



Dear Friend:

Happy Friday and welcome to the February 5 edition of my Weekly Wrap!

This was a busy week as my Senate Republican colleagues and I continued advocating for accountability and transparency regarding the state's mishandling of the nursing home tragedies that claimed the lives of possibly more than 13,000 senior citizens. I also continued advocating for the health, safety, and well-being of senior citizens residing at Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, an urgent situation that was brought to my attention by two of my Columbia County constituents. I also advocated for food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff to be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Veterans were also a focus of this week, as we celebrated a local Korean War Hero's 89th birthday! This American hero has an incredible story, which you can read below in this week's Wrap. I also was happy to see that my Senate Bill designating New York as a "Purple Heart State" was unanimously passed in the Investigations and Government Operations Committee! My bill is now eligible to be brought to the Senate floor for a vote but there are no guarantees that the Senate Majority Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, will do that; that is within her discretion. However, strong public support may make that happen. I'm looking for all veterans and their families, friends, and supporters to send an email to the Majority Leader at scousins@nysenate.gov and ask that S.2279 designating New York as a Purple Heart State be brought to the floor for a vote.

This month, we recognize and celebrate the incredible achievements that Black men and women have contributed to our nation's history. Courageous individuals like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass, Muhammad Ali, Jackie Robinson, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth (to name a few!), whose extraordinary lives and accomplishments set an example of integrity and accomplishment. We can follow their example through our attitudes and actions each and every day.

Finally, it's Superbowl Weekend... so who ya got? Email me your Superbowl picks (send BEFORE the game starts at approximately 6 p.m. on Sunday) at jordan@nysenate.gov. I'll mention the name of my constituent with winning/closest pick (in terms of the overall score and winning team, of course) in next Week's Wrap. Below is my prediction for the outcome of Superbowl LV on Sunday (for the record, I was rooting for the Pittsburgh Steelers since I originally hail from Pennsylvania and my poor Eagles didn't have a chance).

Bucs: 31

Chiefs: 28

Best of luck to both teams and be sure to enjoy the game safely!

As always, I want to hear from YOU. If you have a comment, question, or concern, please email me at jordan@mysenate.gov or call my office at **(518) 371-2751**. Thank you for reading and subscribing to my Weekly Wrap. It's an honor and a privilege serving you!

– **Senator Daphne Jordan, 43rd District**

Fighting for transparency into NY's mishandling of the COVID-19 crisis in our nursing homes

My Senate colleagues and I will not back down on our efforts to ensure answers, accountability, and transparency. On Friday, we called for an immediate update on the inquiry by the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice into New York State's mishandling of the COVID-19 crisis in our nursing homes. Our recent letter is pictured below.



January 29, 2021

Re: Investigation into COVID-19 New York Nursing Homes Statistics

Dear Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Members of the New York State Congressional Delegation:

As you know, this week, the New York State Attorney General released a scathing report entitled, '*Nursing Home Response to COVID-19 Pandemic*.' According to the report, the New York State Department of Health (DOH) may have undercounted the number of nursing home fatalities resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic by over 50%. The fact that we are more than 10 months out from the start of the Governor Andrew Cuomo's declared State of Emergency for the pandemic and we do not have a definitive answer to the question of how many residents perished from COVID-19 in these facilities is wholly unacceptable, and DOH has made it abundantly clear that it has no intention of sharing this information willingly. In light of this resistance and lack of transparency from DOH and the Executive, we respectfully request an immediate update on the inquiry by the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice into New York State's handling of the COVID-19 crisis in our nursing homes.

Despite knowing that the elderly were among the most susceptible to complications resulting from the virus and the risk of rapid transmission in congregate settings, DOH issued guidance on March 25, 2020, providing that "[n]o resident shall be denied re-admission or admission to the [nursing home] solely based on a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of COVID-19," as well as prohibiting nursing homes from requiring medically stable hospitalized residents to be tested for COVID-19 prior to their admission or re-admission. Following the outcry of public officials, nursing home staff and loved ones, DOH rescinded the guidance in May, but not before more than 6,000 patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 were admitted into a nursing home. This policy, as well as others, jeopardized vulnerable nursing home residents, but we are still without complete knowledge of the full extent of the toll the virus took on these residents.

