



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## **Senator Gallivan Introduces Legislation to Ensure Stadium Negotiations are Open**

Jim Ranney

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ISSUE:

- [Buffalo Bills](#)
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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) and Assemblyman Pat Burke (D, Buffalo) have re-introduced legislation (S.1714/A.8261) that would require those involved in negotiating a new lease and possible new stadium for the Buffalo Bills to follow New York's open meetings law and make their deliberations public. Senator Gallivan first proposed the bill in 2014 when the last round of lease negotiations began between the team, Erie County and New York State. It passed the Senate unanimously in 2014, 2015 and 2016 but failed in the State Assembly.

The Buffalo Bills are now seeking a new stadium to be built near the football team's current facility, Highmark Stadium, in Orchard Park. The team's current lease is scheduled to expire in 2023. Considering the vast amount of public dollars at stake, it is only right that public meetings be held to ensure the process is open and transparent.

"The Buffalo Bills have an important cultural impact on Western New York, but as we consider how best to meet the long-term needs of the team, we must ensure that members of the community are involved in the process," Senator Gallivan said. "A project of this magnitude should not be negotiated in secret, especially when state and county taxpayers will be asked to help pay for it."

"Western New Yorkers should not be shut out of the process to determine the future of the Buffalo Bills," Burke said. "We've already invested significantly to keep the Bills at home, including \$95 million in state and county funds for improvements to

the team's Orchard Park stadium, and shown we're willing to be a partner in continuing this storied tradition in Western New York. With the vast amount of public funding involved and the team's crucial economic and cultural impact on our region, discussions on constructing a new stadium or additional renovations at the current stadium should be open and transparent to taxpayers."

The legislation would amend the public officers law and require any working group, subcommittee, advisory committee or subsidiary of the Erie County Stadium Corporation to make their deliberations open to the public. The New Stadium Working Group was created as part of a past lease agreement between the Buffalo Bills, Erie County and New York State.

The New York Coalition for Open Government recently called on state and county officials, and Pegula Sports and Entertainment, owners of the Buffalo Bills, to hold public meetings. The group points to several other professional sports teams and communities that provided opportunities for the public to be heard regarding stadium construction.

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## **related legislation**

### **[2021-S1714](#)**

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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 the Erie county stadium corporation complying with the open meetings law](#)

January 14, 2021

In Senate Committee [Investigations and Government Operations](#)

Sponsored by [Patrick M. Gallivan](#)

Do you support this bill?