

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
ON RURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
RACING, GAMING AND WAGERING

January 19, 2021

SENATOR
PAMELA A. HELMING
54TH DISTRICT

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As State Senator, I have the privilege to represent many talented student performers and musicians. They participate in chorus, theatrical productions, band, orchestra and other activities that allow them to share their talent and passion with our community.

These extracurricular activities provide an important outlet for young people. The skills and character they build are key to their intellectual and emotional development. This is especially important during this national pandemic due to the fact that many students have experienced an unprecedented amount of isolation.

Isolation is a concern for students' parents, local educators and mental health professionals. Involvement in extracurricular activities helps keep students engaged both academically and socially. In fact, involvement in music and performance arts has been shown to improve educational and social outcomes long term for students, and in many cases is key to the development of their creativity.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have released guidance for the safe reopening of musical and theatrical programs. However, they remain paused here in New York State, even as many schools have reopened. There has been much discussion regarding the reopening of high school sports and students who participate in musical and theatrical activities deserve the same consideration.

I respectfully request that your administration and the New York State Department of Health work with student performers and musicians, superintendents and teachers to develop guidance that will allow these activities to resume. We have a duty and responsibility as a state to ensure that our students have access to these important opportunities.

Students, teachers and school administrators are ready and willing to follow all safety guidance. Safety is everyone's top priority and I believe that by working together we can resume many of these activities. They are willing to rise to the challenge, but cannot do so without the state's partnership.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If I can provide further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P. Helming'.

Pamela A. Helming
Senator, 54th District

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