In a letter to Governor Cuomo dated August 26, 2020, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice requested information on this issue, specifically requesting statistics regarding the number of nursing home residents who contracted the virus, regardless of where it was contracted, and the number of residents who died of COVID-19 in a nursing home or any other location after being transferred from the nursing home. As we are sure you know, New York State is the only state that restricts its nursing home fatality count to individuals who died while still in the nursing home—excluding those who contracted the virus in the nursing home but passed away in another facility such as a hospital. This obfuscation of the data allowed the Governor to claim that New York State was 46th in the nation in nursing home COVID-19 deaths relative to total COVID-19 deaths in the state. The Civil Rights Division expanded their inquiry into the reported statistics from New York State in late October; given the distressing report from the New York Attorney General, an update on this matter is all the more urgent.

We commend the New York State Attorney General for putting politics aside and prioritizing the health and safety of vulnerable New Yorkers by shedding light on the crisis that took place in these facilities. We are far

past the time when New Yorkers deserved and needed answers to these tough, but simple questions. Last July, DOH issued a report on the issue, "[i]n an effort to learn for the future from the data now available from the earliest days of the first in a century pandemic." This report effectively absolved DOH of any mishandling of the crisis, but the Department refused—and to this day, continues to refuse—to share the underlying data used to generate the report despite the Department's own assertion that this information could be used to "learn for the future" in combating the virus. The move only further highlighted the need for an independent, non-partisan investigation into the matter.

Following the report, the Health Commissioner testified in a joint hearing by the New York State Legislature on August 3rd, where the Commissioner was repeatedly pressed for answers regarding reported statistics on nursing home fatalities and promised to release this critically important data. As a follow-up to the hearing, the Chairs of the New York State Senate Standing Committees on Health, Investigations and Government Operations, and Aging, as well as the Administrative Regulatory Review Commission, sent DOH a letter on August 20 with questions from Members of the legislature, including a request for the full breakdown of deaths in long term care residential settings. The letter requested a response within three weeks, however it has been over five months since that letter and these questions remain unanswered.

Given DOH's lack of response to lawmakers, it is no surprise that the state has also fought and delayed turning over information on nursing home fatality statistics from outside organizations. Media outlets including the *Associated Press* and *Times Union*, and independent organizations including the Empire Center for Public Policy, have repeatedly attempted to obtain information through Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests, but have been stonewalled every step of the way. In times of crises, transparency is all the more essential, and state lawmakers, advocates for nursing homes residents and others are being denied the critical opportunity to provide a more active role in protecting vulnerable New Yorkers based on what should be a full and clear account of what transpired in our state. It is abundantly clear that the state will delay and block the release of this vital information for as long as it can, and each day the public is kept in the dark on this issue puts more lives at risk.

We respectfully ask that you work with the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice to ensure New Yorkers are provided with an immediate update on their investigation, and if information-sharing is still being denied by DOH, we ask that you use all the authority available to you as Members of the United States Congress to elicit this critical information.

We sincerely appreciate your attention to this urgent matter, and we look forward to working together to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable New Yorkers and those who care for them.

Sincerely,



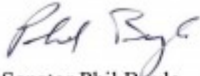
Senator Sue Serino
41st District



Senator Robert G. Ort
62nd District



Senator Fred Akshar
52nd District



Senator Phil Boyle
4th District



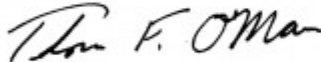
Senator Joseph A. Griffo
47th District



Senator Daphne Jordan
43rd District



Senator Mike Martucci
42nd District



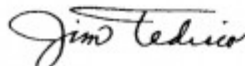
Senator Thomas F. O'Mara
58th District



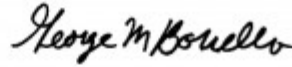
Senator Anthony H. Palumbo
1st District



Senator Patty Ritchie
48th District



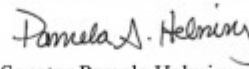
Senator James Tedisco
49th District



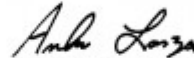
Senator George M. Borrello
57th District



