



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.

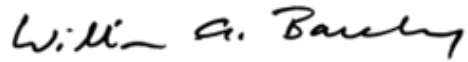
This pandemic has understandably upended the lives of all New Yorkers. Millions have changed their behaviors and made great sacrifices to help bend the curve of the virus. These decisions were not made lightly, and the health and safety of our citizens is of paramount importance. The members of the Assembly 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.

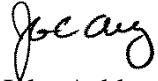
Allowing graduation ceremonies to proceed would offer a sense of closure for students who so abruptly left school and had their educational experiences turned upside down. This is often the last time these young people will see each other as they move onto different paths in life. Few occasions are as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



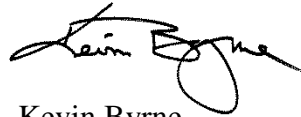
Jake Ashby  
107<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Ken Blankenbush  
117<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Karl Brabenec  
98<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Kevin Byrne  
94<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Marjorie Byrnes  
133<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



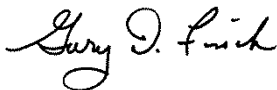
Clifford W. Crouch  
122<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Joe DeStefano  
3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



David DiPietro  
147<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Gary D. Finch  
126<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



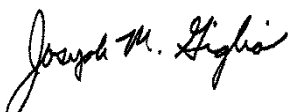
Michael Fitzpatrick  
8<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Christopher S. Friend  
124<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



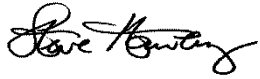
Andrew Garbarino  
7<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Joseph M. Giglio  
148<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Andy Goodell  
150<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Steve Hawley  
139<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Brian M. Kolb  
131<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



Peter Lawrence  
134<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Nicole Malliotakis  
64<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Dave McDonough  
14<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Brian Miller  
101<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



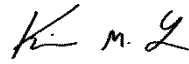
Michael Montesano  
15<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mike Norris  
144<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mark Johns  
135<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Kieran Michael Lalor  
105<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mike LiPetri  
9<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Brian Manktelow  
130<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



John Mikulin  
17<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Melissa "Missy" Miller  
20<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Angelo Morinello  
145<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Phil Palmesano  
132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Anthony Palumbo  
2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Ed Ra  
19<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mike Reilly  
62<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



John Salka  
121<sup>st</sup> Assembly District




Colin Schmitt  
99<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Doug Smith  
5<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Robert Smullen  
118<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Daniel Stec  
114<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Chris Tague  
102<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Mark Walczyk  
116<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



MaryBeth Walsh  
112<sup>th</sup> Assembly District