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Senate Democratic Majority Advances Legislation to Support New York's Workforce

Albany, N.Y. – Today, Senator April N. M. Baskin (SD-63) and the Senate Democratic Majority continued its commitment to strengthening New York's workforce, those who power our state's economy, by advancing legislation that enhances workplace protections and combats wage theft.

This legislative package increases Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) benefits, streamlines wage theft claims, holds bad actors accountable, and strengthens enforcement against exploitative practices. It also extends paid sick leave to domestic workers, protects employees from coercive severance ultimatums, and ensures fair compensation by defining bonuses and non-discretionary payments as wages. By cracking down on payroll fund misappropriation and empowering the Department of Labor to issue stop-work orders for worker misclassification, these measures take decisive action against workplace exploitation.

"This legislation protects New York's workforce from exploitation and unfair labor practices. It will ultimately result in another benefit: those earned wages, no longer subject to theft, can now be poured back into our economy," Baskin said.

The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Establishes the No Severance Ultimatums Act:** This legislation, S.372, sponsored by Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris, establishes the No Severance Ultimatums Act, which prohibits employers from delivering coercive severance ultimatums to employees and former employees reviewing severance agreements, and which provides employees with ample time to review such agreements.

- Increases TDI benefits and expands coverage: This legislation, S.172, sponsored by Senate Labor Chair Jessica Ramos, amends the Workers' Compensation Law (WCL) to increase short-term disability benefits provided in the form of Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) weekly cash benefits, and expands disability and paid family leave coverage.
- Provides grounds for attachment and streamlines wage claims procedures: This legislation, S.4611, sponsored by Senate Labor Chair Jessica Ramos, creates grounds for attachment to allow wage theft victims to seek attachment of employers' assets during court action pendency, and amends the business corporation law and the limited liability company law to streamline procedures allowing employees to hold shareholders and owners personally liable for wage theft.
- Extends paid sick leave to domestic workers: This legislation, S.4515, sponsored by Senate Labor Chair Jessica Ramos, requires employers of domestic workers to provide annual paid sick leave to such workers.
- Establishes the crime of misappropriation of payroll funds: This legislation, S.4188, sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie, expands protections for employee payroll funds by establishing the crime of the misappropriation of payroll funds.
- Enacts the Wage Payment Integrity Act: This legislation, S.2236, sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes, enacts the Wage Payment Integrity Act, which bolsters employee protections against wage theft by clarifying that all bonuses and other forms of employment remuneration that are not purely discretionary count as wages.
- Allows stop-work order issuance for employee misclassification: This legislation, S.1514, sponsored by Senator Pete Harckham, authorizes the Commissioner of Labor to issue a stop-work order for employers that have misclassified their employees or that have misrepresented to insurance companies their employee count.

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