



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Gianaris, Reyes Announce Both Houses Of The Legislature Pass The NY HERO Act

MICHAEL GIANARIS April 21, 2021

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



NEW YORK – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris and Assembly Member Karines Reyes announced the New York HERO Act ([S.1034-B/A.2681-B](#)), a critical bill requiring businesses to have enforceable safety standards to prevent further spread of coronavirus, has passed the New York State Assembly New York State Senate.

**Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris** said, “Too many workers have already sacrificed their health for our community’s benefit. The New York HERO Act honors 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 and so many organizations throughout New York. I am thrilled both houses are passing this important bill.

**Assembly Member Karines Reyes, R.N.** said, “As a nurse, I know how hard this last year has been for those working on the frontlines of the pandemic – worried about their health, the health of those around them and whether their work environment was a safe one. We need to ensure that corporations, who have made billions during this pandemic provide adequate protections to their employees and frontline workers. I am proud that we are passing this legislation that will save lives and protect those that are on the front line of public health crises.”

**Senate Labor Committee Chair Senator Jessica Ramos** said, “The Legislature is once again taking action to protect workers. The New York HERO Act codifies the way workers want to feel protected, requiring businesses to have enforceable safety standards. Throughout this pandemic, workers across our state have had to put their lives and the lives of their families at risk to keep New York running. It’s our turn to take care of them.”

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. Workers would also be given a direct role in monitoring and reporting violations through workplace health and safety committees and employees would be protected from retaliation for utilizing their rights under the law.

The NY HERO Act is supported by more than 100 labor, community, and safety organizations, including the AFL-CIO. The legislation passed the Senate Labor committee in January. Just last week, Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Reyes wrote an op-ed in *The Buffalo News* highlighting the importance of the NY HERO Act.

Senate co-sponsors include Senate Labor Committee Chair Jessica Ramos and Senators Brian Benjamin, Alessandra Biaggi, Jabari Brisport, Samra Brouk, John Brooks, Jeremy Cooney, James Gaughran, Andrew Gounardes, Michelle Hinchey, Brad Hoylman, Robert Jackson, Tim Kennedy, Liz Krueger, John Mannion, Rachel May, Shelley Mayer, Elijah Reichlin-Melnick, Gustavo Rivera, Sean Ryan, Julia Salazar, James Sanders, Diane Savino, James Skoufis, and Kevin Thomas.

Assembly co-sponsors include Assembly Members Chris Burdick, Carmen De La Rosa, Richard Gottfried, Donna Lupardo, Michael Montesano, Nily Rozic, Rebecca Seawright, Linda Rosenthal, Charles Barron, Steven Englebright, Jonathan Jacobson, Al Taylor, Stefani Zinerman, N. Nick Perry, Demond Meeks, Sarah Clark, Jen Lunsford, Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, Jeffrey Dinowitz, Zohran Mamdani, Jo Anne Simon, Andrew Hevesi, Inez Dickens, Chantel Jackson, Emily Gallagher, Nathalia Fernandez, William Colton, Jenifer Rajkumar, Harvey Epstein, Gina Sillitti, Daniel Rosenthal, Robert Carroll, Marcela Mitaynes, Joe DeStefano, Stacey Pheffer Amato, Dan Quart, Harry Bronson, Catherine Nolan, Phara Souffrant Forrest, Charles Lavine, Robert Rodriguez, Michael Benedetto, Peter Abbate, Fred Thiele, Khaleel Anderson, Daniel O'Donnell, Brian Barnwell, Kenny Burgos, and Catalina Cruz.

**Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN** said, “The NY HERO Act is critical for New York’s recovery from COVID-19. This legislation will ensure that millions of New Yorkers can do their jobs safely and businesses can reopen without risking more COVID outbreaks. That is how we will build our state back and better than ever before and become a model for the rest of the country. The assembly and senate have passed this critical legislation with super

majorities. Now Governor Cuomo has an opportunity to thank all of the essential workers who sacrificed so much throughout the pandemic by signing this bill into law.”

**Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU)** said, “As the pandemic continues, workplace safety must be a priority. The NY HERO Act will provide the enforceable standards that workers and communities need to stay safe. Senator Gianaris, Assembly Member Reyes and many allies in Albany have championed this bill and given a voice to workers when they needed it most. We look forward to seeing the bill signed into law.”

