



WILL BARCLAY
Minority Leader

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

June 4, 2020

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

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write today in support of allowing schools in New York State to host graduation ceremonies for this year's graduates, provided that safety precautions are implemented.

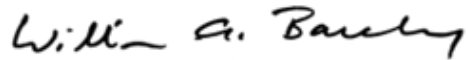
This pandemic has understandably upended the lives of all New Yorkers. Millions have changed their behaviors and made great sacrifices to help bend the curve of the virus. These decisions were not made lightly, and the health and safety of our citizens is of paramount importance. The members of the Assembly Minority Conference are particularly concerned about the negative effects the closure of schools and the cancelation of graduation ceremonies will have on our students in the future.

We must consider that students have been isolated at home for almost three months due to the pandemic. Graduation ceremonies to celebrate educational accomplishments are an important rite of passage and represent a lifetime milestone. But they could also be an excellent way to finally transition our state out of this lockdown. For many young people who do not plan to attend college, this will be the only opportunity to participate in a graduation ceremony. Many will be entering the workforce, going into a trade, or enlisting in the military.

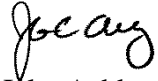
Allowing graduation ceremonies to proceed would offer a sense of closure for students who so abruptly left school and had their educational experiences turned upside down. This is often the last time these young people will see each other as they move onto different paths in life. Few occasions are as truly memorable, and a graduation ceremony would provide students the chance to say their goodbyes.

We should allow our schools the opportunity to host graduation ceremonies, perhaps outside later in the summer with limited guests, while respecting any needed social distancing guidelines applicable at that point in time. This will allow students to be recognized for their achievements and accomplishments. We must honor the hard work of our students, especially in these challenging times. There is no more fitting way to do that than to host a graduation ceremony.

Sincerely,



Will Barclay
Assembly Minority Leader



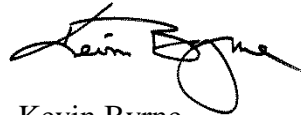
Jake Ashby
107th Assembly District



Ken Blankenbush
117th Assembly District



Karl Brabenec
98th Assembly District



Kevin Byrne
94th Assembly District



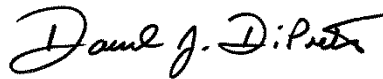
Marjorie Byrnes
133rd Assembly District



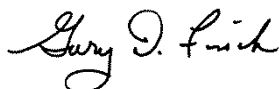
Clifford W. Crouch
122nd Assembly District



Joe DeStefano
3rd Assembly District



David DiPietro
147th Assembly District



Gary D. Finch
126th Assembly District



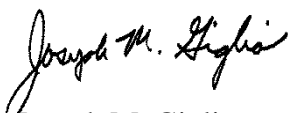
Michael Fitzpatrick
8th Assembly District



Christopher S. Friend
124th Assembly District



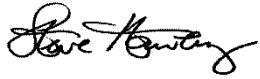
Andrew Garbarino
7th Assembly District



Joseph M. Giglio
148th Assembly District



Andy Goodell
150th Assembly District



Steve Hawley
139th Assembly District



Brian M. Kolb
131st Assembly District



Peter Lawrence
134th Assembly District



Nicole Malliotakis
64th Assembly District



Dave McDonough
14th Assembly District



Brian Miller
101st Assembly District



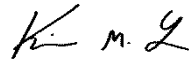
Michael Montesano
15th Assembly District



Mike Norris
144th Assembly District



Mark Johns
135th Assembly District



Kieran Michael Lalor
105th Assembly District



Mike LiPetri
9th Assembly District



Brian Manktelow
130th Assembly District




John Mikulin
17th Assembly District



Melissa "Missy" Miller
20th Assembly District



Angelo Morinello
145th Assembly District



Phil Palmesano
132nd Assembly District



Anthony Palumbo
2nd Assembly District



Ed Ra
19th Assembly District



Mike Reilly
62nd Assembly District



John Salka
121st Assembly District




Colin Schmitt
99th Assembly District



Doug Smith
5th Assembly District



Robert Smullen
118th Assembly District



Daniel Stec
114th Assembly District



Chris Tague
102nd Assembly District



Mark Walczyk
116th Assembly District



MaryBeth Walsh
112th Assembly District