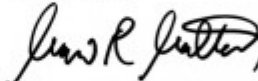
Senator Patrick M. Gallivan
59th District



Senator Pamela Helming
54th District



Senator Andrew J. Lanza
24th District



Senator Mario R. Mattera
2nd District



Senator Peter Oberacker
51st District



Senator Edward A. Rath III
61st District

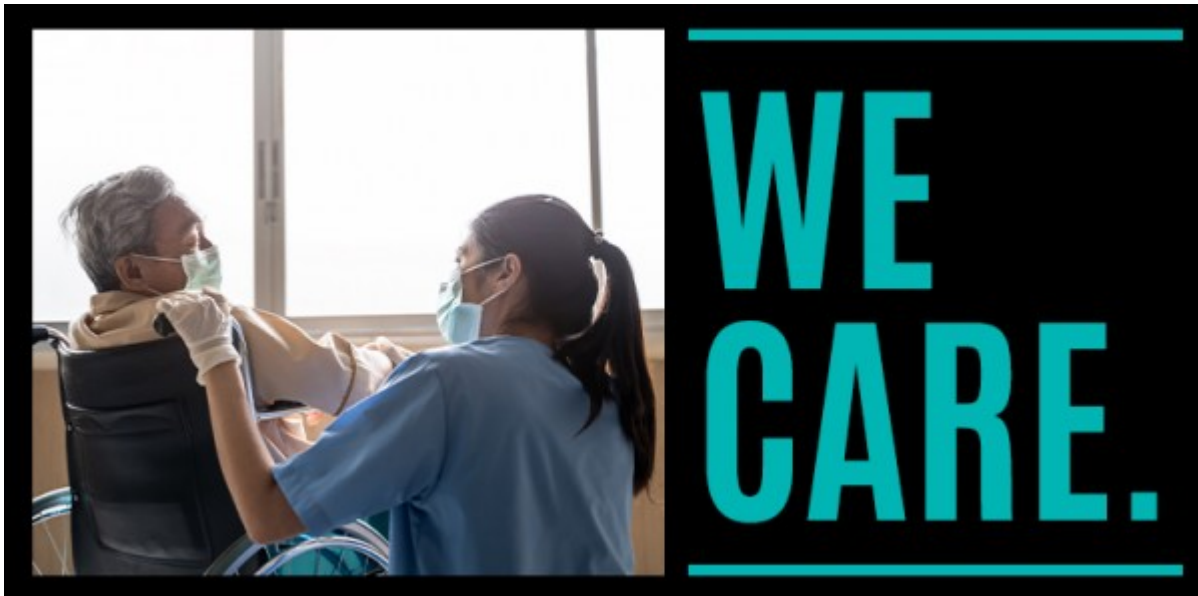


Senator Daniel G. Stec
45th District



Senator Alexis Weik
3rd District

Continuing to fight for our seniors



The Attorney General's report on the Governor and Department of Health deliberately undercounting the number of deaths in nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic by as much as 50 percent was disturbing and demands action. In addition, the report's finding that the Governor and DOH also left nursing homes understaffed and undersupplied with PPE, leading to a tragedy that claimed the lives of 13,000 of our state's seniors, also requires a strong response from the state legislature. It's clear that this disaster is a result of the Governor's Executive Order that forced COVID-positive seniors back into nursing homes, where unequipped staff and vulnerable seniors were exposed to this awful virus.

New Yorkers must have answers. They must have accountability. They must have the truth.

The only way that can happen is if the Senate uses its full powers and conducts a real investigation. That means using its power of subpoena to gather evidence and call state officials to testify under oath.

