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**SENATOR FLANAGAN NAMES NEW CO-CHAIR FOR
SENATE'S TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
**Senator Rob Ortt Selected to Lead Initiative That
Improves Opportunities for Job Seekers and Employers**

New York State Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan today announced the appointment of Senator Robert Ortt (R-C-I, North Tonawanda) as a new co-Chair of the Senate's Task Force on Workforce Development. He will lead the Senate's ongoing initiative to improve employee readiness; better meet the workforce needs of private sector employers; connect job seekers with potential employers; retrain those who have lost jobs; and help make New York State's overall economy more robust, dynamic and resilient.

Senator Flanagan said, "Senator Ortt has long been a champion for Western New York businesses and will use his wealth of military and local government experience to lead the Task Force. He will continue the Senate's successful efforts to create better opportunities for our state's workers by identifying, enhancing, and maximizing the resources available to meet the needs of new and existing employers."

Senator Ortt said, "Workforce development has been a key focus of mine and I look forward to continuing the work of my Senate Republican colleagues, who have been at the forefront of this issue. By educating, training, and cultivating skills among our students and employees, we can help ensure that we meet a 21st century global economy with a 21st century workforce."

The Senate Task Force on Workforce Development was established in March 2015 and charged with reviewing the state's existing programs designed to train both job seekers and existing employees for current and prospective employment opportunities. Task Force members held several forums that brought together leaders in business, labor, public education, higher education, local governments, and workforce training and development.

The valuable input provided by Task Force participants was used to generate an extensive [report](#) and a [package of legislation that the Senate passed last year](#), and one of the bills (S7967) became law. It will expand the type of data collected by the state Department of Labor to include forward-facing job statistics that can be used by employers and educators to accurately predict future needs and properly prepare the workforce for career opportunities.

This year, Senator Ortt will partner with co-Chair Senator George Amedore (R-C-I, Rotterdam) to continue to work with stakeholders to examine, create, and help implement initiatives that strengthen the state's economy by training job seekers and existing employees for the employment opportunities that are in demand.

Senator Flanagan also named four new members to the Task Force: Senator Pam Helming (R, Canandaigua); Senator Chris Jacobs (R-C-I, Buffalo); Senator Elaine Phillips (R-C, Manhasset); and Senator James Tedisco (R-C-I, Glenville). They will join existing members Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County), Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport), Senator Joseph Griffo (R-C-I, Rome), Senator William Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson), Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-C-I, Port Jefferson), Senator Carl Marcellino (R, Syosset), Senator Kathleen Marchione (R-C, Halfmoon), Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats), Senator Patricia Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton), Senator Susan Serino (R, Hyde Park), Senator James L. Seward (R-C-I, Oneonta), and Senator Catharine Young (R-I-C, Olean).

Senator Ortt replaces Senator Jack Martins, who has departed the Senate.

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