



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## State Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblyman Michael Blake Introduce the Public Assistance Disclosure Act

GUSTAVO RIVERA May 18, 2015

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### *Proposed Legislation Would Identify Companies Who Heavily Rely on Taxpayers to Subsidize Their Business*

**(Albany, NY)** – