



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mario R. Mattera

## Long Island's Senate Republican Delegation Calls On Governor Cuomo To Aid Struggling Ice Rinks

MARIO R. MATTERA January 13, 2021

| ISSUE: ICE HOCKEY, LONG ISLAND ECONOMY, YOUTH HOCKEY, YOUTH SPORTS



**Senator Mario Mattera (2nd Senate District) joined with his colleagues Senators Anthony Palumbo (1st Senate District), Alexis Weik (3rd Senate District) and Phil Boyle (4th Senate District) in sending a letter to Governor Cuomo requesting that he immediately recategorize youth ice hockey's risk level from "high" to "moderate." This move would allow Long Island's ice rinks to host non-checking games.**

The Senators argue that this simple change will help Long Island's ice rinks survive the economic hardship created by the pandemic, while ensuring that the tradition of youth

hockey continues throughout the region.

“Ice rinks throughout Long Island have taken necessary precautions to ensure that non-checking ice hockey can be played in a safe environment,” said Palumbo. “By simply recategorizing youth hockey from ‘high’ risk to ‘moderate,’ we can help save these struggling businesses and provide enjoyment for the Long Island’s youth hockey players and their families. It’s a win-win for the region and our residents during these difficult times.”

“These community centers are essential to our local economy and it is so important that our state works with them so they can continue to serve our young athletes. They provide more than just a business relationship with many families who count on them for entertainment, exercise and a sense of normal life. That is why it is so important that our state allows them to play the game with the same rules as rinks in our surrounding states. While we all agree that the health and safety of our young athletes must be our main concern, our rinks have made protecting them their number one concern and their efforts must be respected by our state,” stated Senator Mattera.

"Ice rinks play an important role in our community. It is imperative we do everything we can to ensure these small businesses can survive. These rinks have proven they can follow all State and CDC required protocols to keep competitors, fans, and employees safe. By designating youth hockey as a "moderate" risk sport, our young competitors can once again play sports and the rinks will have an opportunity to sustain their business," said Senator Weik.

“As a life-long hockey fan, I join my colleagues in urging the Governor to protect the economic vitality of ice rinks on Long Island and throughout New York State. Hockey can be played safely following appropriate guidelines, and New York should follow the lead of other states in allowing it,” said Senator Boyle.

The most profitable time of the year for ice rinks is December through February and the revenue generated at those times helps sustain their businesses year-round. This reclassification is reasonable and appropriate, as the Governor allows non-checking roller hockey games to be played as long as the participants and facility are following guidelines.

Currently, many of the region's ice rinks follow state recommendations and have implemented protocols for safe play, which include: wearing masks at all times, no checking, limiting the number of players on a team and limiting spectators.

"Our local ice rinks have strictly adhered to New York State's safety measures and as a result, none of these facilities have had to shut down due to COVID-19 exposure or outbreak," said Palumbo. "Clearly, our ice rinks are doing everything they can do to ensure a safe environment. I urge Governor Cuomo to make this simple change to help these struggling businesses survive and allow non-checking ice hockey to be played on Long Island."