

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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## **Senator Helming Continues to Urge State to Expand Free COVID-19 Testing**

Senator Helming continues to call on the state to expand access to free COVID-19 testing in the 54th District as cases increase in the Finger Lakes and Central New York regions.

“Expanding testing is critical to bring the pandemic under control and begin our economic recovery,” said Senator Helming. “We need greater access to permanent testing, particularly in our rural communities, to reopen businesses, get people back to work, and keep children in school.”

According to data released by the state on December 21, the Finger Lakes and Central New York regions had the highest and second highest rates, respectively, of COVID-19 patients as a percent of the region’s population. The Finger Lakes and Central New York ranked second and fourth, respectively, in the 7-day average percentage of positive test results. Senator Helming’s district covers communities in both of these regions.

“I have worked with our counties to ensure that they receive the testing supplies they need from the state, but their resources to perform regular testing are limited,” said Senator Helming. “For most people in my district, the nearest free state testing site is an hour or more away. The state can best support our rural communities by expanding access to free testing.”

Senator Helming also said she is working to ensure that the state’s vaccine distribution plans include the needs of rural communities in the district.

“The state has said it will work to ensure an equitable distribution of the vaccine across the state,” said Senator Helming. “I will work to make sure our rural communities get the supplies and resources they need so that every person who wants and needs the vaccine can get it.”

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*Senator Helming represents the 54th Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, visit Senator Helming’s website at [helming.nysenate.gov](http://helming.nysenate.gov) or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook and Twitter.*