

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Local Senate Delegation Calls For Small Business Fund & Halt to Takeout Container Ban

The Western New York Senate Delegation today called for the establishment of a \$890 million Small Business Emergency Assistance Fund for the State of New York. Additionally, the delegation called for the labeling of any budget proposals to ban the use of serviceware, including takeout containers. This proposed ban is especially concerning due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the reliance many restaurants have on sterile, single use polystyrene containers to provide takeout food.

“Now, more than ever we have to come together as a state to protect public health and safeguard the future of jobs in upstate New York. Together we must send a clear message to the job creators in our communities that we will work with them to weather this storm. That starts with rededicating state resources to provide 0% interest loans. Helping our local small businesses meet their obligations means employees will continue to receive paychecks and any other benefits they are entitled to receive. Additionally, although discussions regarding the State Budget are ongoing, it appears that a ban on polystyrene takeout containers is being considered. Nearly 800 local jobs in Canandaigua depend on the production of these products and it is the most hygienic way for local restaurants to provide takeout service and keep their doors open during this pandemic. Banning these takeout containers is wrong for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it would jeopardize the health of New York’s citizens,” said Senator Pam Helming.

“At a time when we are uniting to fight a pandemic and both businesses and workers are suffering, it’s imperative that State Government step up as a partner to help,” said Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport). “Dolco who operates plants in Bloomfield and Richmond in my district produce polystyrene products and employ hundreds of people. Restaurants now dependent on takeout service need these safe and affordable containers more than ever. I’m calling on the Governor and the Senate and Assembly majorities to end any consideration of banning polystyrene in the State Budget. Additionally, this budget must include an emergency aid package to support our local small businesses. This is critically important and we should not adopt a budget without it.”

“As we unite as New Yorkers to combat this unprecedented pandemic, it is essential that we do all we can to support our economy and small businesses. I am joining with my Senate colleagues to call on the Governor to establish the Small Business Emergency Assistance Fund for the State of New York to assist the thousands of businesses that are struggling. The Governor needs to ensure these common sense measures are in place to safeguard jobs and New York’s economy,” said Senator Joe Robach.

"This pandemic has placed businesses across our country on life support and has especially devastated the small businesses in New York. Our state is already home to one of the most difficult business climates in the nation, and to add to this devastation by creating additional regulations would surely mean the end of hundreds of small businesses across

New York. We should instead be focusing on assisting these employers and job creators through this unprecedented time and focus our attention on protecting the small businesses that are currently struggling,” said Senator Rob Ort.

“As a small business owner myself, I am keenly aware of how essential small businesses are to the lifeblood of our Western New York community and economy,” said Senator Chris Jacobs. “Time is of the essence in providing relief to the small businesses affected. The sooner we take action, the sooner these companies can apply for loans that may very well determine whether or not their businesses survive and their employees have jobs to return to.”

“Our small businesses are the backbone of our communities. As a small business owner myself, I understand the effect this is having first hand. I am glad to see our Upstate members coming together. During this time it is so important that we unite and help our workers and businesses,” said Senator Mike Ranzenhofer.

“As our state works to contain the spread of COVID-19 and the health impacts to our population, we also understand the tremendous strain this situation has placed on our small businesses, who have had to halt or substantially reduce their operations. The proposed emergency fund would go a long way towards helping these job creators survive this crisis, so that we don’t permanently lose these valuable businesses and jobs,” said Senator George Borrello, 57th District. “Recognizing the particular hardships faced by our restaurants as well as the pressing need for single-use sanitary serviceware, this legislation would also take the critical step of prohibiting bans on takeout containers including polystyrene, which is currently part of budget discussions. While a bad idea even in the best of times, such a ban right now would only compound the extraordinary challenges our restaurants are facing.”

“During these extraordinary times, it is incumbent on everyone in government to work together to provide assistance for those directly impacted by this crisis, especially small businesses throughout New York. Helping businesses survive will allow them to maintain critical jobs and services in the future and soften the blow on our economy. Likewise, now is not the time to impose additional restrictions on restaurants and other establishments fighting to keep their businesses viable,” Senator Pat Gallivan said.

The \$890 million would come from state settlement funds that are currently earmarked for use during economic uncertainty. The monies would be distributed by the state through grants, loans and emergency assistance relief to New York State small businesses impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.

The delegation is also supporting a proposal that would:

- Create a 0% interest loan program dedicated to helping small businesses meet their payroll commitments;
- Repurpose available tax credits to help the needs of the state’s existing small businesses;
- Use all economic development discretionary funding for existing small businesses within New York State;
- Extend business tax remittance deadlines; and
- Temporarily suspend all regulatory fees on small businesses.

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