

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY BASKIN, MEYERS,  
HARDWICK, JOHNSON, CHIMERA, GILMOUR & VINAL**

**Supporting Our Vulnerable Senior Citizens in Long-Term Care and  
Nursing Homes and Calling for a State Inquiry into COVID  
Nursing Home Deaths**

WHEREAS, the care of our most vulnerable persons is one of the government's most important functions, and our senior citizens residing in nursing homes, long term care facilities and skilled nursing facilities are amongst the most-vulnerable persons during the COVID pandemic; and

WHEREAS, our seniors deserve the most compassionate care possible in their golden years, particularly for those who are confined to nursing facilities and who are not ambulatory or who cannot leave those congregate settings; and

WHEREAS, as of February 4, 2021, in 2020 and 2021, Erie County lost 621 people who died in nursing homes whose deaths were confirmed as caused by COVID-19, and lost 211 people who died in nursing homes whose deaths are presumed to be of COVID-19 and lost 9 people who were nursing home residents whose deaths were confirmed as COVID-19 but who died in the hospital, and lost 6 people who died at adult care facilities in Erie County whose deaths were confirmed and we mourn those losses; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Health issued a comprehensive report in July 2020 (revised on February 11, 2021), entitled "Factors Associated with Nursing Home Infections and Fatalities in New York State During the COVID-19 Global Health Crisis," indicated, among other things, that infected staff without symptoms accounted for the bulk of the spread as during the peak in mortality in nursing homes in 2020 it was not known that people without symptoms were contagious; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the New York State Attorney General recently issued a report which was critical of the care provided by nursing home operators across New York during the COVID pandemic, finding allegations of patient neglect and other concerning conduct that may have jeopardized the health and safety of residents and employees such as lack of compliance with infection control protocols; and

WHEREAS, the State Attorney General also found that a large number of people who died in the hospital of COVID had been nursing home residents at the time they contracted COVID-19 and were reported as hospital deaths and were not published as related to a nursing home; and

WHEREAS, a court order that prompted the release of new numbers from the State concerning the COVID deaths in nursing and related long-term care facilities, recently increased the state's long-term care COVID-19 death toll from about 8,500 to around 15,000 when including presumed and confirmed cases, when previously presumed but not confirmed cases

were excluded from the number of deaths released daily by the State and such exclusion was so noted in the daily figures released; and

WHEREAS, some State Legislators are now calling for hearings and inquiries by the State Assembly and State Senate concerning the COVID reporting discrepancy, as well as the care and preventive measures utilized by nursing home operators to protect their residents and staff.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature expresses its support for a State inquiry into the measures undertaken by nursing homes, long term care facilities and skilled nursing facilities to address COVID-19, including preventive measures to protect residents and staff; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature requests the New York State Department of Health provide this Honorable Body and the residents of Erie County the results of said State inquiry into the measures undertaken by nursing homes long term care facilities and skilled nursing facilities to address COVID-19, including preventive measures to protect residents and staff, as soon as possible to promote transparency, decrease confusion, decrease worry, and allow for informed decision making and informed consent for patients, residents, and their family members; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Honorable Body declares our support for the health and wellbeing of senior citizens as evidenced in our 2017 passage of Ruthie's Law to help protect seniors; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this honorable body finds the deliberate actions of Governor Andrew Cuomo to conceal and lie about nursing home COVID death statistics to the public and federal authorities, as admitted by Secretary to the Governor Melissa DeRosa, to be deeply concerning and hereby supports an in-depth federal investigation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that said investigation should include a full review of the measures undertaken by Governor Andrew Cuomo and his executive staff relating to their handling of COVID-19 infected persons sent to nursing homes, and the effects of that deadly decision; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution to be transmitted to the Governor, State Health Commissioner and the local New York State Legislature delegation.