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Subject: Weekly Wrap: Re-open, Reset plan, advocating to protect nursing home residents, promoting Lyme disease awareness & MORE



Dear Friend:

Friday's here – and so is the afternoon delivery of my Weekly Wrap! My latest edition for this week ending May 8 contains important news about the “Re-open, Reset” plan I’m advancing to help get folks back to work and re-open – and reset – our state and our economy in a safe, sensible, and regional manner. Also in this week’s wrap, you’ll find more details about my advocacy to protect nursing home residents and my accompanying call for an independent investigation of the state’s handling of COVID-19 as it relates to nursing homes. Also, a special update regarding today’s COVID-19 testing site media availability in Rensselaer County at Hudson Valley Community College.

This Weekly Wrap also features some of the important monthly designations for May intended to raise awareness about our military heroes, Lyme disease, and mental health. Also, you’ll see another salute to some of the terrific Hometown Heroes for the 43rd Senate District whose hard work, compassion, and leadership are making a genuine difference every day during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Let’s continue being positive and keep moving forward to the day when New York State can re-open and we can all return to doing what we love with the people we love. Thank you for reading and have a great weekend!

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

State Department of Labor Unemployment Backlog Update

Unfortunately, just like the past several weeks, the State Department of Labor's (DOL) ongoing failure to respond to, and successfully process, a growing backlog of unemployment claims remains a MAJOR challenge as unemployment in New York State continues to grow. This is, by far, the number one issue that constituents across the 43rd Senate District are contacting my office about.

My office continues to be in regular contact with DOL every day and keeps working hard to help submit claims and advocate for the backlog of cases to be cleared. Call my district office at (518) 371-2751 if you need assistance in filing an unemployment claim. My staff and I will continue doing everything we can to help you!

“Re-open, Reset” Plan Rollout



This week, my Senate Republican colleagues and I took the next step in our ongoing efforts to re-open New York State in a safe, sensible, regional manner.

We issued a press release outlining some of the priorities and principles of our new “Re-open, Reset” plan to intended to help get folks back to work and re-open, reset, and revitalize our economy.

More details about our Re-open, Reset plan is directly below in a press release:

“Re-Open, Reset” Plan to Help New York

Senator Daphne Jordan (R,C,I-Halfmoon) State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda), and their Senate Republican colleagues, Sen. Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, Sen. Rich Funke, Sen. Tom O'Mara, Sen. George Borrello, Sen. Patrick Gallivan, Sen. Pam Helming, and Sen. Fred Akshar rolled out an economic "Re-open, Reset" Plan for Upstate and Western New York to coincide with the virus's regression.

The “Re-open, Reset” policy consists of four distinct elements:

- Re-open businesses in a safe and pragmatic fashion;
- Reduce government control over businesses;
- Reform government to help businesses and taxpayers; and
- Revitalize our economy and local communities.

Sen. Daphne Jordan said, “Re-opening New York’s economy in a smart, sensible, regional, and safe business-to-business approach should be ‘job one’ in terms of getting folks back to work and helping our struggling small businesses. I’m proud to have led the important effort to get residential and commercial construction moving again, and I continue calling for the state to recognize the many businesses that can and should reopen. In many cases, it may be far safer to shop in our local small businesses that have safety plans than the big box stores that have much more foot traffic. I agree with my good friend Senator Ortt that it’s not nearly enough to simply ‘un-pause’ businesses when our state is hemorrhaging jobs, Albany is awash in red ink, and over a million New Yorkers are out of work.

We must jumpstart our economy by re-opening businesses safely, reducing government control over job creators, reforming government bureaucracy to help businesses and taxpayers, and revitalize our economy and communities. This is our mission and it's critical to resetting New York State and successfully turning the page on this economic crisis.”

Senator Ortt challenged policymakers to go beyond simply returning to work, even as he noted the importance of reopening certain segments of the economy.

Sen. Rob Ortt said, “The COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed incalculable costs upon our country – the financial toll surpassed only by the human toll. As we put the pieces back together, it is incumbent upon elected officials to address the short-term and long-term challenges we face. In this great challenge, we have the unique opportunity to rethink, retool, and reboot our economy. While others talk about "un-pausing," I'm talking about resetting. We didn't pause the economy, we unplugged it. And just as we have assumed a war footing to combat the virus, we will need to assume the same stance to resuscitate and rebuild our economy.

