



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

Coming Soon to Your Local Drive-In Theater: “High School Graduation: The Motion Picture”?

SENATOR JIM TEDISCO May 4, 2020



Senator Tedisco requests Governor Cuomo issue an Executive Order to enable school districts and municipalities that want to hold graduation using video technology to project ceremonies on the big screen of local drive-in theaters, all while practicing social distancing

As our state and nation continues to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I-Glenville) today is announcing support for an innovative approach to enable high school seniors and their families to celebrate their graduations together, while still practicing

social distancing; holding graduation ceremonies at drive-in movie theaters.

Senator Tedisco is asking Governor Cuomo (see attached letter) to issue an Executive Order to allow school districts who want to do so to work with municipalities and drive-in movie theaters that are willing to participate, to host graduation ceremonies while safely complying with all COVID-19 prevention social distancing and safety protocols.

The drive-ins can project a pre-taped video onto their screens that could include remarks from school officials, teachers, students and an address by valedictorians and salutatorians. The video could then show photos of each graduate with a narrator announcing each student's name. Students would receive their diplomas in the mail. Many drive-in movie theaters can safely fit hundreds of cars in their lots and as the audio is transmitted via radio, there is no need for attendees to have their car windows down.

In the 49th Senate District, the popular Malta Drive-in Theatre has come forward to offer their facility for a socially-distant graduation ceremony for local high schools.

“Walking across a stage to accept your high school diploma as your family and friends cheer you on is a rite of passage and a special memory that’s part of growing up and moving on to the next stage in our lives. It breaks my heart that due to the COVID-19 crisis, thousands of young people in New York State may not have that momentous opportunity,” said Senator Jim Tedisco.

“While it’s certainly not the same thing as a traditional high school graduation ceremony, I think we have a unique solution that could work for some school districts and communities and that’s to allow drive-in movie theaters to safely host a version of a graduation ceremony while maintaining social distancing. I ask the Governor to give this proposal serious consideration as a viable attempt to allow young people to come together in a socially

distant way and celebrate the important milestone of graduating from high school,” said Senator Tedisco. “I want to thank Malta Town Councilman Timothy Dunn and Malta Drive-In owner Ed Caro for bringing this innovative idea to my attention so we can bring some joy to our graduating seniors and their families in this challenging time.”

“The Malta Drive-In is a gem in our town and this opportunity to safely allow graduation memories to be made is a home run. My deep thanks to Ed Caro of the Drive-In and Senator Tedisco for being such a champion for this common sense approach to making memories safely. This is how #MaltaWorks,” said Malta Town Councilman Timothy Dunn.

“Our schools are looking for an opportunity to safely hold graduation ceremonies and many of them have contacted us to see if we would be available to host them given that the drive-in movie business is already set-up with many of the safety protocols that are needed now. We think this is a great opportunity to allow local high school seniors to celebrate their graduations. I want to thank Senator Tedisco and Councilman Dunn for following up and bringing this to the Governor,” said Ed Caro, owner of the Malta Drive-In Theater.