

only 18 individuals were laid off despite the fact that 230 jobs were eliminated.

In addition to the effects on staff, the budget cuts have forced the cancellation of OMRDD's plans to add 123 beds to community residences this year. Subsequently, a total of 400 positions will not be filled.

Opposition to the cuts has come from several legislators, including Westchester Senator Nicholas Spano, Mental Hygiene Committee chairman. In a recent letter to Webb, Spano referred to the situation as "particularly irresponsible," pointing out that the legislature had determined that layoffs originally proposed were unacceptable. The legislature Spano pointed out, had subsequently made revisions in the budget to prevent layoffs.

"The legislature is committed to maintaining filled positions...It is disappointing that you pretend otherwise," Spano stated. "I can well understand your unwillingness to have to work within the constraints of a budget that does not allow you the flexibility you have become accustomed to. But given the choice between providing community services for the developmentally disabled and providing for a comfortable departmental surplus again for OMRDD, I think the legislature's path was clear...It is time to end political gamesmanship...and put our energies toward working together on behalf of the mentally disabled of New York."

The Island research scientist being laid off is one of 133 members of the Professional Employees Federation (PEF) who will lose his job next month. Union spokesman John Townsend explained that OMRDD will suffer "a great loss, since many of our titles are professional. There are vacant positions that could have been reduced," Townsend told the *Register*. "But they're actually looking for a reduction in bodies. They're trying to deprofessionalize and de-skill the workforce." PEF, he said,

plans to fight the layoffs in court.

The remaining four titles - laboratory technician, senior laboratory technician, histology technician and radiology technician - are represented by the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA). Union spokesman Steve Madarasz called it an "unfortunate situation that will obviously cause some inconvenience. It can't help but have a negative impact on staff morale." He added, however, that CSEA expects its 100-plus members being laid off to be relocated within the state." (About half of the CSEA layoffs are due to the closing of facilities in Manhattan and the Bronx, rather than budget cuts, he explained.)

"We don't anticipate any actual layoffs," Madarasz said. "We expect our members to find other employment opportunities, and we fully expect comparable salaries."

OMCE is apparently not so sure its members, particularly the chiefs of services, will be offered comparable salaries, however. (The job commands anywhere from \$61,991 to \$78,461.)

In an Aug. 7 letter to OMRDD Commissioner Arthur Webb, Zaron says elimination of some of the positions "may be counterproductive" and calls for a postponement of the layoff date. She has also asked Webb to "immediately appoint, prior to any layoff, all chiefs and developmental service managers to other department titles at the same salary grade level which are currently vacant or filled provisionally or on a temporary basis."

In addition, Zaron has requested, among other things, a "strong push" for comparability for additional titles and more help, by OMRDD's internal service officer program, in helping laid off employees locate other positions.

Broadnax, Uttley said last week, "will be doing everything possible" to insure that laid-off OMRDD employees are offered comparable jobs within the state.