



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REFUSES ACTION TO GET ANSWERS ON NURSING HOME DEATHS

SUSAN SERINO February 1, 2021

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS; COVID-19; SENIORS; NURSING HOMES; ADULT CARE FACILITIES**



HYDE PARK, NY—Senator Sue Serino today is speaking out following news that the New York State Senate’s Legislative Committee on Investigations and Government Operations failed to take up a motion that would have allowed the Committee to issue a subpoena to the New York State Department of Health for the nursing home data and related communications related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an effort to compel a thorough nonpartisan, independent investigation into bombshell allegations unveiled last week by the New York State Attorney General, Senator Tom O'Mara, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee, advanced the motion in accordance with Section 62-a of the Legislative Law, which states that "the chairman, vice-chairman or a majority of a legislative committee may issue a subpoena requiring a person to attend before the committee and be examined in reference to any matter within the scope of the inquiry or investigation being conducted by the committee."

"When you have the power to make a difference, it's not enough to say you would consider the issuance of a subpoena, you have to set politics aside and act," said Senator Sue Serino. "If lawmakers were as interested in getting the answers New Yorkers deserve as they were in making empty threats, this motion would have been advanced today. Instead, when given the chance to take meaningful action, they chose to quite literally 'mute' the discussion. Those who lost loved ones to COVID-19 in New York's nursing homes deserve better, and we will not stop pushing until their voices are heard."

The Chair dismissed the motion on a questionable procedural argument, and instead of engaging in debate on the issue, Senator O'Mara's microphone was ultimately muted before the meeting was abruptly ended.

Serino and her colleagues have been calling for the issuance of a subpoena for months, and there has been well-documented bipartisan support behind the push for an independent investigation with subpoena power. Serino and her colleagues even wrote directly to the Chairs of the Senate's Investigations and Government Operations, Health and Aging Committees back in September 2020, and again last week, urging them to leverage their power as committee chairs.

Serino currently serves as the Ranking Member of the NYS Senate's Aging Committee.