



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris Joins Comedy Club Owners To Say Shuttered Clubs Are Not A Joke – Demands State Allow Comedy Clubs To Open

MICHAEL GIANARIS September 22, 2020

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NEW YORK – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris joined with New York’s comedy club owners and comedians to call on the state to allow comedy clubs to safely open. Last week, Governor Cuomo refused to allow these venues to reopen, despite many having outdoor spaces similar to restaurants that are currently operating. Photos of today’s press conference are available [here](#).

Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, "I challenge anyone to explain why comedy clubs would be less safe to operate than restaurants or bowling alleys. There is no good reason to keep them closed when these other establishments are open — all that does is further hurt our economic recovery."

Kambri Crews of QED Astoria said, "We're holding this rally to make NY State give live entertainment the same consideration given to other industries. If people can attend ping pong tournaments in Bryant Park, we should be allowed to produce socially distanced outdoor comedy shows. If bars are allowed to host indoor trivia nights, it shouldn't suddenly become illegal because the trivia host starts telling jokes."

Comedian Christian Finnegan said, "Everybody understands that this is complicated. But NY State seems to have figured it out for every other industry--I'm not sure why comedy can't even get a concrete plan. I can tell you this: The ban on live comedy has done nothing of the sort. Shows are happening every night--in backyards, parking lots, and private homes. The only thing this confusion does is prevent those shows from happening safely, under the oversight of licensed venues."

Senator Gianaris and the club owners are asking the state for the following:

Allow outdoor performances to happen immediately. Venues remain closed in NYC banned from producing ticketed outdoor live performances which contradicts the fact that public gatherings with fewer than 50 attendees are allowed to continue without contact tracing or oversight.

Allow clubs to be included with restaurants at 25% occupancy for indoor service. Indoor dining at 25% capacity begins September 30th and independent performing arts spaces are not

included in this plan. Once customers are seated, comedy clubs & many arts venues operate like any other food service establishment.

Allow venues to be included with indoor bowling at 50% occupancy without food & beverage service immediately. Indoor bowling in NYC is allowed to occur at 50% indoor occupancy on the contingency that no food or beverage is consumed indoors. Independent arts venues should be allowed to operate in this exact same manner with safely spaced seating in theaters without food or beverage service.

Explain the metrics clearly. The Governor has rightly talked about science and statistics but is not sharing what the numbers are for when ticketed arts & entertainment will resume. The requests above are based on comparable rules of operations for safe reopening already in place, based in common sense. All we ask is that the comedy clubs are swiftly allowed the same newly regulated reopening parameters as other NYC industries, and that we are informed as to the logic of these decisions either way.