As the Senate Health Committee prepares to meet in the coming weeks, Senate Democrats are trying to dodge this shocking failure of leadership. It's inexplicable, but when given the opportunity to assert itself and use constitutionally granted powers, Senate Democrats are staying silent.

On Wednesday, my Senate Republican colleagues and I held a press conference calling on the Senate to use these abilities and hold the Governor and Department of Health accountable for the decisions and cover-ups that have cost lives and put families in anguish.

This cannot wait. For the sake of our deceased seniors, their loved ones and the nursing home staff that have worked tirelessly throughout this pandemic, we must have a full investigation. I will not stop fighting to make that happen.

Local Korean War hero turns 89 years YOUNG



I was happy to be a part of Saturday night's parade honoring Paul O'Keefe's 89th birthday! Mr. O'Keefe is a Korean War veteran who served with the 24th Infantry Division. He was of the first U.S. soldiers called to South Korea. The 24th Division held off North Korean forces, allowing United Nations forces to build up their strength. Of the 24th division, there were 3,735 killed in action and 7,395 wounded during the war.

Mr. O'Keefe has been a Chaplain for the Hempstreet Fire Department for more than 17 years and is the Commander of the Korean War Veterans Association, Adirondack Chapter.

Thank you, Mr. O'Keefe, for your incredible service to this country, and happy birthday!

Calling for answers regarding the Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center

My office was recently contacted by two of my Columbia County constituents who shared their serious, detailed concerns about the health, safety, and lives of residents at the Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center. The situation was described as a crisis, with serious concerns about a dire, deadly COVID-19 outbreak within the facility, chronic understaffing (as many of the facility staff reportedly had tested positive for COVID-19), and overall poor conditions in terms of room cleanliness (some rooms were reportedly infested with ants, garbage was overflowing), and responsiveness to inquiries from loved ones. My office conferred with the local public health authority who confirmed many of the concerns and shared that they had received numerous complaints from family members with loved ones at the facility.

My office IMMEDIATELY contacted the facility to raise all of these important, specific concerns and also alerted the State Department of Health to undertake an IMMEDIATE, unannounced on-site inspection and investigation. I wrote the State DOH (my letter is attached with this post) and also made repeated calls. State DOH did visit the facility as I requested. I also urged a full review of the situation at the facility (staffing levels, the rampant spread of COVID-19 among residents, cleanliness of rooms, the inability of family members to make timely contact with, and check-in on, their loved ones) to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of residents. I called on the State DOH to IMMEDIATELY examine the specific concerns raised by my constituents and family members of facility residents. I'll continue carefully monitoring this situation.

The State Department of Health did, in fact, visit and I had a zoom meeting this week with the facility. Positive news came out of the meeting in that the number of COVID-19 positive cases has dropped considerably after giving residents a monoclonal antibody infusion.

They are rectifying staffing issues, interviewing to hire a new full-time administrator, and changing their phone system so that every resident has an outside line next to their bed and more staff to answer the facility phone.

Protecting my Columbia County residents at this facility is a top priority! I'll continue closely monitoring this situation and keep calling for health authorities to intervene. If you have concerns about Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, please email me at jordan@nysenate.gov and I will be in contact with State DOH. I'll continue urging that the agency take ALL necessary actions to protect the health, safety, well-being, and lives of residents at the facility. My letter is pictured below.

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
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AGRICULTURE
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VETERANS, HOMELAND SECURITY AND
MILITARY AFFAIRS

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NEW YORK
STATE
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SENATOR DAPHNE JORDAN
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January 22, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Howard Zucker, M.D.
Commissioner, New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

I write to convey my serious concerns for the health, safety, well-being, and very lives of Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center residents who are at heightened, continuous risk of COVID-19 exposure. **As the State Senator representing Columbia County, I urge the State to IMMEDIATELY intervene with this dangerous, deadly, and rapidly deteriorating situation.**

