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PHILIP A. PALMESANO
Assemblyman 132nd District

Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca,
Steuben, and Yates Counties

June 4, 2020

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

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing to you on behalf of the high school seniors in the 132nd Assembly District and around the state. I urge you to allow these seniors, who have lost and sacrificed so much of their final year of high school due to school closures as a result of COVID-19, to be allowed to participate in their high school graduation ceremonies. I understand this could be a challenge, but certainly not impossible, for some downstate schools, particularly in New York City. However, just as our business openings should not be a one-size fits all approach, neither should high school graduations.

As our infection rate continues to decline and our economy continues to re-open, it is more than appropriate, and would certainly be welcomed news, to allow our high school seniors to be able to experience such a significant and momentous occasion in their life. Our school districts, working with public health officials and following safety guidelines, will keep the safety of students, staff and the public paramount. Working together, they will put in place a safe and sensible plan to allow our seniors to participate in, and fully experience, their high school graduation. They have earned it and they deserve to experience it.

As I said and you know well, these kids have sacrificed and lost so many of the final opportunities and experiences of their senior year in high school. Experiences like class trips, sports, club events, athletic signings for college, yearbook signings, their proms and end of year fun and get togethers. Governor Cuomo, they've missed out on enough. Don't take their high school graduation ceremonies away from them too.

Governor, through your actions, you have the opportunity to deliver a strong message of perseverance to our high school seniors. Allow our seniors to have graduation ceremonies, celebrate their accomplishments and bring much-needed closure to their high school careers. They deserve this. We owe it to them and we should make it happen for them.

Sincerely,

Philip A. Palmesano
Member of Assembly