

News from Senator George M. Borrello

57th Senate District

Representing Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and portions of Livingston County

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SENATOR BORRELLO JOINS LEGISLATIVE COLLEAGUES, FAMILIES AND FOX NEWS SENIOR METEOROLOGIST JANICE DEAN IN CALLING FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION INTO NURSING HOME DEATHS

Press conference occurs on day that New York State Health Commissioner was scheduled to testify at public hearing

ALBANY – In the wake of the New York State Attorney General’s incriminating report on the Cuomo administration’s undercounting of COVID-related nursing home deaths, Senator George Borrello joined legislative colleagues and advocates to call for an independent investigation into the Health Department’s actions surrounding the coronavirus crisis in nursing homes. The virtual press conference also included family members who lost loved ones in nursing homes to COVID, including Janice Dean, Fox News Senior Meteorologist.

Senator Borrello underscored that the lawmakers’ calls for transparency came on the day that Health Commissioner Howard Zucker was supposed to testify at a health budget hearing. However, the Commissioner cancelled the February 3 appearance, rescheduling for February 25.

“The Attorney General’s report confirmed the Cuomo administration attempted to prevent a full and transparent accounting of nursing home deaths, leading to an undercount of up to 50 percent. We have lots of questions about how and why this occurred as well as the role of the controversial March 25 state directive requiring nursing homes to admit COVID-positive patients,” said Senator Borrello.

“New Yorkers deserve answers; today’s Health Department hearing would have been an opportunity to question the Commissioner about the charges in the report, right now, while the information is timely. Instead, the administration has again, chosen to stonewall and delay, postponing the hearing and enabling them to mold the facts and figures to fit their narrative.”

He also criticized Senate Democrats’ dismissal yesterday of a motion by Senator Tom O’Mara, Ranking Member of the Senate Investigations Committee, calling on the body to issue a subpoena to the Department of Health for nursing home data and related communications.

“The scrutiny that this situation demands was blocked by the Senate Majority Chair of the Investigations Committee in a shamefully partisan move that has no place when we are talking about life and death issues. This nursing home crisis has escalated beyond the point where Senate Democrats’ can use politics as a roadblock. They have a duty to their constituents and all New Yorkers to help lead the effort to uncover the truth,” said Senator Borrello.

Senator Borrello concluded by referring to the Governor’s statement from earlier this week dismissing the importance of where nursing home residents died, he said, “the Governor has contradicted himself. While he claimed it doesn’t matter where people died, he used his misleading data to promote his handling of the crisis. He boasted back in October that the state ranked [46th out of 50 states](#) in the number of nursing home deaths. So, it did matter to him when he shifted the data to serve his narrative. However, more importantly, it matters greatly to every family that lost a loved one and whose questions and voices have been ignored by this administration. We have a responsibility - to them - to get to the truth.”