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STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

STEVE HAWLEY
Deputy Minority Leader
139th District

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

Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
New York State Department of Health, Commissioner
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza,
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker:

I am perplexed as to why a new restriction has been put in place for childcare, day camp, and overnight camp programs, as it pertains to children wearing masks who are over the age of two. This guidance was not deemed necessary last year when children were able to go without masks, and it is puzzling that it is seen as needed now with all of the progress that has been made toward vaccinating our state's population against COVID-19.

It has been proven that children are less susceptible to COVID-19 and are much less likely to experience severe symptoms or hospitalizations. In addition, daycares and camps are settings where children intermingle and not major areas of transmission. Pediatricians will tell you that the spread of COVID-19 among young children is not the main reason we have new cases. As parents and other adults are vaccinated, these children are at less risk now than ever.

I am sure you're aware, childcare facilities have been working tirelessly to implement common-sense practices like health screenings, proper hygiene, and other regimens to ensure the children in their care are safe. Local health departments have been and continue to work with these childcare facilities to support their dedication in maintaining the wellbeing of children and staff. With that said, just about anyone with children will tell you expecting toddlers to wear masks for hours without taking them off defies basic common sense.

In closing, I urge you to reconsider these mask requirements in the childcare, day camp, and overnight camp programs. You must agree that 8-10 hours a day is unreasonable to expect young children to continuously wear a mask.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Steve Hawley

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