



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mario R. Mattera

## Senate Republican Conference Force Vote To End The Mandates, Unmask Our Kids And Return NY to Normal

MARIO R. MATTERA February 15, 2022

| ISSUE: **SENATE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE, RUBEN DIAZ, EDUCATION, PEDRO ESPADA JR.**



Senator Mario R. Mattera (2<sup>nd</sup> Senate District) joined with Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt and members of the Senate Republican Conference to call for an end to unconstitutional mandates promulgated by Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Department of Health. The Republicans forced a vote on the New York State Senate floor to end the mandates and bring sanity back to our residents.

The measure was intended to protect the children of New York State but not one Democrat joined the Senate Republican Conference in their effort to unmask the children.

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*“It is long past time to unmask our children and allow them to return to normalcy. The damage that New York State mandates are senselessly doing to our youngest residents is unconscionable. These children need to fully enjoy their childhood to reach their potential and these policies are taking that opportunity away from them. I urge my Democrat colleagues to join us in protecting our youngest and most vulnerable now.” - Senator Mario R. Mattera.*

This vote comes in the wake of the so-called vax or mask business mandate being lifted, but with the mask mandate in schools and childcare centers remaining in place. Children are the least vulnerable individuals with regard to COVID-19, but the most susceptible to psychological damage due to their lives being upended for the past two years.

“School children and toddlers are suffering emotionally. Parents and families are at their wit’s end. New Yorkers are just sick and tired of these one-size-fits-all Albany mandates. I vowed to my constituents that I would fight these unconstitutional mandates until every single one is lifted. I intend to keep that promise, and I am proud to stand alongside my fellow Republicans today to force our Democrat colleagues to explain where they stand. It’s time to end the mandates now,” said [Leader Ortt](#).

“When Governor Hochul substituted her judgment on masks for the judgment of parents she awakened a sleeping giant. Let's be clear- all the data shows school age kids are at far less risk than any other group when it comes to COVID. There is absolutely no reason any child should be forced to wear a mask for seven hours a day in school, especially when that same kid can get a pizza, go to a movie or watch a basketball game mask-free. What makes schools

such a hotbed for COVID risk but not an arena? Nothing. This is about control, not about public health. All mask mandates must end now. Let's restore choice and individual judgment and stop baseless political fear mongering," said [Senator Mike Martucci](#).

"It's well past time for Governor Hochul to finally end her mask mandate for school children. Families are fed up, frustrated, and want the Governor's mask mandate removed – and we want New York State to start putting our kids first. While neighboring states including Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Connecticut all have mask mandate off-ramps, Governor Hochul's indecision and delay are keeping our kids on a road to nowhere, with no end in sight to her oppressive mask mandates that are doing real harm mentally, emotionally, developmentally, and educationally. The people are speaking — and the Governor needs to start listening," said [Senator Daphne Jordan](#).

"Governor Kathy Hochul and the State Senate Majority have repeatedly said they would 'follow the science' regarding mandates. Their maintaining these harmful mask mandates on our students while removing them for almost every other indoor activity proves this was all just political rhetoric," said [Senator Phil Boyle](#).

"New Yorkers have grown weary of Albany's heavy-handed approach to the pandemic. With omicron infections rapidly decreasing throughout the state it is time to end these mandates and empower local governments with the ability to best meet the health and safety needs of the communities they represent," said [Senator Anthony Palumbo](#).

"The public has patiently abided by the never-ending, often confusing, mandates coming out of Albany but their patience is wearing thin. The justification that these mandates are for public safety erodes when it's clear the mandates are inconsistent and arbitrary. For the second time the State has rescinded its mask mandate for most public places except schools. Why is it OK for students to go maskless at sporting events and restaurants but not in the

classroom? It defies logic. I'm proud to stand with my colleagues calling for an end to these draconian measures," said [Senator Alexis Weik](#).

Senate Republicans have been a steadfast voice calling for more checks and balances in state government, and putting an end to the Cuomo-Hochul era of governance by mandates. Last month, the conference called on Governor Hochul to end her one-size-fits-all Albany mandates, and [return to fact-based, collaborative governing](#). Additionally, Leader Ortt has called on the Governor multiple times to [unmask our kids](#).

Last week, Leader Ortt and Senate Republicans [penned a letter](#) to the Governor blasting the decision to keep kids masked & calling for metrics for an off-ramp. A representative from the Department of Health later confirmed that they have no "[data targets](#)" for ending school masking. On Saturday, Leader Ortt [stood with educators and parents](#) to reiterate his calls for an end to the child mask mandate.

A key plan in the Senate Republicans "[Take Back New York](#)" 2022 agenda – which the Conference has been unveiling since January – is restoring accountability to state government. One of the policies within the plan is to [restore checks and balances to the state government](#).

The hostile amendment was voted on during the [Senate Session](#) on February 14, 2022.

**Any resident who would like to join the Senate Republican Conference's effort to unmask the children should [click here](#) to show their support!**