



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO CONTINUES FIGHTS FOR LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

SUSAN SERINO March 21, 2021

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HYDE PARK, NY— On March 3rd, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that events, arts and entertainment venues would be able to resume operating at 33% capacity beginning on April 2nd. While the announcement was met with great fanfare, over two weeks later, impacted venues are still without the necessary guidance they need to effectively plan for any potential reopening and are unable to get basic questions answered by the state. In a letter

sent to the Governor and shared with the Commissioner of Health and the Chairman of the State Liquor Authority (SLA), Senator Sue Serino today is calling on the state to put an end to its arbitrary and contradictory message and urging them to take immediate steps to empower these venues to reopen safely.

“Too many hardworking small business owners and job creators have had to close their doors for good through no fault of their own as a result of New York’s often arbitrary pandemic rules, leaving employees without jobs and communities without the institutions that make them what they are,” said Senator Serino. “With the vaccine now making its way steadily across our state, everybody is rightfully looking toward the future, yet the state continues to play politics with its reopening rules—cherry picking industries, leaving others behind, and refusing to answer even basic questions that would help these employers stay afloat. It is not right, and it is time for the state to put an end to its micromanaging and work instead to empower employers to safely reopen their businesses.”

In her letter, Serino also points out that while the state announced that the 11:00 p.m. curfew will be lifted for casinos, movie theaters, bowling alleys, billiard halls, gyms and fitness centers on April 5th, bars and restaurants were left out of this loosening of restrictions. She notes the duplicity of this ruling as the Governor’s own data shows that only roughly 1% of COVID-19 infections from September through November resulted from New Yorkers patronizing bars and restaurants. She also notes that the newly announced rules leave many venues in a grey area as they try to determine whether they must operate under the rules governing arts and entertainment venues or bars and restaurants.

“As we all look toward the future, it is important to remember that ultimately it will not be the State that revitalizes our communities—it will be the small business owners and the employees of our favorite local establishments who bring about our resurgence,” Serino wrote. “It was everyday New Yorkers and the sacrifices they made that flattened the curve, and it will be those very same New Yorkers who will play a direct role in ensuring our state rebuilds back better than before. It is time now for the state to stop micromanaging and allow our small businesses to get to work doing what they do best—moving our communities and our state forward.”

While Serino and her colleagues in the Republican conference have attempted to advance an amendment to fully strip the Governor of his Emergency Powers every day of the Legislative Session, the Legislature's Supermajority has rejected it outright each time. Serino and her colleagues have also introduced concurrent resolutions that would do away with the rule that forces patrons to purchase a food item with their alcoholic beverages. To date, the Legislature has taken no action on either resolution.

To read Serino's letter in full, please [click here](#).

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