



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

## Tedisco Announces New Bill to Create Independent Bi-Partisan Investigation of 6,200 COVID-19 NYS Nursing Home Deaths

SENATOR JIM TEDISCO June 23, 2020



Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I,REF-Glenville) today announced that he is introducing new legislation to establish an independent, bi-partisan state commission to fully investigate the deaths of 6,200 New Yorkers who died from COVID-19 in state-regulated nursing homes.

Tedisco also is urging the New York State Senate and Assembly to quickly hold joint legislative oversight hearings on the COVID-19 related deaths in our state's nursing homes as well as the disproportionate health effects of the pandemic on minority communities.

A March 25<sup>th</sup> order by the Cuomo Administration barred testing of the coronavirus for those being placed or returned to nursing homes.

According to [ProPublica](#), “If a hospital determined a patient who needed nursing home care was medically stable, the home had to accept them, even if they had been treated for COVID-19. Moreover, the nursing home could not test any such prospective residents — those treated for COVID-19 or those hospitalized for other reasons — to see if they were newly infected or perhaps still contagious despite their treatment. It was all laid out in a formal order, effective March 25. New York was the only state in the nation that barred testing of those being placed or returning to nursing homes.”

Tedisco’s legislation, which is being drafted, would create a state commission to investigate what led to this March 25<sup>th</sup> executive order and look at the regulations and the oversight safety processes impacting New York State’s nursing homes leading up to the COVID-19 outbreak. The bi-partisan Commission would consist of five members: one each appointed by the Senate Majority Leader, Senate Minority Leader, Assembly Speaker and Assembly Minority Leader, and chaired by an appointee of the New York State Attorney General. The Commission would be funded through the existing state budget for investigators and have subpoena power. A report to the Legislature of findings and recommendations for the future would be issued by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

“I’m calling on every elected official and candidate running for office to speak out and support a fair and independent investigation into the thousands of lives lost because of the placement of COVID-19 patients in nursing homes. My legislation takes the politics out of getting to the bottom of this terrible tragedy because this investigation would be overseen by bi-partisan appointees from both houses of the legislature. We owe it to the families of those who lost their lives and the future safety of these facilities to get answers and help prepare for a second wave of the virus or a future pandemic,” said Senator Jim Tedisco.

Senator Tedisco first called for legislative hearings and an independent investigation into the Administration's handling of COVID-positive patients being placed into nursing homes in early May. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, Tedisco and his Senate Republican colleagues put an amendment on the Senate Floor to direct \$100 million from federal CARES Act funds to nursing homes, assisted living and adult care facilities to help purchase testing supplies, PPEs, as well as train and hire additional staff.