

February 5, 2016

Senator Robert Ort  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 815  
Albany, NY 12247

Re: Request for Continued Funding : Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists

Dear Senator Ort,

We hope this letter finds you well.

Last year, \$2,000,000 was included in the budget to fund the hiring of vitally important Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS) for our schools. Currently, the Governor's Budget for 2016-17 for Mental Hygiene does not include the \$2M in funding for the NYC Department of Education to hire additional SAPIS workers. We are writing to request that you support the inclusion of these funds in the current budget.

As you may know, Staten Islanders have been engaged in an island-wide effort to combat the scourge of opioid analgesic and heroin abuse. It is killing our children at a per capita rate that far exceeds the rest of New York City. To illustrate the depth of the problem, we would point out that of the five neighborhoods in New York City with the highest rate of unintended opioid-related deaths, the borough of Staten Island has three of them – yet we comprise only 6% of the population.

Prior to last year's budget, Staten Island had only 12 SAPIS; in one instance, a high school located in the geographic epicenter of the problem, the ratio of students to SAPIS was 4,000:1, a dangerous and unacceptable number. Given the severity of this problem, so severe that in May of 2014 the NY Times referred to our borough as "Heroin's New Hometown," money was allocated to add ten new SAPIS for our borough's schools.

Recognizing that young lives hang in the balance, we are asking you to help us not only maintain the ten additional SAPIS we hired last year, but to help us add another ten.

For perspective, even if we were to add an additional ten specialists, we would still be covering fewer than 50% of Staten Island schools. It is not a final solution, but perhaps we can begin to rein in this terrible scourge.



In our efforts to be on the front lines in the war on substance abuse, we have been buoyed by the cooperation we have received thus far from the New York State Legislature. We are hoping that you are willing to aid us in our efforts to stem this widespread, and deadly, problem. Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo  
President, Borough of Staten Island



Andrew J. Lanza  
Senator, 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Michael J. Cusick  
Assembly Member, 63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District

February 5, 2016

Senator George Amedore, Jr.  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 802  
Albany, NY 12247

Re: Request for Continued Funding : Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists

Dear Senator Amedore, Jr.,

We hope this letter finds you well.

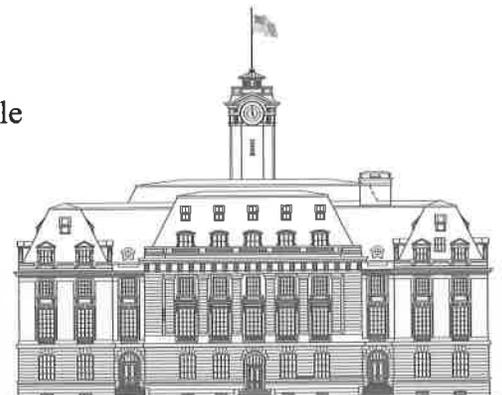
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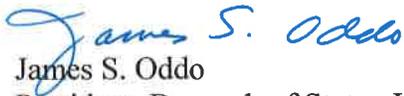
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Assembly Member, 63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District

February 5, 2016

Assemblymember Aileen Gunther  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 826  
Albany, NY 12248

Re: Request for Continued Funding : Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists

Dear Assemblymember Gunther,

We hope this letter finds you well.

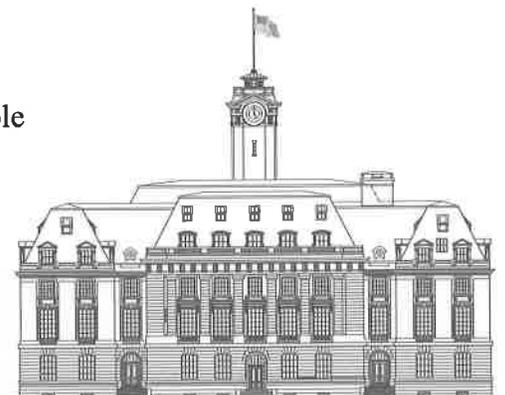
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Andrew J. Lanza  
Senator, 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Michael J. Cusick  
Assembly Member, 63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District

February 5, 2016

Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 627  
Albany, NY 12248

Re: Request for Continued Funding : Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists

Dear Assemblymember Rosenthal,

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