



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Area state legislators cheer decision to start up high school sports: Recently called on Governor Cuomo to give go-ahead

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 22, 2021

| ISSUE: [HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS](#)



Senator O'Mara, Assemblyman Friend, and Assemblyman Palmesano recently sent a letter to the governor and other top Cuomo administration officials urging them to give the go-ahead, a move which has also been strongly backed by student-athletes and their supporters throughout New York State.

**Elmira, N.Y., January 22**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Assemblyman Chris Friend (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) cheered the state's decision today to allow local health officials to make the call on starting up high school

sports seasons beginning February 1.

In a joint statement, O'Mara, Friend, and Palmesano said, "We recently said that we were confident that the Cuomo administration, working in partnership with local education and health officials, has the capacity to ensure a safe return of high school sports. We welcome the state's decision to allow local health officials to make the call and get our student-athletes back in their games. It's an important step for athletes and their families, coaches, and entire school communities and we join them in looking forward to the return of high school sports."

O'Mara, Friend, and Palmesano last week sent a letter to the governor and other top Cuomo administration officials urging them to give the go-ahead, a move which has also been strongly backed by student-athletes and their supporters throughout New York State.

Last week's letter read, in part, "These students have invested many years of discipline and training to maintain their physical fitness and to compete on behalf of their school districts and communities...The Southern Tier has proven to be a leader in the state by having one of the lowest positivity rates by exercising the policies and procedures established by the Health Department. Our student-athletes ask for guidance from the state to allow all winter, fall and spring sports to start in the Southern Tier and throughout New York State. We know that doing so will provide an outlet and great enrichment to student-athletes patiently waiting for their turn to play."

In early December, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSA), following guidance from the Cuomo administration, indefinitely postponed high school basketball, hockey, wrestling, and competitive cheerleading. All state winter sports tournaments were also cancelled.

The activities were considered high-risk for the spread of COVID-19. The NYSPHSA has been awaiting further guidance from the Cuomo administration, which the governor said would be provided by December 31.

Fall sports previously deemed high-risk by the state and postponed, including football and volleyball, are scheduled to resume on March 1 as part of a “Fall II” season.