



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Monica R. Martinez

## New York State Senator Monica R. Martinez is Pleased to Announce the Relief for Forfeit Day Applicants

MONICA R. MARTINEZ May 13, 2020



(PATCHOGUE, NY): New York State Senator Monica R. Martinez has been advocating to assist residents who have found themselves in a unique situation, needing to collect unemployment benefits, but owing New York State 'forfeit days' due to prior actions or errors. As a result, these benefits and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) were being withheld leaving thousands without the funds to provide for their families and fearing the worst. Legislation was introduced, S.8275, numerous letters were sent to the Commissioner of the Department of Labor requesting assistance and temporary relief, and

dozens of calls made with colleagues to try to find a solution.

Today, the Governor and the Department of Labor announced that relief was indeed on the way for these residents who have been pleading with so many of their representatives. “I am thrilled the Governor and the Commissioner Department of Labor have heard the pleas of many residents who have been struggling for months who were bound by forfeit day limitations. We will finally be seeing some relief in the coming weeks! After two months since I wrote my letter to the Commissioner to assist these individuals who have been full of anxiety and uncertainty whether they would be able to feed their families, obtain necessary medication, and secure basic necessities- I can respond with relief and confidence that help is on the way. I thank my colleagues for their support rallying behind my legislation, endless emails and calls for help that brought us to today’s announcement. We really are NY Strong,” stated Senator Monica R. Martinez.

The details of the announcement state emergency actions have been taken to provide relief for New Yorkers who have been assessed “forfeiture day” penalties which, under the law, prevents an individual from receiving future benefits for a specified number of days.

Due to the fact that these specific individuals are currently unemployed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was due to no fault of their own and have extremely limited options to find employment, the Department of Labor is providing immediate relief by suspending forfeiture days during the pandemic emergency.

Unemployed New Yorkers with forfeiture days on their accounts have begun to receive the \$600 weekly Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation payments, and in addition, they will now receive the traditional unemployment insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits they would otherwise be eligible for. These payments are expected to

begin in approximately two weeks and will include back pay through May 13. For individuals with other flags on their accounts, such as child support payments and offsets to reimburse the state for benefits they improperly received, those people will see payments reduced to continue to re-pay amounts owed.

Senator Martinez said, "Hearing the cries, anxiety and uncertainty in my residents' voices, I knew I had to act on their behalf and fast. This was not an easy task to tackle, but with persistence and confidence, we made a difference."

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