

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE
CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME AND
CORRECTION

COMMITTEES
CODES
LABOR

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE



SENATOR
FREDERICK J. AKSHAR II
52ND SENATE DISTRICT

PLEASE RESPOND TO:
□ **ALBANY OFFICE:**
ROOM 608
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
518-455-2677

□ **DISTRICT OFFICE:**
BINGHAMTON STATE OFFICE BLDG.
44 HAWLEY STREET, STE. 1607
BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK 13901
607-773-8771

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Governor Cuomo:

First, let us convey our continued appreciation for the hard work you and your team are doing during this public health crisis. Your daily briefings have been informative and have benefited our collective constituency.

In a recent interview, we were concerned by your response when asked about Upstate county governments urging downstate residents to not travel to Upstate communities during this pandemic. You stated: "I don't like it socially or culturally, I don't like what it says of us as one state." In our humble opinion, that statement is not based on facts nor on data, it's based on feeling, which is the exact opposite approach that you've publicly championed in dealing with this crisis. Upstate counties have been reiterating your message to "Stay Home, Stop the Spread and Save Lives."

We have heard from many of our constituents that there's been a disproportionate amount of travel from areas severely impacted by COVID-19 to our Upstate communities. As you and health experts you've relied on have said, we must be proactive in stopping the spread of this virus and minimizing the strain on our healthcare system. Why should non-essential mass transit between cities be exempt from our efforts?

To be clear, we're not talking about those in hospitals, their families, or health care and EMS personnel. We are speaking specifically to those who simply want a "safe" area to ride out this pandemic. We are not suggesting that you should shut down the highways or barricade New York City. Our suggestion is to reiterate your message to Stay Home, Stop the Spread and Save Lives and help enforce the Executive Orders you've put forth. If you won't address this issue, at least consider giving localities the power to shut down busses, hospitality bookings and limit travel to their counties.

This isn't about shuttering our communities to our fellow New Yorkers, this is about stopping the spread of a highly communicable disease beyond the most severely affected areas. It's about preventing our health care systems from being overwhelmed with cases. The state and the federal government have done a remarkable job of setting up beds and providing resources to the hardest hit areas of the state and every effort should be made to encourage residents to remain in those areas.

The message must be clear: no one from any part of the state should be engaging in non-essential travel right now. Every New Yorker needs to do their part to flatten the curve and take the pressure off our increasingly overwhelmed health care system.

Stay healthy, wishing you and your team all the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred".

Frederick J. Akshar II
52nd Senate District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JTG".

Jason T. Garnar
Broome County Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martha Sauerbrey".

Martha Sauerbrey
Tioga County Legislative Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan J Reynolds".

Daniel J. Reynolds
Chairman, Broome County Legislature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard C David".

Richard C. David
Mayor of Binghamton