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Robach and Morelle Honored at RIT for Advocacy for the Deaf

October 8, 2007

In recognition of their consistent support of the state's deaf and hard-of-hearing community, State Senator Joseph Robach (R-Greece) and Assemblyman Joseph Morelle (D-Irondequoit) were honored at a reception marking Deaf Awareness Day, September 26 in the Dyer Arts Center at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf.

Robach and Morelle were cited for their most recent work introducing legislation in the Senate and Assembly, respectively, to create a statewide Interagency Council for services to people who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard-of-hearing. The council, which will be administered by the New York State Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy to Persons with Disabilities, will include seven agency heads or their designees, as well as eight representatives appointed by the Governor and the State Legislature, to promote a statewide program for coordinated services, maintenance of data, dissemination of service information and evaluation of the needs of the deaf, deaf-blind and hard-of-hearing communities. The council will report to the Governor and State Legislature on policy, legislative initiatives and development of a uniform statewide plan.

"This law improves opportunities for access to the services that deaf, deaf-blind and hard-of-hearing people need for medical, housing, transportation, technology, personal care, family and day programs," said Dr. T. Alan Hurwitz, RIT vice president for NTID and CEO and dean of NTID. "It increases independence and the ability to advocate for the delivery of these comprehensive services. We owe Senator Robach and Assemblyman Morelle a debt of gratitude for recognizing the needs that this legislation will address, and for moving it forward."



State Senator Joseph Robach (R-Greece) and Assemblyman Joseph Morelle (D-Irondequoit) were honored at a reception marking Deaf Awareness Day, September 26 in the Dyer Arts Center at NTID. [See full-size photo](#)

"We are pleased that this all-important law will provide a tremendous opportunity for much-needed advocacy and services to enhance the quality of life for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard-of-Hearing New Yorkers alike," said Steve Lovi, vice president of the Empire State Association of the Deaf and member of the Rochester Deaf Awareness Week Committee.

Along with Hurwitz and Lovi, members of Rochester's deaf and hard-of-hearing community, Regional Center for Independent Living, Rochester Recreation Club for the Deaf, and RIT students, faculty and staff, were in attendance to honor Robach and Morelle.

"I was pleased to help create this panel to empower people living with hearing loss and to improve the implementation of services to those in need, both in Rochester and across the state," said Robach. "As the father of a hard-of-hearing child, I know the challenges that individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard-of-hearing face, and I know that this law will significantly enhance the delivery of these much needed services in our community."

"It has been one of the priorities of my service in the State Assembly to help meet the needs of our deaf and hard-of-hearing population," said Morelle. "It gives me great pleasure to know that this legislation will bring about positive changes and provide access to services that will improve the quality of life for so many New Yorkers."

Rochester Institute of Technology

National Technical Institute for the Deaf

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