

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SENATOR
PAMELA A. HELMING
54TH DISTRICT

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND SMALL BUSINESS
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
ON RURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEES

AGRICULTURE
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
RACING, GAMING AND WAGERING

January 15, 2021

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As State Senator, I have the privilege to represent thousands of student athletes and their families. A number of student athletes, parents, coaches and concerned community members have contacted me to share their passionate support for safely resuming winter sports, including, ice hockey, basketball and wrestling. These sports, along with many spring and fall sports continue to be categorized by the New York State Department of Health as "high risk."

Extracurricular activities provide an important outlet for young people. The skills and character they build as part of a team sport are critical for their socialization and wellbeing. This is especially important, due to the fact that many students have experienced a great deal of isolation throughout the pandemic. This isolation is a concern for both their parents and mental health professionals. Additionally, the ability of many senior student athletes to receive athletic scholarships will be compromised by the cancellation of competitive matches.

According to MaxPreps, 34 states are currently playing winter sports and 12 states have a start date coming up. Three states, including New York, have made no decision and one state has totally cancelled winter sports.

I respectfully request that your administration and the New York State Department of Health reconsider the current "high risk" classification for winter and fall sports. The current regulations allow students to practice, but not compete. This is counterintuitive and incredibly frustrating for both students and coaches.

Our local student athletes are hopeful that they can resume competition and are ready and willing to follow the guidance provided to them by the appropriate health authorities. Safety is everyone's top priority and I believe that by working together with our student athletes, coaches and health professionals, New York State can help lead the nation in developing guidance to begin winter sports.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. If we can provide further information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela A. Helming". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

Pamela A. Helming
Senator, 54th District

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