



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming to State: Let Them Play!

PAMELA HELMING January 21, 2021

Senator Pam Helming has asked the Governor to take action to safely resume high school sports, and music and performing arts in K-12 schools. She has also introduced legislation that would require the state education and health commissioners to adopt the necessary rules to do so.

Senator Helming is inviting constituents to join this effort by signing her online Let Them Play petition: <https://www.nysenate.gov/petitions/pamela-helming/let-them-play-petition>

Senator Pam Helming said, “Sports are essential to physical development and fitness, and instill important values such as teamwork, sportsmanship and leadership. Band, chorus and theatre enable young people to shine by sharing their unique talents and inspiring others through their performances. There is a lot at stake for these students, from their physical and mental health and academic success, to their ability to compete for college scholarships.”

Jamie Farr, Superintendent, Canandaigua City School District said, “Considering how school districts across our state have proven they can operate safely in the midst of a pandemic, I remain hopeful we will be given the opportunity to make necessary adjustments such that our students and staff can run their programs for the second half of the school year. It can be done safely. Each school district has so many talented artists, musicians, and athletes yet the restrictions we are under does not allow them to showcase their talents and engage in

the things they are most passionate about. They are missing an opportunity to safely participate in doing what they most love and they deserve better. They deserve serious consideration for change in the restrictions we are currently operating within.”

Jeffrey Pirozzolo, Superintendent, Auburn City School District said, “Our students have lost way too much this past year. Give the students in New York State the same opportunities to participate in athletics, music and the theater as other states have. They deserve it.”

Shawn Van Scoy, Superintendent, Gananda Central School District said, “60% of Gananda’s students participate in a school sport. The opportunity to participate in school athletics is a significant motivator for many of our students. We don’t necessarily need fans in the stands, but our students need the opportunity to participate on a team, to learn to be leaders, and to learn how to work with teammates in the pursuit of common goals. Many of our Fall and Winter athletes have missed these opportunities. The lack of clear and consistent guidance on athletics has been very frustrating and it has been hard to understand why the standards for school athletics are different from the standards for community youth sports. It is my hope that as the Spring season approaches there will be some recognition that School Districts have been highly successful in protecting students' health during this crisis and we can be given the opportunity to apply the same level of care to all Spring sports.”

Senator Helming concluded, “Look at any school district and you’ll see how incredibly our young people have followed the rules during this pandemic to keep themselves and others safe. They are not asking to have fans or an audience. They are simply asking for permission to do what they love to do, safely and under all necessary protocols. Athletic directors, coaches, teachers and schools are ready to conduct these programs safely, but they cannot move forward without the state’s partnership.”