



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senate Deputy Leader Gianaris, Assembly Member Reyes, Legislators Urge Dotdash Meredith, Among The Largest Publishers In The U.S., To Stop Stonewalling And Comply With NY Hero Act

MICHAEL GIANARIS March 14, 2022

| ISSUE: **NY HERO ACT, WORKPLACE SAFETY, DOTDASH MEREDITH, COVID-19, LABOR**



NEW YORK, N.Y. – Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris and Assembly Member Karines Reyes are calling on Dotdash Meredith, one of the nation's **largest** digital and print publishers, to comply with requirements outlined in the New York Hero Act (**S.1034-B/A.2681-B**), requiring businesses to have enforceable safety standards to prevent further spread of coronavirus and other airborne diseases and recognize workplace health and safety

committees. Up until now, Dotdash Meredith has refused to acknowledge and abide by the new law's requirements, going so far as to place their intransigence in writing.

"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," said **Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris**. "All workplaces are expected to adhere to the law and protect their workers during airborne infectious disease outbreaks. We fully expect Dotdash Meredith to comply with this law immediately and quickly resolve the issues presented by its workers."

"In spite of the loss of thousands of New Yorkers, Dotdash Meredith has committed itself to non-compliance with the New York HERO Act," said **Assembly Member Karines Reyes**.

"Adherence to the law is non-negotiable, but it is particularly disheartening to see Dotdash Meredith deny its workers the right to establish workplace health and safety committees to protect themselves against airborne infectious disease. Dotdash Meredith must recognize the rights of their workers and reconcile this matter immediately.

The NY Hero Act, **signed into law** in 2021, requires 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 was supported by more than 100 labor, community, and safety organizations, including the AFL-CIO.

Workers at Dotdash Meredith recently met with Senator Gianaris to raise concerns about the company's lack of compliance with the state law. Specifically, workers allege the

company has not complied with their workplace safety plans, and not recognized a workplace health and safety committee designed to raise issues about conditions.

Senator Gianaris and Assembly Member Reyes shared their letter with colleagues and 22 legislators signed on, including Senators Jessica Ramos, James F. Gaughran, Rachel May, Andrew Gounardes, Jabari Brisport, Julia Salazar, Roxanne Persaud, Gustavo Rivera, Toby Ann Stavisky, Liz Krueger, Brad Hoylman, Alessandra Biaggi, Elijah Reichlin-Melnick and Assembly Members Inez Dickens, Andrew Hevesi, Linda B. Rosenthal, Jo Anne Simon, Jeffrey Dinowitz, Phara Souffrant Forest, and Daniel O'Donnell. [You can view the full letter here.](#)

"We wanted to make sure the office was safe for our return, especially during New York's spike with the omicron variant. We wanted to be a part of the conversation and welcomed Dina to discuss workplace safety with us, but in return, we were silenced and our legitimacy was questioned," said **Ryan Parks, producer at PeopleTV and a Dotdash Meredith union member.** "Forming this committee isn't an irrational ask, especially because it's covered in the Hero Act. Ultimately, we feel the company can be at its best when workers feel safe and healthy."

"For months the company ignored urgent health & safety concerns we observed on multiple occasions in the office. We continually reached out in a good faith effort to have an honest conversation with leadership," says **Greg Lofts, Unit Chair of the Health & Safety Committee.**

"Only after ignoring us for months did they fire off a wholly dismissive and aggressive email, claiming our committee has no right to exist. We do exist and we won't back down. It's past time for the company to get serious about our health & safety.

**Chris Brooks, Field director for the NewsGuild of New York** said, "Meredith's insulting, reckless, and lawless behavior is an affront to the employees whose tireless labor has substantially benefited shareholders, such as when the company was purchased by Dotdash to the tune of billions of dollars last year. Dotdash Meredith must stop shirking its obligation to protect its

workers.”

**Senate Labor Committee Chair Senator Jessica Ramos** said, “The NY Hero Act was not passed with the intention that employers could perceive it as a list of suggestions. The Dotdash Meredith Union has taken important steps to protect the workers and escalate their health and safety for accountability, and the over 100 labor unions that supported the passage of the NY Hero Act stand with them as they demand safety in their workplace.”

**Senator Andrew Gounardes** said, “Dotdash Meredith's blatant disregard for its workers' health and safety is appalling. New Yorkers have been working hard to keep each other safe for two long years now, and the least they should be able to expect is that their employers and workplaces will do the same. We passed the NY HERO Act into law last year because we know that all workers deserve a workplace safe from heightened COVID exposure risks, and I will continue to work alongside my colleagues in state and local government to ensure that is what all workers are able to experience.”

**Senator Jabari Brisport** said, "No one should have to choose between their safety and keeping food on the table for their children. That's why we passed the HERO Act last year, and Dotdash Meredith is not above the law."

**Senator Jim Gaughran** said "The State Legislature passed the NY HERO Act to protect employees from harms in the workplace and empower workers to ensure their employers comply. Dotdash Meredith's failure to meet the minimum health and safety standards in the NY Hero Act is appalling and I urge Dotdash Meredith to comply with the law."

---

RELATED LEGISLATION

---

## 2021-S1034B

---

- 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
- 

Prevents occupational exposure to an airborne infectious disease

January 06, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Michael Gianaris**

Do you support this bill?