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**SENATOR
ANDREW S. GOUNARDES**

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June 9, 2021

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Commissioner Mitchell Silver
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Silver,

We write today to request that the Fort Hamilton Senior Recreation Center in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn be returned to its intended purpose of serving the seniors in our districts at the conclusion of the current 2020-2021 academic school year. The Center has been serving as a temporary Learning Bridges site for DOE students throughout the pandemic, but as the school year draws to a close we believe it is now critical to bring this facility in line with the senior centers now preparing to reopen throughout the City.

It is our understanding that the Center is now being considered for use by the Department of Education for its Summer Rising program; we ask you to reject this plan and instead reopen the Center to seniors. While we agree it was necessary to keep seniors safe at home during the peak of the pandemic and to accommodate our public school hybrid and remote students, the number of students currently being served at the site numbers in the low double digits, while more than 700 senior members in our well established NORC neighborhood remain desperate to return to their programming, services and friends at Fort Hamilton. As we have already begun experiencing intense summer heat and humidity, we further submit that the Center's use as a cooling facility is absolutely essential in the coming months.

We ask that the City seek alternative Summer Rising locations for the students presently attending classes at the Fort Hamilton Senior Recreation Center and provide clear, written reopening plans for the Center at the conclusion of this month. We cannot allow our seniors to continue to suffer the ongoing, negative mental and physical health impacts of extreme isolation.

Sincerely,

Andrew S. Gounardes
Member of Senate, 22nd District

Justin Brannan
NYC Councilmember, 43rd District

