S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

5899--A

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

March 6, 2015

Introduced by M. of A. BARRON, ORTIZ, PICHARDO, WALKER, MILLER, COOK, GOTTFRIED, DAVILA, JAFFEE -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. BLAKE, MOSLEY, PERRY -- read once and referred to the Committee on Children and Families -- recommitted to the Committee on Children and Families in accordance with Assembly Rule 3, sec. 2 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to establishing the peer advocacy and mentoring program

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 522-a to read as follows:

S 522-A. PEER ADVOCACY AND MENTORING PROGRAM. 1. THERE IS HEREBY CREATED WITHIN THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, A PEER ADVOCACY AND MENTORING PROGRAM.

2. THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES SHALL, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH, CONTRACT WITH A MENTORING PROGRAM THAT HAS MET THE REQUIREMENTS UNDER SECTION THREE HUNDRED NINETY-E OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LAW, SPECIALIZING IN PROVIDING PEER SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY TO YOUTH AND THE NEEDS OF YOUTH, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL NEEDS, TO ESTABLISH A PEER ADVOCACY AND MENTORING PROGRAM. SUCH PROGRAM SHALL BE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE PEER SUPPORT, ADVOCACY AND MENTORING FOR YOUTH RESIDING IN RESIDENTIAL CARE.

3. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY INCONSISTENT PROVISION OF LAW TO THE CONTRARY, PRIORITY FOR SERVICES UNDER THE PEER ADVOCACY AND MENTORING PROGRAM SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOUTH WHO WERE PLACED IN RESIDENTIAL CARE PURSUANT TO SECTION 353.3 OF THE FAMILY COURT ACT, AND WHO RESIDE IN FACILITIES DESCRIBED IN SECTION FIVE HUNDRED FOUR OF THIS ARTICLE.

4. PEER ADVOCATES ACTING AS EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS IN THE PEER ADVOCACY AND MENTORING PROGRAM SHALL: (A) BE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE:

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [ ] is old law to be omitted.

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(I) EXPERIENCE WITH ISSUES FACING YOUTH AT RISK OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM; AND

(II) SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ANY ADDITIONAL TRAINING THAT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, QUALIFYING SUCH INDIVIDUALS TO WORK IN THE PEER ADVOCACY AND MENTORING PROGRAM;

(B) HAVE REASONABLE AND APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO YOUTH IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES AS DETERMINED BY THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH YOUTH IN A PRIVATE, CONFIDENTIAL SETTING SO LONG AS THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES DETERMINES THAT SUCH MEETING DOES NOT POSE A SAFETY RISK; AND

(C) NOT IDENTIFY, IN ANY WAY, OUTSIDE OF THEIR SCOPE OF EMPLOYMENT OR DUTIES AS A PEER ADVOCATE, THE NAME OR IDENTITY OF ANY YOUTH SERVED WITHIN THE PEER ADVOCACY AND MENTORING PROGRAM.

S 2. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.