



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SERINO SLAMS INACTION ON NURSING HOME CRISIS

SUSAN SERINO May 27, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS; COVID-19; SENIORS; NURSING HOMES; ADULT CARE FACILITIES**



HYDE PARK, NY—Senator Sue Serino today is speaking out against inaction on the part of the Legislature to effectively address the crisis unfolding in nursing homes, assisted living and adult care facilities across the state. Earlier today, the Legislature reconvened for the first time in nearly two months to specifically pass a package of bills under the guise of addressing issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite that stated goal, and the high rates of deaths in nursing homes, the Legislature failed to pass a single bill that would better protect residents now, or better support the facilities that care for them.

*“Since day one, these facilities, which care for our most vulnerable, have been an afterthought to the state,” said Senator Serino. “From the March 25<sup>th</sup> directive that defied common sense and required them to take COVID-positive patients, to failing to fully fund testing—the state has failed residents, family members, and facility staff time and again. Today, when the Legislature had the opportunity to make a real difference in immediately protecting residents and supporting these facilities, they failed to advance a single piece of meaningful legislation. The state needs to step up and immediately provide the support these facilities need to best care for their residents.”*

With the Associated Press reporting that New York has the **highest number of nursing home deaths in the nation**, and little progress being seen to reverse those troubling statistics, the Legislature today only approved one bill even remotely related to this pressing issue. Worse, the bill does nothing to provide immediate support to current residents who are vulnerable to COVID-19 today.

The bill, S.8289-B, requires these facilities to submit a ‘pandemic emergency plan’ to the NYS Department of Health in 90 days and once per year after that. The plan submitted by facilities must include a communication plan for families, requires them to maintain a two-month stockpile of PPE, requires the facilitation of once-per-day videoconferencing, and requires the creation of a plan for bed holds.

While all of these are important aspects of pandemic planning, and may play a role in more effectively handling future pandemics, Senator Serino accurately points out that the legislation makes no mention of where funding would come from to make any of the bill’s components a reality and does nothing to better protect residents or support the facilities who care for them today.

Serino, who is the Ranking Member of the NYS Senate’s Aging Committee, once again argued for the advancement of the many suggestions she has made to better protect residents including:

- the creation of an **emergency council** to enforce accountability and transparency in facilities,
- the creation of **specialty care centers** to keep COVID positive patients away from vulnerable residents and out of hospital beds,
- the **utilization of the National Guard** to assist with testing, sterilizing facilities, and supporting staff,
- the providing of adequate PPE,
- a **serious investment in staffing pools** to ensure facilities have access to the trained workforce they need to best care for residents, and
- an **independent investigation** into the state’s handling of this issue.

*Senator Sue Serino continued, “Like so many of our healthcare operators, these facilities are on the front lines of this pandemic. The residents, families, and hardworking staff who support them deserve better than what happened in Albany today. Instead of scapegoating, handing down unfunded mandates and rewriting history when it comes to bad state policy, we need to work together to ensure these facilities have immediate access to the resources they need to keep residents safe and healthy during this trying time.”*

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2019-S8289B**

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Relates to requiring residential health care facilities to prepare an annual pandemic emergency plan to the commissioner of health

May 06, 2020

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Julia Salazar**

Do you support this bill?