



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Pam Helming, Colleagues: We Don't Need A Study, Small Businesses Need Help Now

PAMELA HELMING June 29, 2020

GENEVA, NY— Senator Pam Helming and her colleagues demanded immediate help for struggling small business owners, who now face increased unemployment insurance rates after government forced business shutdowns resulted in layoffs.

Governor Andrew Cuomo issued an Executive Order that authorizes the state's Labor Commissioner to issue a finding regarding how unemployment experience rating charges were impacted by the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Senator Helming, however, already carries legislation to remedy the problem from mass unemployment due to forced business closures, which Senate Democrats rejected in May when put on the floor as an amendment.

"We do not need a study, we need action or our already struggling businesses might face closing forever. It is unfair to raise unemployment insurance on these small businesses when their employees were simply let go because the Governor forced their businesses closed. While the Senate played politics with my amendment, I hope they reconsider the hardship our businesses are facing and put this on the floor for a vote," said Senator Helming.

“More than half of the states in the nation have already declared that COVID-19-related layoffs will not be counted against employers for the purposes of determining their unemployment insurance tax rates. New York needs to step up join these states immediately; it is the only fair and reasonable response, given that the state’s imposition of mandated business closures was the catalyst for employers’ layoffs,” said Senator George M. Borrello, co-sponsor of the legislation. “A study will only cause harmful delay and confirm what we already know, which is that small businesses UI rates will increase significantly due to events completely beyond their control. Many are already hanging by a thread and need every bit of help we can provide in order to stay in business and rehire their employees.”

Senator Sue Serino said, "This is a slap in the face to the thousands of small businesses throughout the state who went above and beyond to do their part to keep our communities safe and healthy. They don't need a study, they need immediate action and clear relief now. We have to set politics aside, do what's right, and help those who make our communities work."

The proposal would have left no impact on an employer’s unemployment insurance payment, which is based on an experience rating. When more employees collect benefits, the higher the contribution is from the business.

To help keep businesses financially afloat in the future, this amendment would have excluded claims from an employer’s unemployment insurance experience rating charges if an employee’s unemployment arose from the COVID19 pandemic.