

DRAFT LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR A.8586 – Supported Decision-Making

Members of the New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Re: Support for A.8586-A (Simon) – Relates to Supported Decision-Making for People with Intellectual, Developmental, Cognitive and Psychosocial Disabilities

Dear Assemblymember,

Everyone has different levels of development and maturity. Very little separates each of us when it comes to the qualities of being an adult. Forming and implementing goals, having relationships, being active rather than passive in our lives, and making decisions on our own behalf is all part of being responsible for oneself and as an adult in our society.

Sometimes individuals need support to help with decision-making. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) might need such support from those they trust and especially people who know their values and understand their goals.

Supported Decision-Making (SDM) is a well-recognized practice by which people with I/DD can make their own decisions with the support of people they trust and retain all their legal and civil rights. The process is rooted in the common experience that all people use support to make decisions and such support is a human right that allows people to make their own decisions.

Legislation in the State Assembly has been introduced to legally recognize SDM agreements in New York state. The bill, A.8586-A and its companion in the State Senate, S.7107-A, formalize decision-making supports for people with I/DD living in communities all across the state, promote person-centered care, and individual civil rights by allowing many the opportunity to make choices that effect their lives, and affording people the dignity of knowing they are solely responsible for their own decisions.

SDM is one means of decision-making for people with I/DD and, the legislation recognizes that an SDM agreement should be encouraged *when appropriate for the individual*.

We strongly believe that SDM is highly valuable process for people to help them make decisions on their own behalf. We, the undersigned, strongly support A.8586-A and the significance the bill carries by statutorily establishing the SDM process through a new Article 82 of the NY Mental Hygiene Law.

We respectfully request your support of this important civil rights measure and urge passage of the legislation this session.

Sincerely,