



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daphne Jordan

## Senator Daphne Jordan advocates for overnight summer camps to open for the 2021 summer season

DAPHNE JORDAN February 11, 2021

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Albany, NY – New York State Senator Daphne Jordan (R,C,I-Halfmoon) today called on Governor Cuomo to allow the opening of overnight summer camps so these beloved institutions may resume their operations for the 2021 summer season after having been prevented from doing so in 2020. Senator Jordan sent a letter to Governor Cuomo earlier this morning urging him to allow overnight summer camps to open – and for the state to provide early guidance so the facilities can undertake all necessary preparations.

Last year, the state denied overnight summer camps (aka, sleepaway camps) the ability to open due to COVID-19. The resulting closures caused serious economic hardship for summer overnight camps and denied countless youths a much-beloved opportunity to enjoy New York's great outdoors, partake in healthy recreation, make lifelong friendships, and forge wonderful memories while attending overnight summer camp.

As noted in Senator Jordan's correspondence, on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, the New York State Camp Safety Advisory Council, comprised of representatives from the New York State Department of Health, the medical community, camp owners, and directors held a public meeting on the resumption of summer camps. The result of their meeting was the passage of a resolution affirming that overnight and day camps can operate safely this summer. The Council unanimously voted to both recommend to New York State that overnight camps should be allowed to operate and that there should be no limitations on group size on overnight and day camps. The Council's detailed report advocating for the resumption of overnight summer camps is currently being circulated within the State Department of Health.

"Without question, the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic has been incredibly difficult for everyone, with the human and financial toll being particularly devastating. The pandemic has been especially challenging for children and families throughout New York State. From social distancing, to mask-wearing, to remote/hybrid academic learning, the cancellation or suspension of sports, clubs, and other beloved extracurricular activities, the children of New York State have experienced unprecedented changes and challenges to their everyday lives. New York's children have continually shown incredible resiliency and courage in the face of these disruptions," Senator Jordan said.

"Now, as we will soon mark one year since the COVID-19 pandemic's onset, we thankfully

have multiple vaccines that are proven safe and efficacious in preventing severe COVID-related illness, hospitalization, and death. We also know much more about this virus, how it spreads, and that effective risk mitigation efforts such as proper social distancing, thorough sanitization, and the wearing of masks can help prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19," Senator Jordan said.

"Overnight summer camps serve an invaluable role in children's positive social-emotional development. Camp is perhaps the safest and best place for young people to be, both from an emotional and physical health perspective, given all they have been subjected to because of COVID-19. These camps operated safely in Maine and New Hampshire in 2020, and day camps statewide were allowed to resume operations effective June 29, 2020 and did so successfully. New York State's overnight summer camps should be afforded the same opportunity for the benefit of countless children who missed out on this experience last year due to the pandemic," Senator Jordan stated.

"Serious economic consequences are expected if overnight summer camps in New York State are not allowed to return to full operational status this summer. In fact, it is anticipated that many New York State sleepaway camps may permanently go out of business due to ongoing financial hardships, resulting in even more lost jobs and more lost opportunities for our state. New York State providing advance notice now that overnight summer camps can resume their operations will assist them in successfully implementing all necessary COVID-19 safety protocols including testing, capital projects, supply ordering, and hiring staff. Overnight summer camps are ready, willing, and able to meet and exceed all health and safety protocols to provide a positive experience for their guests. For the sake of our economy, and our children who have endured so many significant disruptions and challenges, our state needs to allow these beloved summertime institutions to open for the 2021 season without any further delay," Senator Jordan said.

Text of Senator Jordan's correspondence sent to Governor Cuomo this morning advocating for the state to allow overnight summer camps to open for the 2021 summer season attached with this news release above.

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