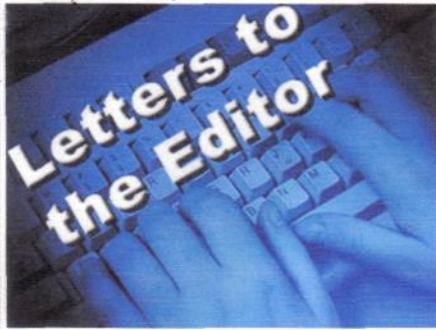


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How Would You Measure Up Gov. Cuomo?



To the Editor:

(Feb. 2015) For the last eight years, I have taught photography for The Arc of Madison Cortland and The Arc of Onondaga. Today, I serve as a board member for The Arc of Madison Cortland and I must say that I have met some amazing people, people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities that have faced unbelievable challenges in their life and through no fault of their own.

Recently I read that Governor Cuomo vetoed four bills critical to people with developmental disabilities. Unless you have a family member with an intellectual disability, I do not believe the average person would have any clue what this means to citizens with disability in New York State. These vetoes take a situation, which many of us would find impossible to deal with and make it that much harder for those families that must deal with it.

Most people assume that a person with a developmental disability lives in a group home and that they are taken care of by the state. That could not be farther from the truth. The majority of people with a developmental disability reside with their family, their parents. The family provides the majority of care. Unfortunately, we all age and so do family caregivers. Where there once may

have been two parents now there is one, life expectancy happens to all of us. So now what happens to the person with a disability that requires twenty four hour care, seven days a week, and three hundred sixty-five days a year? Under Governor Cuomo's leadership they are placed on a waiting list and there they wait and wait and wait. There are thousands of people with disabilities waiting for programs and services in New York State So what happens to them in the meantime?

I understand that something had to be done to rein in the unbelievable spending in Albany. However to keep our most vulnerable citizens on waiting lists and knowingly placing people at risk is just not right.

I truly believe that we are measured by how we care for our most vulnerable, our children, our elderly, and our disabled. How would you measure up Governor Cuomo? It has been said that Government is a reflection that mirrors the society it governs. These vetoes have cracked that mirror. We still can see our reflection but every time we look the crack is still there.

Sincerely,

James Cooke, Chittenango

Board Member, The Arc of Madison Cortland

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