



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Monica R. Martinez

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(PATCHOGUE, NY): New York State Senator Monica R. Martinez has been a strong advocate for all essential workers and local businesses throughout the ongoing pandemic. There have been many companies that have gone above and beyond to ensure the health and safety of their employees is of utmost importance by providing personal protective equipment, consistent cleaning of common areas, and temperature screening upon entry to the building.

Unfortunately, this is NOT the case with all. For months, we have been dealing with one specific business in Suffolk County, who has done nothing to protect their employees, in fact, the practices in place have caused more harm to the employees who are only trying to support their families.

“Quality King for months has ignored countless calls, letters and pleas by union and government officials to ensure that health and safety protocols are put into place at their

facility to protect their workers. During the height of the pandemic, this business suffered an unnecessary outbreak amongst its staff with seventy (70) employees infected with COVID, and up to fifty (50) additional employees required to quarantine plus family members who succumbed to the illness due to the infected employee coming home. The complete disregard for the health, safety, and well-being of employees and the public at large by Quality King in Ronkonkoma and Bellport is deeply troubling. Reports of their unwillingness to provide appropriate PPE for the staff and absolutely no modifications to the cleaning schedule to ensure proper sanitization of the workplace, is not only irresponsible but completely unprofessional and inhumane.”

The New York Health and Essential Rights (NY HERO Act), sponsored by Senator Gianaris, directs the Department of Labor to issue protective standards to prevent exposure to COVID-19, enforceable through fines. This legislation would mandate standards to include testing, mandatory face masks and PPE, social distancing, hand hygiene, disinfection and engineering controls. Such standards and protocols must be followed by all businesses in New York State to protect the health and well-being of all workers.

Furthermore, the NY HERO Act authorizes employees to establish health and safety committees to raise complaints and report violations of such protocols in the workplace; and provides employees, whether unionized or not, with protections from reprisal from their employer.

“I look forward to supporting Senator Gianaris’ bill when it comes to the floor. We need to hold businesses such as Quality King, accountable for these egregious actions. Employee’ safety and health should be the top priority of all managers and executives who either remain open or are reopening their businesses. If they do not comply with the standards to protect their employees, such as providing disinfection plans and mandatory face masks, among others, fines will be imposed,” said Senator Monica R. Martinez

“We all play a vital role and it is important to remain vigilant and responsible in order to prevent a recurrence of an outbreak, and that means taking proper precautions. Businesses need to be proactive, rather than reactive and should supply employees with masks, glass or plastic partitions, and enhanced cleaning and sanitizing procedures to protect their staff to ensure productivity of their business.”

“It is irresponsible of a business owner to leave their employees defenseless, with no protective equipment, no enhanced cleaning measures, and without updating them on the conditions of their workplace. It is time we hold Quality King accountable for their negligence.”