Yesterday, two of my Columbia County constituents requested my intervention with this urgent matter as the facility appears to be in crisis and completely overwhelmed from COVID-19 and plagued with mismanagement. This afternoon, my office spoke with the local health authority who corroborated many of the circumstances you will see listed on the following page. **The local public health authority affirmed that the situation at the Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center is spiraling out of control due to insufficient staffing and an inability to control a severe, ongoing COVID-19 outbreak within the facility that has tragically claimed multiple lives.**

My office was informed that, as of today, Columbia County has recorded 69 COVID-19 cases among residents at Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center and 25 COVID-19 cases among facility staff. It is my understanding that the facility's capacity is 120 residents, so more than half of the residents are presently infected with COVID-19, which is deeply troubling.

After reading the facts outlined below, I'm confident you will agree that the situation at Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center has reached crisis levels and that the State Department of Health must **IMMEDIATELY** intervene by undertaking the following action steps:

- 1. Conduct an immediate unannounced on-site inspection to officially document unsafe conditions for facility residents and an inadequate staffing ratio;**
- 2. Immediately provide additional support staff as the facility cannot properly serve or protect its residents; and**
- 3. Provide any necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and additional COVID-19 testing that the facility may require.**

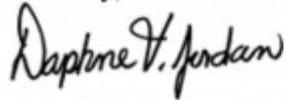
The State should also consider suspension of the facility's license if, after a thorough and fair investigation, it is found to have deliberately circumvented state health regulations or intentionally misled state health regulators.

The following are some of the specific details, many of which are now confirmed by the local health authority, regarding the dangerous, deteriorating, and deadly conditions happening **RIGHT NOW** at Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center:

- **The facility has a severe personnel shortfall due to numerous staff members testing positive for COVID-19;**
- **Many residents – 69 as of today, as per Columbia County – within the facility are sick with the deadly virus and unable to feed themselves. We know that at least two residents have passed away within the last two weeks and possibly many more;**
- **Housekeeping staff are unable to perform their duties and many rooms in the facility's COVID wing are filthy with food and drink spilled on the floor, garbage overflowing, and residents' rooms needing a thorough cleaning with some rooms even infested by ants;**
- **Calls from family members checking on loved ones go unanswered due to a lack of facility staff.**

Based on these facts, I believe that the situation within Ghent Rehabilitation and Nursing Center has reached crisis levels and requires an **IMMEDIATE** intervention from the State. Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Daphne Jordan
State Senator, 43rd District

Observing Black History Month



February is Black History Month. While we should always remember the tremendous contributions that Black men and women have made and continue to make to our history and culture, this is an ideal time to acknowledge those achievements and express our appreciation.

Washington County vaccine distribution update

The following message is from the Washington County Department of Public Safety:



WASHINGTON COUNTY UPDATES VACCINE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

Following receipt of our first allocations of the COVID-19 Vaccine over the last two weeks, our team coordinated outreach efforts with our First Responder agencies and Office for the Aging & Disabilities Resource Center, Community Senior Groups and Leaders in an effort to reach many of those eligible populations directly as we kicked-off our distribution process. When we launched our initial coordinated communications campaigns within those groups, we also launched a Vaccine Information Help Line to help accommodate what is a significant need for those in our county without internet to have access to local vaccine event information. Our help line, (active when POD events are open for registration), is composed of team members of dedicated personnel from our Washington County, NY Office for Aging & Disabilities Resource Center, Social Services, Public Health and Public Safety

Departments. Additionally, our Help Line staff developed a stand-by list from overflow calls (which is required for all POD events) for emergency call-ins and cancellations to ensure every dose makes it into an eligible arm!

#VACCINATEWASHINGTONCOUNTY

To date, our Washington County, NY Public Health Department and Washington County EMS Vaccination team members have been able to vaccinate 1,259 people with their first doses! The ability to continue dispensing the COVID-19 Vaccine to our communities is dependent on receiving vaccine supply from the state and subsequently the federal government. The vaccine supply we receive from the state comes along with direction in which eligible categories and populations it must be used for, the counties are not able to decide on our own or re-allocate use of vaccine to another category. It remains the goal of our Washington County Public Health team to vaccinate everyone in Washington County who is eligible and wants to be vaccinated. We understand there have been some challenges to the initial rollout of the vaccine nationwide, statewide and here locally in Washington County. As with any process, our team is always looking for ways in which we can identify areas to improve our own processes and systems for the many who rely on us all.

