

February 3, 2017

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.

Let us start by offering our thanks for the increased level of funding for Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Specialists (SAPIS) for the 2016-2017 school year. It was much appreciated and certainly much needed.

Sadly, however, we are not able to say that a reduction in the number of opioid-related deaths has been the result of added SAPIS; indeed, the depth of the opioid crisis increases unabated despite the best effort of many agencies and community organizations to fight this terror on any and all fronts.

If we were losing this number people because of gun violence, the hue and cry would be deafening. If so many were dying by contracting an exotic disease or virus, the entire nation would be mobilized in an attempt to eradicate it.

We understand that many resources are being utilized, but we believe that given the enormity of the problem and the increase in mortality that we could be – and should be – doing so much more to combat addiction disease.

We are not going to quote to you statistics with which you are already familiar; we are not talking about numbers, we are talking about the slow and painful loss of human life, and the attendant grief suffered by the families left behind. It is taking a toll not only on our borough, our city and our state, but on our entire nation.



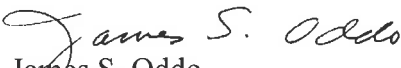
It is time for us to commit; it is time for us devote the resources necessary to ending this scourge by attacking it on all fronts. The number of SAPIS has indeed been rising, but has resulted in no sign of addiction abatement. Simply put, we need more: more resources, more money, more commitment.


We reiterate that you have “done the right thing” in the past – but we are now forced to recognize that the paradigm has shifted, that the crisis is deepening, and that in order to effect positive change we need to up our game by a full order of magnitude.


So once again we implore you: once again we ask you to aid us in our efforts to stem this widespread problem, a problem growing deadlier with every week that passes. Please make the funds available to dramatically increase the number of SAPIS in our schools.

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

Cc: New York State Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan  
New York State Senator Kemp Hannon  
Deputy Secretary Shawn MacKinnon, Senate Finance Committee



February 8, 2017

Senator George Amador  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 802  
Albany, NY 12247

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

Dear Senator Amador,

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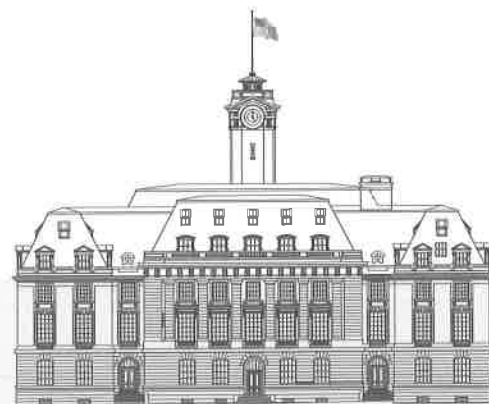
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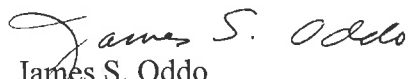
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