



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo and Picente: So-called repeal legislation is more show than substance

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO March 5, 2021

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With the New York State Legislature poised to pass legislation today that claims to repeal the Governor's extraordinary powers, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, said today that he will not support the bill because it does not do what it claims to do and is "nothing being presented as something."

"The majorities in the Legislature have touted this bill as a mechanism to repeal the powers that the Governor has accumulated as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and to restore balance in government," Sen. Griffo said. "However, when you look into its contents, you will find that this flawed bill is ambiguous and too interpretive, which benefits the Governor. While this legislation technically repeals last year's bill granting the Governor extraordinary powers, it does not really revoke or rescind his ability to employ or utilize the powers that he has amassed under existing orders. At this stage, nothing short of a full, clean repeal is acceptable."

Instead of immediately repealing all of the Governor's emergency powers, as Sen. Griffo and Republican members of the Senate have repeatedly called for, this bill - which has been given the Governor's stamp of approval - would:

- Eliminate the original sunset clause that would have led to the expiration of the Governor's extraordinary powers on April 30. The powers will now continue until an emergency declaration designated by the Governor has been lifted.
- Allow the Governor to extend and modify existing directives, many of which have caused great concern due to their arbitrary and inconsistent nature such as directives affecting restaurants, nursing home visitation, weddings, schools and entertainment venues.
- Allows for a restructured comment process at the state and local level that is weak, without a mechanism for the Legislature to enforce and allows the Governor to continue to do whatever he deems appropriate. Additionally, only relevant committee chairs and majority leaders will receive notice be allowed to officially comment, which infringes on the rights of all legislators elected to represent their constituents.

Sen. Griffo and Republicans in the Senate have advanced legislation multiple times that would fully repeal the Governor's authority and return government to the way it was originally structured and intended to function. The Senate Majority has unanimously rejected this effort each time. The Majority also has neglected and been reluctant to utilize the legislative oversight process through public hearings to garner information and question policy.

"Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majorities in the Legislature have had the ability to reconvene and curtail the Governor's extraordinary powers," Sen. Griffo said.

"However, despite our continuous pressure to do so and to revisit and revise policies implemented by the Governor, the majorities have refused. I am calling upon all legislators, including the 14 Democrat Senators who urged such action 'as expeditiously as possible' in a recent letter, to reject this bogus proposal. If they truly believe in repealing the Governor's extraordinary powers, for which many of them have advocated, then they should have no

problem standing up and demanding real, substantive action that reestablishes the Legislature as a coequal branch of state government.”

“County government has been on the front line in responding to this crisis and this bill is simply a bit of political theater that does absolutely nothing to improve our ability to respond to the rapidly changing conditions in our community,” Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. said. “If anything it will create more confusion.”

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