



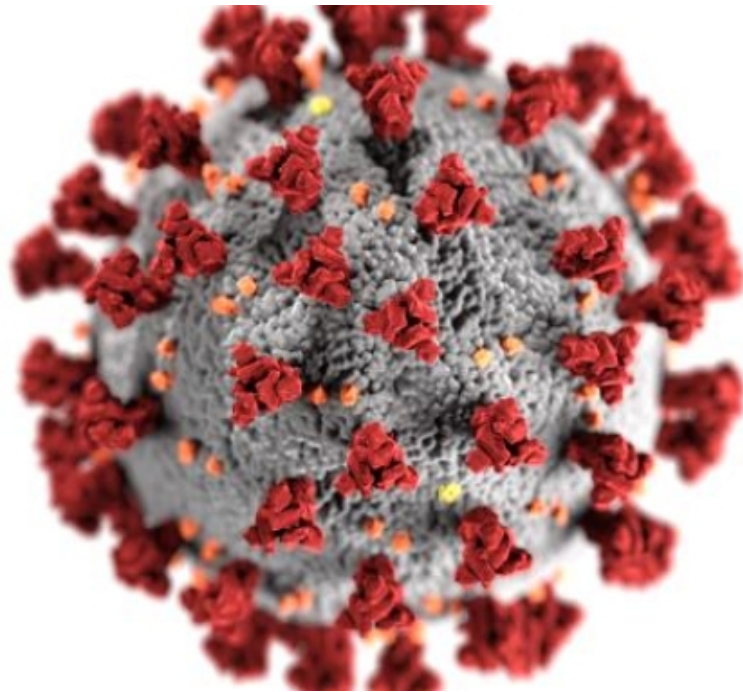
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo urges state to take additional measures to address coronavirus and future public health concerns

CDC March 5, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS, PUBLIC HEALTH, VIRUS, FLU SEASON**



New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, is urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo to take additional measures to mitigate the potential spread of the coronavirus and to ensure that New Yorkers are well informed about the evolving public health situation affecting the state.

The state Legislature took action this week by authorizing an emergency appropriation. Deputy Minority Leader Griffo also has spoken directly to New York State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker about the situation and has now sent a letter to the Governor regarding certain recommendations the state could take to address this and future public health concerns.

“We continue to see the concerning effects of coronavirus both domestically and abroad,” Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. “I appreciate the efforts of the local, state and federal governments to address this public health issue. At the state level, it is important that the public be given the most up-to-date information available to help them to reduce their risk of exposure or contracting this or other illnesses. By better educating the public, we can hopefully alleviate the danger that coronavirus poses to New Yorkers and others.”

Coronavirus is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Patients with coronavirus have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms that include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Severe complications from the virus can include pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and, in some cases, death.

The CDC recommends that individuals protect themselves from this and similar illnesses with everyday preventive actions, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.

- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throwing the tissue in the trash.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

The full text of Deputy Minority Leader Griffo's letter to Gov. Cuomo is below:

March 5, 2020

Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of New York State

New York State Capitol Building

Albany, NY 12224

Dear Gov. Cuomo,

With many New Yorkers concerned about the latest coronavirus and the potentially dangerous affect that the virus could have on their families and communities, it is important that the state examine all options available to address this public health issue. It also is incumbent upon us as elected officials to provide the public with the most accurate information possible in order to stop the spread of misinformation and minimize the potential for panic.

While I am appreciative of your efforts and the state's action to confront coronavirus concerns, I understand that guidance, information and data regarding this issue is constantly evolving. In light of the state legislature's emergency appropriation this week and in accordance with what is being done at the federal level, I urge you and the state

Department of Health to consider the following:

- In addition to the state's established hotline and website, an interagency and intergovernmental ongoing emergency operations center should be established to assist with efforts to monitor the virus and its potential spread, manage resources allocated to address this issue and provide important updates to the public, schools and local governments.
- A health condition level system, which would establish various protocols per level commensurate with the threat to public health, should be developed. This would help communities, local governments, residents and visitors understand what precautionary measures they need to take in order to mitigate the spread of coronavirus and future viruses.
- Consider identifying, reopening and staffing closed and/or underutilized hospitals or other medical facilities as possible sites for quarantine.

I also would encourage you and your administration to convene a formal Coronavirus Task Force that can develop the risk assessment scale with corresponding courses of action that will be taken to mitigate further spread of the virus. I believe that such a task force should consist of various state agency heads, including the commissioner of the state Department of Health, superintendent of the New York State Police and the commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Griffo

New York State Senator, 47th District

