



155 WASHINGTON AVE | SUITE 208
ALBANY, NY 12210
518.465.4650 PHONE | 518.465.4625 FAX
INFO@ILNY.ORG | WWW.ILNY.ORG

October 24, 2017

Governor Cuomo Vetoes Bill that Would Help Seniors and People with Disabilities Live In the Community for the Third Year in a Row

Contact: Lindsay Miller (518) 465-4650, or lmiller@ilny.org
Meghan Parker (518) 465-4650, or mparker@ilny.org

(Albany, NY) - Governor Cuomo vetoed the Visitability Tax Credit bill (A.5950/S.2411) for the third year in a row, which would have helped seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their homes and out of nursing homes. The bill would have provided for a modest tax credit of up to \$2,750 for seniors and people with disabilities to modify their homes to make them more accessible. In addition, it would have allowed people to access this credit when including accessible features at the time of construction.

“The lack of accessible housing is the biggest barrier for many people seeking to leave nursing homes. Very often, a ramp to the front door is the difference between a person being able to live safely in their homes or needing to go into a nursing facility” stated Lindsay Miller, Executive Director for the New York Association on Independent Living. “Advocates and sponsors worked in earnest to address concerns raised by the Administration previously, including scaling back the program significantly by capping it at \$1 million per year. We are deeply disappointed the Administration decided to veto the bill yet again, rather than work with us to make whatever additional fixes were needed to implement the program and help people to stay in their own homes and maintain their independence,” added Miller.

The disability community has been advocating for this bill because home modifications can be prohibitively expensive, particularly for seniors and people with disabilities who have to rely on a fixed income. This tax credit would allow many New Yorkers to age in place and at the same time, help increase the stock of accessible housing by incentivizing the inclusion of accessible features at the time of construction.

In his veto memo, Cuomo asserts his support for accessible housing by pointing to the Access to Home program, a successful program which provides low income individuals and families home modifications to prevent unwanted institutionalization.

“It is ironic that Governor Cuomo points to Access to Home as proof of his support of accessible housing since it is currently severely underfunded” stated Meghan Parker, Director of Advocacy for the New York Association on Independent Living. “Funding for Access to Home was cut by 75% under this administration and they have failed to

restore its funding despite vigorous advocacy from the disability community” added Parker.

“We are urging Governor Cuomo to include funding in the 2018 budget to address the dire need for funding for home modifications” stated Miller. “Governor Cuomo needs to include funding for programs like the Visitability Tax Credit and Access to Home so that people aren’t forced into nursing homes against their will.” added Miller.

The New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) is a statewide membership organization of Independent Living Centers (ILCs), community-based not-for-profit providers of advocacy, services and supports for New Yorkers with disabilities of all ages. ILCs are controlled by, and largely staffed by, people with disabilities. NYAIL strengthens local Independent Living Centers and is a leader in the civil rights movement for all people with disabilities.