

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Sen. Helming Wraps Up “Summer of Small Business” Tour; Continues Fight to Create Jobs and Support Business in Upstate New York

Since taking office, Senator Pam Helming has toured many businesses across the region. After becoming the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business, in an effort to specifically identify the most pressing issues small businesses are currently facing, this summer Senator Helming toured more than 25 local businesses throughout the district. She sat down with business owners, employees, and economic/industrial development agencies and was able to learn more about the goods and services they provide and the impact they have on our communities.

Throughout the tours, Senator Helming repeatedly heard the same concerns and challenges about doing business in New York. This included issues of workforce development, labor costs, burdensome regulations, and permitting at the local, state and federal levels.

Also during this time, Senator Helming took the opportunity to meet with educational leaders at every level—community college, p-tech and school superintendents as well as workforce development specialists and labor organizations.

“Equally important in this conversation are our local educators and labor organizations. All of these players coming together to offer training opportunities and work experience is part of the solution to the workforce challenge,” Senator Helming said.

In response, Senator Helming has introduced new legislation to help our workforce and the state’s economy. S.6842 will require the State Apprenticeship and Training Council (“Council”) to hold at least six meetings each year and with the option for these meetings to be held via teleconference. Additionally, the Council will be required to provide an annual report on its findings, meeting conclusions, recommendations and activities.

According to New York State’s Department of Labor website, the Council has met eight times since April 2016 with only one meeting held in 2017 and only one meeting held in 2019 thus far.

“As we work to double the number of apprenticeship programs in New York State and grow and strengthen our workforce, the State Apprenticeship and Training Council must be held accountable for their share of this commitment. To successfully do this, one meeting a year is simply not enough,” Senator Helming said.

Senator Helming has also introduced S.6841, which will increase/expand the Employee Training Incentive Program (E-TIP) tax credit. The E-TIP provides a tax credit to New York State employers for training

investments that upgrade, retrain, or improve the productivity of their employees and for approved internship programs. This legislation will increase the tax credit to employers from 50% to 70% of eligible training costs for employees.

Many of the employers Senator Helming visited, cited a lack of available trained workers as a major impediment to the growth and success of their businesses. This legislation will strengthen employee training while easing the burden of the cost for the business.

“Whether I was visiting a factory or a farm this summer, I continued to hear the same thing from our employers. We must invest in workforce development and cut the red tape that is holding back our small businesses. Some of the businesses I visited throughout the district, like Optimax, OptiPro, Boulder Industrial Contractors and G.W. Lisk, have already created meaningful opportunities and initiatives for local students in an effort to increase workforce development. I support these tremendous public-private partnerships and I look forward to watching them grow. In an effort to help, I will work to increase workforce development opportunities by advocating for the expansion of the employee training tax credit and holding our State Apprenticeship and Training Council accountable. In order for us to grow our economy, create good paying jobs and keep our communities strong, we need a well-trained workforce that is prepared to take the jobs being offered by many local companies. We need to invest in workforce development to grow our economy and keep good paying jobs in our communities. While my Summer of Small Business tour may have concluded, my dedication to our small businesses remains. I look forward to many more visits to businesses throughout the district and continuing this critical conversation,” Senator Helming said.

Senator Helming will also continue to advocate for clarification with the Department of Labor on regulations related to youth training and for her bill (S.450) which creates a training wage for youth under the age of 18 who do not have prior job experience. She also remains committed to additional measures that cut red tape for small businesses.

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