



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Cuomo administration 'strikes again': O'Mara says last-minute Phase 4 rules changes keep holding back local economies

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Elmira, N.Y., June 24—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today criticized the Cuomo administration for its last-minute revision of the Phase 4 reopening guidelines that now prevent malls, **gyms**, movie theaters, and other arts and entertainment venues, including **Eldridge Park in Elmira**, from getting back to business as scheduled on Friday.

O'Mara strongly criticized the last-minute changes and again called for ending Cuomo's unilateral, emergency executive powers.

O'Mara said, "State government by executive order strikes again and leaves local small businesses and local workers facing yet another hard hit, more uncertainty, and ongoing financial pain and suffering. Local county leaders, local residents and workers, and local business owners have demonstrated extraordinary discipline and perseverance following state guidelines and faithfully playing by the rules to execute the COVID-19 response and protect public health. It's not right for the Cuomo administration to keep arriving at the last minute with unexplained rules changes that keep downplaying the work of local officials, devastating local small business owners and workers, and disappointing local residents. If Phase Four was set to begin on Friday and our local leaders, businesses, and workers had done everything necessary to be ready to go, we should be moving forward as planned. Governor Cuomo should not have the unilateral power to put up these roadblocks at the last minute."

According to the state's original guidance, the Phase 4 reopening set for Friday in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions was supposed to include malls, gyms, movie theaters, amusement parks, and other arts and entertainment venues.

Late last night, however, the Cuomo administration informed local officials that the Phase 4 reopening guidelines were being revised and many of these businesses would not be allowed to reopen Friday as originally scheduled. Instead, the state gave the go-ahead to only media production, including motion picture, TV and streaming service production, and "low-risk" indoor and outdoor arts and entertainment.

The Cuomo administration has indicated that other businesses who had prepared to reopen Friday can reopen "soon" but no specific date or guidelines have been provided.