Over the last week, Gov. Cuomo has been receptive to reopening along regional lines, stepping away from the one-size-fits approach of earlier in the pandemic. The Governor heeded calls from Senate and Assembly legislators who have called for a regional approach to reopening with individual assessments of specific regions COVID-19 cases, and for businesses to reopen while accounting for the economic viability and potential risk of infection.

The Senators called for New York State to align the businesses on Empire State Development’s essential list with that of the Federal government’s essential businesses list. By aligning, operations such as construction, sportsmen stores, manufacturing, and other low-risk occupations would be allowed to re-open. This will allow limited New York residents to safely return to work – helping workers, small businesses, and a state unemployment system stretched to its financial and functional limits.

The CDC’s “Opening Up America Again” Plan offers strict guidance for governors and legislators across the U.S. to utilize for the re-opening of the economy in phases as public health milestones are met. The Senators announced that they will follow up on the initial phase to lay out additional elements of the Re-open, Reset Plan pertaining to “reduce, reform, and revitalize” in the coming weeks.

Advocating to Protect Nursing Home Residents



The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded all of us that there is nothing more important than protecting the health and well-being of our loved ones. That's why earlier this week I called for an independent investigation into the state's response to the tragedy that has been unfolding in state regulated nursing homes.

New York State has just disclosed more than 1,700 previously undisclosed COVID-related deaths at nursing homes and adult care facilities, bringing the death toll in these facilities to nearly 5,000 since March 1. In the wake of these shocking numbers, the state is facing new scrutiny over Governor Cuomo and his Department of Health's decision to mandate that nursing homes admit COVID-19 positive patients into their facilities.

The state, under fire for nursing home deaths, launched an investigation to be conducted by the state's Attorney General and the Department of Health, even though the Department of Health is directly involved in creating directives. That's why an independent investigation is crucial. In addition, it is important to note that nursing homes throughout the state have faced budget cuts, are understaffed, and lack PPE.

In addition to an independent investigation, my Senate Republican colleagues and I are calling for an immediate change in policy to create regionally based specialty long-term care facilities for COVID positive nursing home residents.

We know that allowing COVID into a nursing home is an invitation for it to

spread, and we need to make sure that we take necessary steps to protect residents. We also believe that an independent investigation into the state's actions is warranted to make sure that the tragic deaths at these nursing homes never occur again.

Our nursing homes, their staff, and their residents, who are really a family, are on the absolute frontlines of this pandemic and they need our strong and enduring support. I will fight to make sure they always receive that support. More details on this critical issue are available at this linked story: <https://time.com/5832141/new-york-nursing-home-death-toll/>.

COVID-19 Testing Site at Hudson Valley Community College





Today, Friday, May 8, I proudly joined Rensselaer County Executive Steve McLaughlin, Assemblyman Jake Ashby, Rensselaer County Legislature Chairman and Rensselaer City Mayor Michael Stammel, and Hudson Valley Community College President Dr. Roger Ramsammy for the first day of testing at the second COVID-19 test site for Rensselaer County at Hudson Valley Community College.

As noted on Rensselaer County's Facebook page, every member of the County's delegation to the State Legislature, all Mayors and Supervisors from the 22 municipalities in the County, and all members of the County Legislature signed letters of support for the County to get test sites.

Testing continues at the Hudson Valley site today through 4 p.m. and resumes Monday, continuing through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Appointments are required. Call 1-800-245-4245 to make an appointment.

I'm proud to have been part of this team successfully led by Rensselaer County Executive Steve McLaughlin that helped secure this much-needed testing. Rensselaer County Executive Steve McLaughlin always advocates and delivers for the health, safety, and wellbeing of Rensselaer County families!

Military Appreciation Month



The month of May is recognized as “National Military Appreciation Month.” This special observance is meant to raise awareness and encourage celebration and appreciation of those who serve, and have served, in the armed forces for our country. This month is also meant to show our appreciation for the families of servicewomen and servicemen, who tirelessly stand by and support their serving relative. Thank you to all who serve, and have served, our grateful nation!

