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State of the State Proposals Leave Many Questions for New Yorkers with Disabilities

New York, NY—January 3, 2018—In the [2018 State of the State](#), Governor Cuomo makes proposals that could benefit people with disabilities, although we are not specifically mentioned, and leaves out critical issues.

We support early voting and same-day voter registration as outlined in the [13th Proposal](#). However, the Governor has not mentioned the need to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities at early voting polling sites and for online registration. While we agree that early voting increases can potentially increase accessibility for voters with disabilities, we are concerned that accessibility issues are not identified or addressed in this proposal. Weekend hours could provide greater flexibility for people who need assistance from a family member to vote or for people who are unable to vote during business hours.

We support the [15th Proposal](#) to Launch Comprehensive No Student Goes Hungry Program. Children with disabilities already face barriers to education and many come from families who live at or below the poverty level. Better nutrition can help all students with educational attainment.

We support the [16th Proposal](#) to Further the Fight Against Exploding Student Loan Debt. Students with disabilities face greater barriers to employment, and helping them with high college costs helps to ensure a better future.

We support the [19th Proposal](#) to Strengthen Workforce Development. Governor Cuomo proposes increased funding to Regional Economic Development Councils, which also “support efforts to improve the economic security of women, youth, and other populations that face significant barriers to career advancement.”

While the general employment rate is 70%, only 29% of people with disabilities are employed full or part-time. The employment gap is greater in New York City than it is at

the State or national level. Moreover, people with disabilities are largely segregated into low-wage occupations.

We agree that health care is a human right and appreciate the Governor's commitment to preserve and protect Medicaid, CHIP, and New York's health care system. We hope proposals that come out of the Long-Term Care Planning Council will support people in transitioning and living independently in the community. Victims Act should be a top priority in the forthcoming legislative session. We agree with expanding mental health services to people experiencing homelessness and in schools, and wish to see wider access to mental health support around the state.

We are disappointed that the Governor did not include proposals addressing the lack of accessible transportation in NYC. Transportation, after discrimination, is the second biggest barrier to employment for people with disabilities.

We agree that passing the Child Victims Act should be a top priority in the forthcoming legislative session. Children with disabilities are 2.9 times more likely than children without disabilities to be sexually abused. Children with intellectual or mental health disabilities appear to be more at risk, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual abuse as their peers without disabilities. Many children who are sexually abused delay reporting and are less likely to be believed when they do report. This bill would extend the time frame when a sexually abused child can report and make New York a more just State for children who have been sexually abused. Just as no child should go hungry, no child should endure sexual abuse.