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COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ADVOCATES RALLY FOR THE COUNCIL AUTISM INITIATIVE

Council Member Mark Weprin united with his colleagues, autism service providers, and families of children with autism on the steps of City Hall to urge the restoration of the Council Autism Initiative, which provides autism services to children and families.

“Autism is a serious disorder that knows no boundaries. Not only are those diagnosed with the disorder affected, so are their families,” said Council Member Mark Weprin. The Council Autism Initiative provides social and recreational services to children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, along with educational and training services to their families. The Council Autism Initiative funds direct programming and childcare services which allow parents to maintain jobs knowing their children are in a safe environment receiving appropriate care.

“With Autism rates rising across the city, it is extremely important that we fight with my colleague Council Member Weprin to urge the restoration of the NYC Council’s Autism Initiative. With minority children already at a disadvantage due to misdiagnosis or late diagnosis of Autism, we must ensure that our children receive the programmatic and educational resources they need,” said Council Member Julissa Ferreras.

“As we continue to address children with autism and their family's needs, we are all reminded that society is often best judged by the efforts we make for those who have been disadvantaged. We should continue to do all we can because it is simply the right thing to do,” said Council Member Lewis Fidler.

“Children with autism have a chance to thrive in society, but not without our love and support. The Autism Initiative provides direct funding for the tools needed to meet specific health, education and recreation needs. This gives these children and their families a second lease on life. I applaud Council Member Weprin for leading the charge to secure this essential funding for the upcoming year,” said Council Member Jumaane Williams.

“At a time when Autism has reached epidemic proportions, I stand with Council Member Weprin and the thousands of individuals and families across New York City that are affected by this serious disorder. We are here to tell the mayor that we cannot cut vital social services that are so desperately needed by this population. It is our job as elected leaders to protect our most vulnerable citizens. The Council Autism Initiative must be preserved and strengthened,” said Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito.

Last month, the Center for Disease and Control and Prevention reported about 1 in 88 children are now diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Children diagnosed with autism live a better quality of life when they have access to the appropriate services, giving them the ability to develop to their full potential. Autism awareness leads to early intervention, which increases the likelihood that children will receive the proper services.

“In light of the alarming statistics that are newly available, autism awareness and support are more important than ever,” said Council Member Mark Weprin.



Council Member Mark Weprin (center) with Council Members (starting left) Margaret Chin, Ruben Wills, Vincent Ignizio, Julissa Ferreras, Gale A. Brewer, Brad Lander, G. Oliver Koppell, and Lewis A. Fidler, autism service providers, and families of children diagnosed with autism rally on the steps of City Hall in support of the Council Autism Initiative.