



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Simcha Felder

## Felder to Mayor - Open Playgrounds Now!

SIMCHA FELDER June 12, 2020



Honorable Mayor Bill de Blasio

City Hall

New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

I am writing to share my concern over the continued closure of NYC playgrounds. I ask that you order the NYC Parks Department to immediately unlock the gates and open our playgrounds.

Over these four long months, we have asked more of New Yorkers than we ever thought we could. At great personal cost, they rose to the occasion and as a direct result, we did not just flatten the curve, we smashed it. Over this same period, we have all become better educated about the virus and its related risks. I commend the administration's well-publicized tracking system through which New Yorkers have become accustomed to checking the daily numbers. With current numbers hovering around zero, we can no longer tolerate the excessive restriction of closed playgrounds.

Play is how children grow physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally, it is critical to healthy child development. Barring children from play spaces for even one additional, unnecessary minute is unhealthy, dangerous and cruel. Keeping children isolated and cooped up was a necessary evil, ordered only because we were in a state of emergency. It was so intolerable that anyone with an option of escaping to suburban areas did so. The families that stayed and continued raising children in cramped urban living spaces need relief now. Children need to run and play. Parents need to give their children the space to do that. Playgrounds are the only answer.

If we continue to deny children and teens healthy outlets for their youthful energy, the consequences will be disastrous and we will have only ourselves to blame. I encourage you to continue educating people about best practices, but give them the freedom to use their own best judgment. With everything going on in the world, let's not make criminals of good parents and small children at play in the park. The Covid -19 pandemic caused many problems that require complex solutions. Mr. Mayor, this problem you can fix easily today.

Sincerely,

Simcha Felder

Senator, 17th S.D.