



PAT BURKE
Assemblymember 142nd District
Erie County

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July 2, 2020

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie,

I am writing to request the New York State Legislature hold public hearings on the state's response to coronavirus (COVID-19). At the moment, the positive aspects of our response are clear, with states across the country experiencing spikes in cases and deaths due to irresponsible reopening.

Here in Western New York, the positive case rate is close to 1% and hospital admissions and ICU patients are at an all-time low. This is due to the success of the NYS on PAUSE initiative, social distancing, hand washing, and effective messaging around wearing masks, as well as the phased approach to reopening.

It is apparent from the results, and compared to states who did not take COVID-19 seriously, that NYS on PAUSE was effective and saved lives. In a time of uncertainty and failed leadership at the federal level, New York State stood out as an example of what we can do when we work together. That being said, it is our responsibility to offer oversight of Governor Cuomo's decisions and it appears that critical mistakes were made, specifically, regarding nursing homes.

According to the CDC, as of this week, there have been over 30,000 COVID-19 related deaths in New York State. Over 6,000 of those deaths occurred in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. Significant decisions were made with little time to spare, but it is important that the public hears what informed these decisions, where the data was coming from, and what the experts were saying at the time. Hindsight is 20/20, and I recognize that many of these decisions were made when information was scarce, but it is my responsibility to seek accountability for my constituents and for the families of those who lost their lives.

Sincerely,

Patrick B. Burke
Member of Assembly, A.D. 142