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**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**JAMES N. TEDISCO  
Senator, 49th District**

**Albany Office:**  
803 Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12247  
(518) 455-2181  
Fax (518) 426-6821

**District Office:**  
636 Plank Road, #205  
Clifton Park, New York 12065  
(518) 885-1829  
Fax (518) 371-2649

**Satellite Office:**  
Fulton County Office Building  
223 West Main Street  
Johnstown, New York 12095  
(518) 762-3733  
Fax (518) 762-3721

May 4, 2020

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor  
New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As we're sure you would agree, walking across a stage to accept your high school diploma as your family and friends cheer you on is a rite of passage and a special memory that's part of growing up and moving on to the next stage in our lives. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 crisis, thousands of young people in New York State may not have that momentous opportunity.

We're writing today to ask for your support for an outside-the-box approach to enable high school seniors and their families to celebrate their graduations together, while still practicing social distancing: holding graduation ceremonies at drive-in movie theaters.

The drive-ins can project a pre-taped video onto their screens that could include remarks from school officials, teachers, students and an address by valedictorians and salutatorians. The video could then show photos of each graduate with a narrator announcing each student's name. Students would receive their diplomas in the mail. Many drive-in movie theaters can safely fit hundreds of cars in their lots and as the audio is transmitted via radio, there is no need for attendees to have their car windows down. In the Town of Malta, which we represent, the Malta Drive-In Theatre is graciously offering its facility to use for local high school graduation ceremonies.

While it's certainly not the same thing as a traditional high school graduation ceremony, we think we have a unique solution that could work statewide for some school districts and communities by allowing drive-in movie theaters to safely host a version of a graduation ceremony while maintaining social distancing.

We respectfully request that you issue an Executive Order to allow school districts statewide who want to do so to work with municipalities and drive-in movie theaters that are willing to participate, to host graduation ceremonies while safely complying with all COVID-19 prevention social distancing and safety protocols. We ask the Governor to give this proposal serious consideration as a viable attempt to allow young people to come together in a socially distant way and celebrate the important milestone of graduating from high school. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of James N. Tedisco in black ink.

Senator James N. Tedisco  
49<sup>th</sup> State Senate District

Handwritten signature of Timothy Dunn in black ink.

Timothy Dunn  
Malta Town Councilman