

# LDA

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## MEMO IN SUPPORT

**June 11, 2009**

**A.8611 Morelle /S.5672 Huntley, An act to amend chapter 748 of the laws of 2006, enacting "Timothy's law", in relation to eliminating the expiration and repeal thereof.**

### **PASSED ASSEMBLY/ON SENATE CALENDAR-THIRD READING**

Chapter 748 of the Laws of 2006, known as Timothy's Law, requires group health insurance policies to provide a minimum of 30 inpatient days and 20 outpatient visits for the treatment of mental health conditions and further requires large group health insurance policies (more than 50 employees or members) to provide coverage for adults and children diagnosed with biologically based mental illness and children diagnosed with serious emotional disturbances on par with coverage provided for other health conditions. Timothy's Law took effect on January 1, 2007, and sunsets on December 31, 2009. This bill would make this law permanent.

A learning disability is a neurobiological disorder, meaning there are differences in brain structure and/ or function in a person who has learning disabilities. These differences lead to difficulty in learning and often to difficulties in coping with the challenges and stresses of everyday life. One in seven New Yorkers has a Learning Disability.

The impact of learning disabilities on our society and culture is enormous. Over half of the detainees in juvenile detention facilities have a learning disability. Up to 60% of adolescents in treatment for substance abuse have learning disabilities. 48% of those with learning disabilities are out of the workforce or unemployed. 50% of females with learning disabilities will be mothers (many of them single) within 3-5 years of leaving high school. 44 percent of the TANF (welfare) population were found to have a learning disability. 31% of students with learning disabilities will be arrested 3-5 years out of high school.

Persons with Learning Disabilities are also at increased risk to experience mental health issues. This legislation will therefore benefit persons with learning disabilities and their families by helping to provide appropriate support services for mental health issues.

The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State therefore supports this bill, and urges that it be enacted into law.