



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo critical of SLA enforcement mechanisms

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO August 24, 2020

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New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, today requested that the State Liquor Authority revise its standards when it comes to the repercussions that restaurants and bars may face if they are cited for coronavirus-related infractions.

Several establishments in Sen. Griffo's district have been cited by the authority for not following health and safety protocols that have been put in place by the state. This includes a recent case where an Oneida County bar had its liquor license suspended after it was allegedly found to be in violation of state directives involving social distancing, the wearing of masks and requiring food to be purchased with alcohol.

"I understand that there should be consequences for businesses who violate the state's statutes during the coronavirus pandemic. However, at a time when many businesses are facing severe economic struggles and confusion as a result of inconsistent and ambiguous orders from the state, there should not be a one strike and you're out policy," Sen. Griffo said. "While I recognize the importance of ensuring the safety and well-being of employees and patrons, bars and restaurants should be given the opportunity to correct violations before they are penalized more harshly. Someone can commit a crime and be released back onto the street thanks to the bail-related changes now in place in New York, but a restaurant can potentially lose its liquor license for its first infraction. These approaches and policies

challenge businesses and contribute to the state's exodus."

Sen. Griffo also expressed consternation with directives from the authority that effectively bans activities in bars and restaurants that could lead to people congregating. This includes darts, dancing, cornhole, comedy shows, karaoke and pool and prohibits businesses from advertising or selling tickets for musical acts and entertainment.

"Once again, we are seeing inconsistent policies that only cause confusion and erode the credibility of directives from the state," Sen. Griffo said. "In New York right now, you can bring reusable and potentially contaminated bags in and out of stores and homes, but you can't touch a dart, pool cue or beanbag. I get that protocols need to be in place, but we should be finding ways to help businesses during this unique and challenging time."

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