



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

## Senator Andrew Gounardes and Councilman Justin Brannan Call for the Reopening of Senior Centers

ANDREW GOUNARDES April 27, 2021

| ISSUE: **NYS SENATOR ANDREW GOUNARDES, SENIOR CENTERS, COMBATING COVID-19**

**Brooklyn, NY** -- Senator Andrew Gounardes and Councilman Justin Brannan have called for the reopening of senior centers across southern Brooklyn and communities throughout New York City. In a letter sent to the Mayor and Governor's office, the Senator and Councilman shared the importance of reopening senior centers for their older populations, and emphasised that these centers should be able to open their doors safely. Many of these centers may need to budget for HVAC systems, PPE and contact tracing programs, and implement social distancing guidelines for employees and visitors. Because this will be a complicated task, it is critical that this process begins now in order to give seniors and staff members a reasonable expectation.

Senior centers are an integral part of the community that provide socialization and programming for the city's senior population that results in meaningful relationships and activities that keep the mind and body young. Many of these facilities moved their programming online, but that has significantly limited access and left many who relied on these centers without their services. While seniors are now able to dine indoors, visit a museum, or see a movie, the senior centers they rely on are nonetheless still shuttered, even after 67% of New Yorkers over the age of 65 have received at least one vaccine dose.

“As the city continues to reopen, it’s imperative that our senior centers are part of this effort,” said **Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “That’s why we’re calling on the Governor and Mayor’s office to prioritize their reopening. I’ve heard from numerous seniors across southern Brooklyn about how vital these centers are to their lives, which is why we need advance guidance and regulations now for them to prepare. This year has been difficult for us all, but the isolation our seniors have had to endure will have a lasting effect.”

"Every day I talk to seniors who ask when they can see their friends again at their local senior center and it is, quite frankly, heartbreaking," said **Councilman Justin Brannan**. "These are New Yorkers who followed the guidance, isolated themselves at home, and kept themselves and others safe. Let’s not make them wait any longer than necessary for them to safely get back to living their lives to the fullest."

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