



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO CALLS FOR EXECUTIVE ORDER TO PROTECT SMALL BUSINESSES AGAINST SOARING UNEMPLOYMENT COSTS

SUSAN SERINO May 31, 2020



Albany, NY— Senator Sue Serino today is calling for an Executive Order to hold small businesses harmless when it comes to assessing their unemployment insurance rates following the historic layoffs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the Legislature back in Session this past week, Senator Serino joined her Republican colleagues in proposing an amendment that would do just that. However, the Legislature refused to take up the measure or pass legislation to directly address the issue, which has the

power to cripple already struggling small businesses. With no date yet set for the Legislature to return, Senator Serino is urging the Governor to take the steps necessary to protect small businesses in this regard.

“Our small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities, and they have been among the hardest hit during this tough time. They have done their part to keep our communities safe and healthy and now it’s time for the state to do its part to remove any obstacles that impede their ability to reopen safely and successfully. This commonsense measure is one that hardworking New Yorkers across the state are calling for. We have to set politics aside, do what’s right, and help those who make our communities work,” said Senator Sue Serino.

Unemployment in New York now stands at almost 20% in some regions of the state, according to New York Department of Labor statistics for April. Because an employer’s unemployment insurance payment is based on an experience rating, the more employees who collect benefits, the higher the contribution is from the business. Because these historic layoffs are caused by a government-forced shutdown, Serino and her colleagues have argued that the businesses impacted should not be further penalized for doing their part to help promote and protect public health.

The proposal that was advanced last week by Serino and her colleagues, is a bill sponsored by Senator Pam Helming (S.8249), that would ensure no impact is left on an employer’s unemployment insurance payment if an employee’s unemployment arose as a result of the pandemic.

The need for this measure was reiterated time and again throughout a recent joint hearing of the NYS Legislature that examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small businesses in the state. Similar initiatives have clear bipartisan support in both houses of the Legislature.

Serino continued, saying, “Our small businesses have been mired in uncertainty since Day One. They did not have a choice when it came to having to lay off their dedicated employees when the state went on PAUSE, and now they desperately need the peace of mind this measure would bring. Many of these business owners, and far too many of their employees, still haven’t even been able to access their unemployment benefits, so they certainly don’t need the stress of being hit with a major unemployment insurance bill.”