

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

A.1686 (Hunter) and S.3139 (Mannion)

The New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) is a membership association composed of Independent Living Centers (ILCs). NYAIL leads ILC efforts to eliminate physical, communication, attitudinal, and other barriers to all aspects of life. NYAIL strongly supports A.1686 / S.3139 which requires the NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) to provide an annual report on the New York access to home programs.

Access To Home is an important program administered by HCR which provides home modifications to low-income households to keep them at home and out of institutions. Often, basic modifications like the ramp to a front door can be the difference between someone being able to leave and being homebound or having to go into a nursing home. Most of the housing in New York State was not designed to meet people's needs throughout their life span, so most homes need to be modified as one ages or becomes disabled. As such, this program can play an important role in keeping people at home. Access To Home has been severely underfunded for years. As a result, many parts of the State do not receive funding. The regions of the State that receive funding receive very limited funds, limiting the number of projects statewide. Limited data is available to assess if the program is adequately funded. A.1686 / S.3139 would compel HCR to report on key data on an annual basis and post it on their website so it is available to the public. This data includes:

- The number of contracts the corporation entered into with eligible applicants and the amount of funding both awarded and expended by successful applicant;
- The number of projects each eligible recipient completed;
- The types of projects completed by each eligible recipient, including the average cost of each type of project;
- The geographic diversity and demographic information of the beneficiaries of each completed project;
- The unmet demand for access to home programs who applied for funding through an access to home program;
- How many persons with eligible properties were denied and the demographic information regarding such denied individuals;
- The average timeline for completion of each project.

Such data is critical to bring much-needed transparency to a program that plays such a critical role in keeping people out of institutions. This data will provide lawmakers and advocates alike a better idea of who is being served under the program and where unmet needs still exist. For all the reasons above, NYAIL urges swift passage of A.1686 (Hunter) and S.3139 (Mannion).