CHANGES TO THE COUNTY'S VACCINE DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

We're instituting a few changes to our open Point of Dispensing (POD) events and how the announcement and registration process will work, moving forward. For public POD events, we will announce the POD event and the eligible category the day prior to the registration opening on our Coronavirus Information site (at washingtoncountyny.gov/coronavirus), our Vaccine Information Hotline, in our daily e-newsletter (which is free and available for [sign-up](#) on our site above) and on our Public Health & Public Safety social media outlets – we'll also continue sending e-notifications to our local officials and media partners too! Announcing the POD event registration notice the day prior will allow those in the eligible groups for the event, more time to prepare to access the registration link, knowing when registration will open a bit ahead of time. Also, when registration for new events open, we will open the county's Vaccination Information Help Line (during business hours) to assist those without internet access to have the ability to register for open appointments as well (based on availability of accessible appointments).

I WANT TO BE VACCINATED, WHAT CAN I DO?

County Public Health is only one of the many options available for access to vaccination (and many of the others receive larger allocations of vaccine than the counties), we encourage everyone in our communities to ensure you explore every available option if you want to be vaccinated!

- Are you eligible? http://bit.ly/COVID19_AmIEligible (state sites)
- Check our site for updates: washingtoncountyny.gov/coronavirus
- No internet access? Call (518)746-2422 (*County events / info*)
- No internet access? Call (833)NYS-4VAX (*state run sites*)
- Check with your Healthcare Provider

- Check with local Pharmacies (65 and older)

LOOKING FORWARD

As we look forward, our plan includes continuing to deliver vaccine to every eligible member of our communities, including those in our senior and disabled housing communities, homebound and other difficult to reach populations. Our team of Public Health professionals have worked hard and dedicated much time and effort to ensure we have the framework in place to dispense vaccine, however, in order to accomplish our plan in its entirety, vaccine supply needs to increase and become regular to allow ample time for planning and coordination – additionally, counties need to be allowed to vaccinate all eligible categories. Please know and understand that the supply remains extremely limited and our ability to hold events and expand our distribution program all depend on that supply and the direction on allocation use we receive from the state. We look forward to continuing to work with our Washington County EMS Vaccination team, community healthcare partners, our neighbors at Warren County, NY Public Health and the NYSDOH - New York State Health Department to #VaccinateNY together!

THANK YOU to all of our community members for working with us through the challenges and vaccine roll out process, we look forward to continuing to vaccinate those eligible in our communities and working together to get #shotsinarms to help end the pandemic!

Senate Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs Committee



Long Island
State Veterans Home

AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY



Stony Brook Medicine

Presentation Overview

- ★ *State Veterans Home Overview*
- ★ *NYS Veterans Homes*
- ★ *Eligibility Requirements*
- ★ *State Veterans' Homes:
The Quality Advantage*
- ★ *State Veterans' Homes:
The Cost Advantage*
- ★ *VA Construction Grant*




Caring for America's Heroes



Before session on Monday morning, I had a meeting for the Veterans, Homeland Security, & Military Affairs Committee. I am happy to be working alongside some of my colleagues to advocate for our veterans!

American Heart Month



February is American Heart Month, an ideal time to focus on your cardiovascular health. The CDC is a wonderful resource for healthy lifestyle tips and advice. If you'd like to learn more, visit their website [here](#).

My legislation designating New York a “Purple Heart State” moves forward

New York

A Purple Heart State



HONORING THE HEROIC SACRIFICES THAT
OUR ARMED FORCES HAVE MADE TO
PROTECT OUR COUNTRY.

