

THE SENATE



STATE OF NEW YORK

June 3, 2020

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

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I write to share with you the numerous concerns that have been brought to my attention by countless members of the professional service industry regarding the extensive guidelines set forth for reopening for hair salons and barbershops. While I certainly respect the immense pressure that the state is under to make quick decisions about how best to safely reopen, it seems as though those who will be directly impacted by established guidelines are continuously left out of the conversation. As a result, the guidelines set arbitrary mandates that appear to miss the mark when it comes to promoting public health or allowing them to effectively operate.

As you know, the newest guidelines require all hair salon and barbershop employees who interact with customers to be tested for COVID-19 once every 14 days, regardless of whether they are symptomatic or have come into contact with anyone who is COVID-positive. As many in this industry rightly point out, despite the fact that the state guidelines will now require them to wear almost as much PPE as many medical professionals, they are the only industry slated to open in 'Phase Two' that appears to be subject to a testing requirement of this magnitude. They rightly point out that many others—including medical professionals—who come in close regular contact with individuals do not have to abide by any such requirement. For many in my community, the closest free testing sites are a 40-minute drive. Worse, my office has taken calls from residents who have waited as long as 10 days to receive their test results, and many simply receive a phone call providing their results and are not provided with any certificate of the kind you indicated customers should ask to see. While we should be making every effort to promote testing, setting arbitrary mandates on select industries as we reopen hardly seems fair or effective, and will undoubtedly have a disproportionate negative impact on the smallest businesses and low-income earners.

Moreover, the new guidelines require these workers to go above and beyond the standard face-covering mandate by requiring them to wear both a facemask and a face shield. While many of these employees I have spoken too would welcome the opportunity to wear a face shield, the mandate to wear both goes beyond even what those working in our medical facilities are required to do. Worse, like most PPE, these workers have expressed great concern about their ability to procure any appropriate face shields, let alone enough for their

entire teams. Unless the state plans to provide these, free of charge before opening day, this seems like yet another guideline that will disproportionately hurt the smallest and most vulnerable of these businesses.

Additionally, many have expressed confusion as to why they are mandated to subject their employees to a regular health screening assessment (e.g., questionnaire, temperature check) but are expressly prohibited from mandating that their customers undergo the same screening before entering their place of employment.

This industry in particular has significant sanitization and safety training in order to operate under the best of circumstances. Now, they have already put that training to good use and have made significant investments to reconfigure their spaces in order to operate safely. These new guidelines have left many wondering whether it is even safe for their industry to reopen during Phase Two and has caused even more stress and frustration in an already uncertain time.

While public health must always be our top priority, now we need to be doing all that we can to empower our businesses to safely reopen. We should not be creating any more obstacles for them beyond what has been proven to be necessary to preserve public health. I urge you to take a hard look at these guidelines, consult directly with industry leaders across the state, and reevaluate the mandates that will disproportionately hurt a sector driven by so many hard-working New Yorkers.

I thank you for your time and consideration. If you need additional information, or need assistance connecting with these business owners and employees, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Senator Sue Serino
41st District



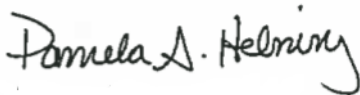
Senator George M. Borrello
57th District



Senator Rich Funke
55th District



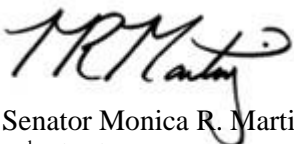
Senator Patrick M. Gallivan
59th District



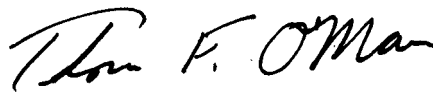
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Senator Chris Jacobs
60th District



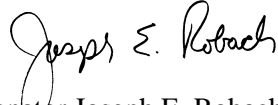
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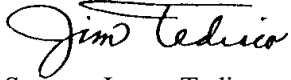
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48th District



Senator Joseph E. Robach
56th District



Senator James Tedisco
49th District