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NEW YORK

New York's Protection & Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Forest Cotten
518-603-0684
Forest.Cotten@drny.org

Workshops Don't Work – People With Disabilities Deserve More

Albany, NY – February 8, 2018 – Despite Federal laws rejecting the unnecessary segregation of individuals with disabilities, New York State maintains a below minimum wage workshop system. These segregated programs have been operating for decades under a false assumption that people with disabilities must participate in intensive segregated pre-employment training to be employable. Nearly 9000 New Yorkers are in sheltered workshops, making such things as orange road flags for construction projects, with minimal opportunity for inclusive employment while being paid sub-minimum wages. A DRNY investigation of over 40 New York sheltered workshops found that appropriate employment opportunities were not being provided to individuals.

The State planned on closing all sheltered workshops by 2019, but then pushed that date to 2022. Now the State has proposed regulations attempting to eliminate certain requirements on providers of sheltered workshops. By doing so, the State interferes with the plan to transition New Yorkers out of sheltered workshops and into competitive employment. DRNY filed comments on the proposed regulations.

“New York’s Sheltered Workshop system doesn’t work and this failed policy must end immediately. It is unconscionable that the State extended the program for another 3 years,” said DRNY Executive Director Timothy A. Clune. “People need real work opportunities now, not sub-minimum wages with reduced accountability, which is what these amendments offer.”

Read DRNY’s comments here: <http://bit.ly/2sahLnF>

DRNY is the designated independent non-profit Protection & Advocacy System empowered by Congress to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect and provide legal and non-legal advocacy services to people with disabilities in New York. The Protection & Advocacy System was created by Congress as a direct result of the horrific conditions that were uncovered in the 1970s at New York’s Willowbrook State School.

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DRNY is supported by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities; Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration; U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration; and, the Social Security Administration. This press release does not represent the views, positions or policies of, or the endorsements by, any of these federal agencies.