

News...

from the office of State Rep. Stephanie Kifowit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 11, 2015

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

State Rep. Stephanie Kifowit

630-585-1308

Kifowit Votes to Keep Services for the Disabled and Elderly

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Tens of thousands of seniors and people with disabilities will no longer be threatened with losing their care or housing, due to legislation state Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, D-Oswego, helped pass last week. The Governor changed eligibility levels to reject many vulnerable individuals from health and housing programs, and Kifowit’s legislation will save money and keep seniors in their own homes by protecting the Determination of Need (DON) score at the current level.

“Being able to live in our homes is something that many of us take for granted,” Kifowit said. “But to many disabled individuals and seniors, being independent maintains their self-worth and quality of life and to me that is very important.”

On May 6, 2015, Kifowit was a chief co-sponsor of a resolution supported by the House which opposed the DON score change proposed by the Governor. Disregarding the negative impact of this change and the support earned by the resolution, the Governor continued to push to narrow eligibility standards and drastically cut home visits, where caretakers help with things such as laundry and meal preparation for seniors and disabled individuals. Under Governor Rauner’s change the minimum determination of need score would raise to 37 from 29, affecting tens of thousands of Illinoisans.

“A change of this magnitude would send otherwise healthy and capable individuals into nursing homes, which is more expensive and could cause depression and isolation,” Kifowit said. “That’s not how we, as a society, should treat the elderly and disabled. They deserve to be supported and to stay in their homes for as long as they are safe, comfortable and able.”

It is estimated that the Governor’s hike to eligibility requirements would have resulted in over 38,000 people losing both their eligibility and their services. With Kifowit’s support, House Bill 2482 will provide protections for those residents who are currently living in Supportive Living Facilities, Nursing Homes, the Coordinated Care Program and Home Services Program, and prevent the state from canceling services based on an increased eligibility measurement. On Sept. 9, this proposal was sent to the Governor’s desk.

“This bill is absolutely essential to the health and wellness of seniors and individuals with disabilities,” Kifowit said. “We need a responsible budget that does not harm the most vulnerable, and I will continue working for a balanced approach, coordinating in a bipartisan manner, to support those most in need.”