



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris, Assembly Member Reyes Build Momentum For New York HERO Act, Announcing 15 Co-Sponsors For Covid-19 Workplace Safety Bill

MICHAEL GIANARIS January 7, 2021

| ISSUE: NY HERO ACT, FRONTLINE WORKERS, COVID-19, CORONAVIRUS, WORKPLACE SAFETY



NEW YORK – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris and Assembly Member Karines Reyes announced the New York HERO Act ([S.1034](#)), a critical bill requiring businesses to have enforceable safety standards to prevent further spread of the coronavirus, has 15 co-sponsors across the Senate and Assembly. The state legislature began their annual session this week.

**Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris** said, “Too many workers have already sacrificed their health for our community’s benefit. The New York HERO Act will honor their efforts by giving workers the tools to protect themselves while on the job. I appreciate the support for this proposal from my colleagues in both houses.”

**Assembly Member Karines Reyes** said, “During the pandemic, we have seen profits rise at the expense of the health of our essential workers who do not receive essential protections. We must pass the NY HERO Act to ensure that corporations profiting off of the labor of our communities are doing their fair share in ensuring that those workers are able to do their jobs safely. Corporations and the wealthy have amassed billions in wealth while thousands of their workers have gotten COVID-19. We cannot continue to allow the wealthiest Americans to continue to build their wealth on the backs of minimum and low wage workers who suffer due to unsafe working conditions.”

**Mario Cilento, President, New York State AFL-CIO** said, “Right now, unlike public sector workers who have protections, there are no statutory protocols for private sector workers in terms of how to respond to infectious diseases. If this pandemic has taught us anything, with tens of thousands of workers succumbing to this virus, it’s that we need to make the health and safety of workers a priority. The NY HERO Act will serve as a necessary template to ensure the safety, health and well-being of everyday working heroes now and into the future. It would be a shame if we don’t learn from this terrible situation. Passing the HERO Act will save lives, plain and simple. We thank Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Reyes for sponsoring this bill and for leading this effort. And we will work as hard as we can to ensure its passage.”

The NY HERO Act, or the New York Health and Essential Rights Act, would require the Departments of Labor and Health to implement enforceable minimum standards for workplace safety. The regulations must include protocols on testing, PPE, social distancing,

hand hygiene, disinfection, and engineering controls. Employers would be permitted to establish individual regulations for their businesses that exceed state requirements.

Workers would also be given a direct role in monitoring and reporting violations through workplace health and safety committees that would be empowered to raise complaints and report violations. The bill would protect employees from retaliation for utilizing their rights under the law.

The NY HERO Act is supported by more than 100 labor, community, and safety organizations.

Senate co-sponsors include Senate Labor Committee Chair Jessica Ramos and Senators Brian Benjamin, Andrew Gounardes, Robert Jackson, Rachel May, Julia Salazar, James Sanders, and Diane Savino.

Assembly co-sponsors include Assembly Members Chris Burdick, Carmen De La Rosa, Richard Gottfried, Donna Lupardo, Michael Montesano, Nily Rozic, and Rebecca Seawright.

**Senate Labor Committee Chair Senator Jessica Ramos** said, “During this pandemic, our workforce has put their lives and the lives of their families at risk in order to keep New York running. Passing the New York HERO Act and requiring businesses to have enforceable safety standards to keep their employees safe is a necessary step to protect the lives of working families during this pandemic and in years to come.”

**Senator Rachel May** said, “Workers everywhere deserve safe working conditions. In today's public health crisis, it is unconscionable for employers to put their workers at risk. I am proud to co-sponsor this bill and thank my colleague Senator Gianaris for bringing it forward.”

**Senator James Sanders Jr.** said, "I fully support the NY HERO Act, which is so important to protecting people, especially vulnerable populations and essential workers from contracting the coronavirus. We have come a long way when it comes to battling this disease but we are not out of the woods yet and the enforcement of safety precautions such as those covered by the NY HERO Act benefits the entire state. I applaud my colleague Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris for taking the lead on this issue."

**Senator Robert Jackson** said, "I'm proud to be a co-sponsor of the NY HERO Act. I have stood up for workers' rights my whole career, including the two decades I spent working for our Public Employees Federation in NYS, so it's pained me to see how workers have suffered because of inadequate protections during this pandemic. Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Reyes' bill hits the nail on the head by shoring up workers' rights through enforceable health and safety standards that will keep our working class safe on the job. I look forward to us passing it very soon!"

**Assembly Member Carmen De La Rosa** said, "I am proud to stand with organized labor and essential workers in support of the NY HERO Act. We need to have a consistent and bold standard to protect people from airborne infectious diseases. This is especially important for many undocumented workers, who face threats from employers when it comes to their status. It is vital that we pass this legislation, so that we can empower all workers to make workplaces and practices safer. I look forward to advocating for this bill in with my colleagues."

**Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright** said, "I am proud to co-sponsor legislation in support of our labor heroes who are on the frontlines serving the public and providing essential services. With the presence of an increasing threat to public health and safety, we must establish strong workplace protections and shield hardworking people from retaliation. Our health and economic recovery centers around the prosperity of these workers and their

families who are the heart and soul of the communities in our great state of New York. I am proud to support this legislation and fight for its passage in the Assembly.

**Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN**, said, “With infections surging across the state, and a slow rollout of the vaccine, essential workers must get the stronger protections they need on the job without delay. The NY State Legislature must prioritize the health and safety of New Yorkers, small business owners, and their customers by passing the NY HERO Act right now. Passing the NY HERO Act will prevent any more unnecessary sickness and deaths of New Yorkers across the state by ensuring adequate protections and a stronger voice in the workplace. This cannot wait.”

**George Miranda, President, Teamsters Joint Council 16** said, “The worker heroes who are getting our state through this pandemic need protections so they can do their jobs safely. Nearly a year into the COVID pandemic, workers are still on the job without protective equipment or sanitary practices. The New York State Legislature can step in and ensure workers have enforceable COVID safety standards immediately. Thank you to Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Reyes for championing this legislation and our New York heroes.”

**Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union** said, “Because of the federal government’s failure to ensure workplace safety, we need enforceable standards at the state level to keep all working New Yorkers safe. This must be a priority for Albany because it is a priority for all working New Yorkers. I want to thank our allies Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Reyes for introducing this critical legislation today, now let's get it enacted into law.”

**Murad Awawdeh, Interim co-Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition** said, “Our immigrant essential workers have been on the frontlines of this pandemic since it began and it's no surprise that they have also bore the brunt of its impact via their sacrifice to the

health and safety of themselves and their families. it's long past overdue that New York put in place workplace regulations to protect all farmworkers and allow them to monitor those plans and report violations without fear of repercussions. The NY HERO Act recognizes the essential role of our frontline farmworkers, and provides the crucial protections they need to continue to keep New Yorkers fed.”

A video of today’s press conference is available [here](#).

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S1034**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor

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Prevents occupational exposure to an airborne infectious disease

January 06, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?