



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Alessandra Biaggi

## SENATOR BIAGGI AND SENATE MAJORITY ADVANCED LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE WORKPLACE COVID-19 SAFETY STANDARDS

ALESSANDRA BIAGGI March 2, 2021

**ALBANY, NY** – Senator Alessandra Biaggi and the Senate Democratic Majority passed major legislation to stand up for New York workers. This package enacts the “NY Hero Act” sponsored by Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris, which requires the creation of health and safety standards for COVID-19 and other airborne infectious diseases in the workplace guaranteeing a greater employee voice in the workplace. This package also includes legislation to encourage employer use of shared work programs to avoid layoffs and legislation to increase the amount of shared work benefits to the maximum allowed by federal law. In addition, these bills promote career paths into healthcare, permit employee time off for vaccinations to be administered, and grant an enhanced death benefit to families of deceased public employees.

**State Senator Alessandra Biaggi (D-Bronx/Westchester) issued the following statement:**

"Throughout the pandemic, frontline workers have continued to show up to work each day, despite the risks, to keep our communities running. At the same time, more than a million New Yorkers have lost their jobs or faced reduced hours. These bills will provide critical protection to essential workers and lend a helping hand to New Yorkers who are looking for

work or trying to survive working reduced hours. I am proud to join my colleagues in passing this legislation, and want to thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for her leadership."

**The legislation passed by Senator Biaggi and the Senate Democratic Majority include:**

- **NY Hero Act:** This bill, S.1034A, sponsored by Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris, will implement airborne infectious disease standards requiring employers to implement an infectious disease exposure prevention plan.
- **Shared Work Program Petition:** This bill, S.17A, sponsored by Senator Shelley B. Mayer, will allow employees to petition their employer to apply for the shared work program in order to avoid layoffs or to rehire laid off workers.
- **Vaccination Leave:** This bill, S.2588A, sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes, will grant public and private employees four hours of time off, per dose, to receive the coronavirus vaccine.
- **Healthcare Employment Incentivization:** This bill, S.3470, sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy will require the New York State Department of Labor and Department of Health to establish a program to incentivize unemployed individuals to enter short-staffed jobs in healthcare by expediting training and certification.
- **Shared Work Program Benefit Extension:** This bill, S.4049, sponsored by Senator Jessica Ramos to increase the amount of unemployment insurance benefits an employee can claim under the shared work program to limits of the federal maximum.
- **Public Employee Death Benefit:** This bill, S.4681, sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes, will extend previously enacted accidental death benefits to the families of frontline workers who have passed away due to COVID-19.

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