Lyme Disease Awareness Month



May is also observed as “Lyme Disease Awareness Month.” While all New Yorkers have been focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s vitally important to remember that Lyme and other tick-borne illnesses continue to be major concerns throughout our state. To learn more about symptoms and steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones, visit <https://www.lymedisease.org/get-involved/take-action/lyme-awareness-month/>.

Mental Health Awareness Month



The past few months have been emotionally challenging for every New Yorker. And for those who were already struggling with mental illness, this time has been especially difficult. If you or a loved one are currently struggling to cope, you are not alone. May is recognized as “Mental Health Month” and this year's theme is “Tools 2 Thrive.” Learn more about what you can do to take care of your mental wellness by visiting this site: <https://www.mhanational.org/mental-health-month>.

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National Nurses Week



May 6, through May 12 (the birthday of Florence Nightingale), marks "National Nurses Week," when we all share our thanks and praise for our OUTSTANDING and COURAGEOUS nurses who've been on the job non-stop providing comfort and care to our fellow New Yorkers during the COVID-19 pandemic. THANK YOU to all our nurses serving on the frontlines of this fight. You are true heroes and we are forever grateful for your service, professionalism, and dedication!

Saluting More Hometown Heroes for 43rd Senate District



With so many individuals, businesses, and organizations continuing to step up and help during the COVID-19 outbreak, it's time for the latest edition of my Hometown Heroes for the 43rd Senate District.

Special thanks and recognition to the heroes being recognized: New York State Trooper Mark Borden; Ginsberg's Foods; Cooper's Daughter Spirits at Olde York Farm; Northern Columbia & Philmont Rotary; Halfmoon Sandwich & Salad Shoppe; Shenendehowa Rotary Club and Rensselaer County Meals on

Wheels. The goodwill, good works, community kindness, and local leadership you've exhibited are among the many reasons why New York's at its best when things are hardest. You're all true Hometown Heroes for our 43rd Senate District and I'm proud to salute you!

New York State Trooper Mark Borden

New York State Trooper Mark Borden responded to a home in Halfmoon for a woman in labor, saving the life of the newborn. When he arrived, he found that the woman had given birth, and was struggling to hold the newborn. Trooper Borden found that the baby girl was in distress and not breathing. He helped the child expel the fluid that had built up in the airway and after a few moments she let out a welcome cry. Thankfully, State Police say the baby and her mother are doing fine.

Ginsberg Foods, Hudson

Ginsberg Foods donated a refrigerated truck for Columbia Memorial Health Food Services Department to utilize during the pandemic to help ensure that their food stays fresh for meals during this difficult time.

Cooper's Daughter Spirits at Olde York Farm, Claverack

Cooper's Daughter Spirits at Olde York Farm Columbia Memorial Health made a wonderful donation of over 500 hand sanitizers to Columbia Memorial Health. Hand sanitizer is in such high demand during this outbreak, this generous donation is incredibly helpful.

Northern Columbia & Philmont Rotary, Philmont

The Northern Columbia and Philmont Rotary made a generous donation of 4,500 surgical masks to Columbia Memorial Health. Protective gear is vital for all our dedicated frontline healthcare workers.

Halfmoon Sandwich and Salad Shoppe, Halfmoon

Halfmoon Sandwich and Salad Shoppe provided masks for free, offering homemade masks to anyone who still needs one, one per person please, while supplies last. Donations are appreciated and will be used to help single mothers affected by COVID-19. Halfmoon Sandwich and Salad Shoppe also partnered with Exit 9 Wine & Liquor Warehouse to provide meals to Saratoga County Emergency Services and the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department.

Shenendehowa Rotary Club

The Shenendehowa Rotary Club delivered delicious dinners to Clifton Park & Halfmoon EMS personnel who have been working long hours and been on the job throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rensselaer County Meals on Wheels

On Monday, April 27, the Rensselaer County Meals on Wheels program delivered over 1,500 meals, a big increase from the 450 delivered before the COVID-19 outbreak. When the outbreak hit, Rensselaer County Executive Steve McLaughlin expanded the program to allow all seniors age 60+ to get nutritious meals. Rensselaer County Department for the Aging Commissioner Carol Rosbozom, her team, and many local volunteers have worked hard on this important mission.

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