

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 73

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 11, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators O'Scanlon and Holzapfel

SYNOPSIS

Urges Governor to grant greater flexibility to high schools attempting to hold graduation ceremonies with proper social distancing during COVID-19 pandemic.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/11/2020)

SR73 CORRADO

2

1 **A SENATE RESOLUTION** urging the Governor to grant greater
2 flexibility to high schools attempting to hold graduation
3 ceremonies with proper social distancing during the COVID-19
4 pandemic.
5
6 **WHEREAS**, COVID-19, a novel coronavirus, is a respiratory illness
7 that was first identified during an outbreak in Wuhan, China and
8 has since expanded across various continents including Asia,
9 Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and Australia
10 resulting in a worldwide pandemic; and
11 **WHEREAS**, In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor
12 Murphy issued Executive Order 107 which required all New Jersey
13 residents to stay at home until further notice; and
14 **WHEREAS**, This Statewide stay-at-home order forced all public and
15 private schools and colleges throughout the State to close for the
16 duration of the school year; and
17 **WHEREAS**, Schools have had to adapt their entire curriculums to
18 provide online education and ensure that New Jersey students will
19 be able to meet matriculation requirements throughout this
20 unprecedented time; and
21 **WHEREAS**, Thousands of high school seniors will be graduating from
22 New Jersey high schools this spring; these graduating students have
23 been forced to be flexible and remain positive while having to miss
24 many of the senior year milestones they have looked forward to for
25 their entire high school careers; and
26 **WHEREAS**, As a result of mandatory social distancing guidelines to
27 stop the spread of COVID-19, graduating students have been forced
28 to miss senior proms, senior banquets, their final varsity sports
29 seasons, senior trips, and the students have been unable to spend
30 their final months in high school with their fellow students and
31 friends; and
32 **WHEREAS**, Graduation remains the final milestone in graduating
33 students' high school careers; and
34 **WHEREAS**, After graduation, graduated students will continue upon
35 diverse paths into futures that may include higher education, the
36 military, and various fields of work; and
37 **WHEREAS**, Graduation ceremonies are a time for students to celebrate
38 their educational accomplishments alongside their peers, a time for
39 parents to recognize the efforts and hard work of their children, and
40 a time for teachers to see the students they have educated enter the
41 next stage of their lives; and
42 **WHEREAS**, On May 22, 2020, Governor Murphy Issued Executive
43 Order 148 which increased the number of people allowed together
44 at outdoor gatherings from 10 to 25; this Executive Order makes it

SR73 CORRADO

3

1 possible for open air high school graduation ceremonies that observe
2 social distancing and other COVID-19-related safety protocols to
3 occur; and
4 **WHEREAS**, However, Governor Murphy stated that high school
5 graduation ceremonies will not be permitted prior to July 1, 2020
6 and that schools with graduating class sizes larger than what is
7 allowed at outdoor gatherings will be required to have multiple
8 graduation ceremonies; and
9 **WHEREAS**, The current restrictions on the size of permitted outdoor
10 gatherings conflicts with the goal of allowing classmates to
11 graduate together; having multiple graduation ceremonies will not
12 allow graduating students to graduate alongside all of their friends
13 and peers, but rather only a smaller group of the graduating class;
14 and
15 **WHEREAS**, In addition, Governor Murphy should allow graduation
16 ceremonies to occur on more flexible timelines; many schools have
17 reported being unable to hold graduation ceremonies after June 30,
18 2020 due to insurance and staffing issues; and
19 **WHEREAS**, Due to the importance and significance of graduation
20 ceremonies in students' educational careers, the Governor is urged
21 to grant more flexibility to high schools attempting to hold
22 graduation ceremonies during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure
23 entire graduating classes will be able to graduate together; and
24 **WHEREAS**, Tens of thousands of capable, devoted, resilient, and
25 resourceful school officials, teachers, school board members,
26 parents, and students stand ready to make the necessary
27 preparations for safe and responsible graduation ceremonies across
28 the State; now, therefore,

29

30 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:

31

32 1. This House urges the Governor to grant greater flexibility to
33 high schools attempting to hold graduation ceremonies with proper
34 social distancing and other appropriate safety protocols during the
35 COVID-19 pandemic.

36

37 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
38 shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Governor
39 of the State of New Jersey.

40

41

42

STATEMENT

43

44 This resolution urges the Governor to grant greater flexibility to
45 high schools attempting to hold graduation ceremonies with proper
46 social distancing protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic.

47 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Murphy
48 issued Executive Order 107 which required all New Jersey residents

SR73 CORRADO

4

1 to stay at home until further notice. This Statewide stay-at-home
2 order forced all public and private schools and colleges throughout
3 the State to close for the duration of the school year. Schools have
4 had to adapt their entire curriculums to provide online education
5 and ensure that graduating students will still be able to meet
6 matriculation requirements throughout this unprecedented time.

7 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, graduating students have
8 had to miss many of the senior year milestones they have looked
9 forward to for their entire high school careers such as senior proms,
10 senior banquets, their final varsity sports seasons, and senior trips.
11 Graduation, the final milestone in high school students' careers
12 serve as the culmination of education and as an important transition
13 point for high school students.

14 Governor Murphy's recent Executive Order, Executive Order
15 148, increased the number of people allowed together at outdoor
16 gatherings from 10 to 25, which allows for open air high school
17 graduations to occur after July 1, 2020.

18 The current restrictions on the size of permitted outdoor
19 gatherings conflicts with the goal of allowing classmates to
20 graduate together. Having multiple graduation ceremonies will not
21 allow graduating students to graduate alongside all of their friends
22 and peers, but rather only a smaller group of the graduating class.
23 In addition, Governor Murphy should allow graduation ceremonies
24 to occur on more flexible timelines. For example, many schools
25 have reported being unable to hold graduation ceremonies after
26 June 30, 2020 due to insurance and staffing issues.

27 Due to the importance and significance of graduation ceremonies
28 in students' educational careers, the Governor is urged to grant
29 more flexibility to high schools attempting to hold graduation
30 ceremonies during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure entire
31 graduating classes will be able to graduate together.