



**THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY**

Room 932
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248
(518) 455-3791

SHELDON SILVER
Speaker of the Assembly

May 25, 2011

Honorable Felix Ortiz
Chair, Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and
Developmental Disabilities
Room 826 – Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Honorable Joseph Lentol
Chair, Assembly Standing Committee on Codes
Room 632 – Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Honorable Jonathan Bing
Chair, Assembly Standing Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation
Room 744 – Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Assembly Chairs Ortiz, Lentol and Bing:

A March 2011 New York Times article entitled “For the Developmentally Disabled, Harm in Safe Havens” described some of the most atrocious and unacceptable acts of abuse against individuals receiving services in facilities and programs licensed by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). These vulnerable individuals and their families who depend on treatment and care through state licensed facilities should have confidence that the care they receive is of high quality and that they are safe from harm and abuse.

I am calling on you, as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Chair of the Assembly Codes Committee, and Chair of the Committee on Oversight, Analysis and Investigation to hold a series of public hearings across the state to examine existing quality of care and safety measures provided in these facilities and to examine what could be done to ensure that those with developmental disabilities can rely on the State to protect them.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to working towards establishing meaningful reforms to avoid further abuse and mistreatment of these individuals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheldon Silver". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

SHELDON SILVER
SPEAKER