



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Statement from Senator Patty Ritchie

PATTY RITCHIE May 21, 2020



The COVID-19 pandemic has put incredible stress on our state's healthcare facilities, including our nursing homes.

It is no secret that in recent years, many of our long-term care facilities have struggled financially. As state senator, I have advocated for changes that would help nursing homes across our rural region become more financially stable, as well as more accessible to those who are in need of care. That being said, now more than ever, they need our help. It is unfortunate that instead of our state stepping up and providing assistance, they are

crushing these facilities with new, costly mandates.

I was saddened yesterday to read that as a result of these mandates—which include twice weekly testing for employees—United Helpers' nursing homes may be forced to shut down. Located in St. Lawrence County, United Helpers not only provides care for some of our region's most vulnerable, it is also a major employer that helps support more than 1,000 much-needed, local jobs.

So far, during this pandemic, nearly 6,000 residents in long-term care facilities have lost their lives. That figure is staggering, and further underscores the need for an independent review of the policies put in place to protect our state's most vulnerable. In addition, while I agree steps need to be taken to protect those in long-term care facilities from COVID-19, these newly imposed mandates are crippling not only for United Helpers, but also for many other providers across our state. This Administration needs to step up and fund the tests they are mandating so facilities can continue to provide vitally important care to those who need it most.