I was thrilled that my bipartisan legislation, Senate Bill S.2279, designating New York as a "Purple Heart State" passed unanimously during a meeting of the Senate Committee on Investigations and Government Operations (thank you to the Committee members for their strong support of my measure that also has broad, bipartisan support in the State Senate).

The Purple Heart is the oldest, and among the most venerated, American military decorations awarded in the name of the President to those wounded or killed while serving, on or after April 5, 1917, with the U.S. Military. Designating New York as a Purple Heart State is an important step to honor the heroic sacrifices that our armed forces have made to protect our country.

In my 43rd Senate District, there are 3 counties with the Purple Heart designation — Columbia, Saratoga, Rensselaer — plus 39 local municipalities for a total of 42. There also are 6 colleges within NYS, 6 trails as of 2019, and 15 counties statewide, that have the Purple Heart designation.

These localities and entities understand the importance of honoring America's brave heroes

with this designation, and they also recognize that such a designation ensures their locality is viewed as welcoming and appreciative of our courageous patriots who have served. By adopting this non-partisan designation on a statewide basis, our state can further demonstrate its appreciation for our Purple Heart Veterans. For more details on this initiative that I'm leading, email me at jordan@nysenate.gov. You can read more about my bill [here](#).

Serving as Floor Leader

It was my honor to serve as Floor Leader for two of our Senate Session days this week. Floor Leader is an important leadership role responsible for overseeing all floor activity on behalf of the Senate Republican Conference for Session. I'm pictured below serving in this leadership capacity.



Advocating for food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine

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January 13, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Howard Zucker, M.D.
Commissioner, New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza,
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

I write on an urgent matter concerning the timely distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff who continue providing an essential function during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As presently constituted, New York State's guidelines for Phase 1B of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution specify that individuals working (paid or unpaid) in a homeless shelter where sleeping, bathing, or eating accommodations must be shared by individuals and families who are not part of the same household, in a position where there is potential for interaction with shelter residents are now eligible to schedule an appointment for vaccination. However, this designation would appear to exclude individuals working in food pantries or soup kitchens that are not located within homeless shelters.

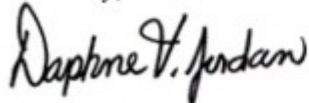
Accordingly, I am respectfully requesting that the state immediately provide a waiver, or revise its guidelines, so food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff who do not work in homeless shelters can be deemed essential and thus be eligible to immediately schedule a COVID-19 vaccination appointment.

Workers at food pantries and soup kitchens regularly interact with some of our communities' most vulnerable populations. These dedicated workers have been on the job providing an essential service and meeting the growing nutritional needs of our fellow New Yorkers since the onset of the Coronavirus outbreak.

As a matter of basic fairness, and in recognition of their faithful, selfless service, the state should immediately include food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff as essential workers in New York's Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccination distribution so they may begin scheduling vaccination appointments at the earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Daphne Jordan
State Senator, 43rd District

Back on January 13, I wrote a letter to Governor Cuomo and DOH Commissioner Zucker regarding the urgent matter of vaccinating food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff. These dedicated workers have been on the job providing an essential service and helping some of the communities' most vulnerable populations since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. I continue to advocate for the immediate eligibility of our food pantry and soup kitchen workers. I'm sharing my letter (pictured above) in this week's Wrap as this effort to vaccinate food pantry workers and soup kitchen staff continues. You can view a Spectrum News story on this issue [by clicking the link here](#).

Taking part in Farm Advocacy Day



This week I also took part in Farm Advocacy Day. I met with the Alliance for NY Farmland after attending their virtual Farmer Appreciation Breakfast and discussed policies to protect farmland and bring a new generation of farmers onto the land. I also met with members of the NY Farm Viability Institute whose mission is to help farmers become more profitable through a farmer-driven grant making process connecting farmer-identified needs to practical research and education solutions. Farming is the backbone of our economy and I'm proud to support our hard-working family farmers and agricultural sector that are so important to our economy and our way of life!

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