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**SENATOR
JAMAAL T. BAILEY**
36TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT
STATE OF NEW YORK

ALBANY OFFICE:
Room 609
Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247
Office: 518-455-2061
Fax: 518-426-6998

DISTRICT OFFICE:
959 East 233rd Street
Bronx, New York 10466
Office: 718-547-8854
Fax: 718-515-2718

E-mail:
bailey@nysenate.gov

Webpage:
bailey.nysenate.gov



February 25, 2021

Governor Andrew Cuomo
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY, 12224

Governor Cuomo:

We, the undersigned elected officials write to say that we are glad that vaccine access is ramping up in New York City via the FEMA/NYS mass vaccination sites in Brooklyn and Queens. As we accelerate vaccination efforts, it makes sense that we ensure that all communities receive the ability to be safe.

However, as you have indicated, equity is critical, and as elected officials representing The Bronx, we remain deeply concerned about vaccine equity in this borough. As you know, The Bronx unfortunately continues to have the highest positivity rates in the city, so equity in remedying this matter is critical.

We would like to ask for some steps to be taken to achieve equity, including but not limited to these steps. First, we ask that the amount of vaccines be significantly increased in the largest site in The Bronx, Yankee Stadium- to be on par with the availability in the mass vaccination sites. The neighborhoods surrounding the stadium continue to have some of the highest positivity rates in the borough and city. Secondly, we would ask that we work together to look for a site to bring a similar FEMA/NYS mass vaccination site elsewhere in The Bronx.

Many Bronxites in the northern portion of the borough could potentially have issues accessing Yankee Stadium, and could benefit from additional capacity or sites further north. Within the concept of equity also exists transportation equity, and the recognition that many of our most vulnerable utilize public transportation, namely surface transit. Transportation to these sites would be critically important to the success in getting Bronxites vaccinated.

We strongly urge you to commit the necessary resources to vaccination facilities so that all of our communities are prepared to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain at the ready for any discussion related to this matter for the people of our borough and the State of New York.

Sincerely,

Senator Jamaal T. Bailey

Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman

Congressman Adriano Espaillat

Congressman Ritchie Torres

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

State Senator Jose Serrano Jr.

State Senator Alessandra Biaggi

State Senator Gustavo Rivera

State Senator Luis Sepulveda

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz

Assemblywoman Nathalia Fernandez

Assemblyman Kenny Burgos

Assemblywoman Chantel Jackson

Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner

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Councilman Fernando Cabrera