**Dennis Trainor, Vice President of CWA District 1** said, “By passing the NY HERO Act, New York is sending a clear message that all workers deserve safe working environments. The devastating infection rate and death toll that continues to ravage New Yorkers, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, shows that the status quo is broken— workers must have meaningful workplace health and safety protections, with real enforcement. This legislation is a long-overdue step to ensure all workers are protected on the job, and we call on Governor Cuomo to sign this bill into law.”

**Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN, President of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA)** said, “The NY Hero Act will make New York among the first states to enact a strong infectious airborne disease standard, along with enforceable labor regulations and health and safety protocols to protect all workers. It's the least NY can do for essential workers, who sacrificed so much during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep this state running. The 42,000 members of the New York State Nurses Association applaud the many labor and community allies, as well as the Leaders – and sponsors and advocates – within both the Assembly and the Senate, for their commitment and work to get this done. We look forward to this bill being signed into law and to the day when no worker has to choose between life and livelihood.”

**Thomas Gesualdi, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16** said, “Teamsters Joint Council 16 applauds passage of the NY Hero Act, which will help protect the workers who have kept New York functioning during the pandemic. Ensuring that employers provide a safe, healthy workplace and that workers have a voice in their own safety is a crucial step forward. Thank you to Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, Senator Gianaris, and Assemblyperson Reyes, and most importantly the broad coalition of essential workers throughout New York who moved this important piece of legislation forward. We look forward to this Bill being signed into law as quickly as possible.”

**Donna Lieberman, Executive Director of NYCLU** said, “No New Yorker should have to face the impossible choice between their health and their paycheck— yet too many, especially Black and Latinx essential workers, have been left without protections for far too long. We thank the legislature for recognizing the urgency of enforceable regulations to prevent the spread of airborne infectious diseases in all workplaces, and for providing workers with tools to end retaliation for raising health and safety concerns. Now is the time for Governor Cuomo to sign this life-saving legislation into law.”

**Gloria Tenecela, member leader at the NY Nail Salon Workers Association** said, “Even during a pandemic, nail salon owners are still not taking responsibility to provide us with more protection. I go to work so I can provide for my daughters, but I know that it is risky. I am worried because workers and customers could bring the disease home and infect their families. Nothing will change if we remain silent. We need laws that protect us at work and protect our right to speak out and demand the proper PPE so we can take care of our health. We thank Senator Gianaris, Assemblymember Reyes, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie for their leadership in passing the NY HERO bill and we urge the Governor to sign this bill right away.”

**Beatriz Ramirez, member leader Laundry Workers Center** said, “Our immigrants and community of color have been the most affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The NY Hero Act will make a difference by creating the necessary standards to protect and give the voice that low-wage and excluded workers need at their workplaces. As a laundromat worker, I have learned that health and safety are our rights and that vaccines are a crucial step, but with NY Hero, our state will be ready for any future infectious disease. This victory is for all workers.

**Charlene Obernauer, Executive Director of NYCOSH** said, “This legislation is critical to keeping workers safe during and after the pandemic. The vaccines are an amazing step forward, but we need to do more so that workers know that they are safe on the job and will not be spreading Covid-19 in their communities and to their loved ones. This legislation--creating a first-in-the-nation permanent airborne disease standard--does just that.”

**Murad Awawdeh, Interim Co-Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition** said, “Immigrant and BIPOC New Yorkers have too long faced the impossible choice of maintaining their health or their jobs, at great cost to their family security and well-being during this pandemic. As one-third of New York State's frontline workers, they have been risking their lives to treat those stricken with COVID-19, stock our grocery shelves, take care of our elderly, pick our produce, and more to keep this state running in a time of crisis. They and all workers deserve to work in safe conditions without fear of reprisal or losing their jobs—whether they work in offices in Manhattan or hospitals in Buffalo or the fields of the Hudson Valley. We commend Speaker Heastie, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Reyes for their leadership on this issue and urge Governor Cuomo to sign this into law immediately.”

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S1034B

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

Prevents occupational exposure to an airborne infectious disease

January 06, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?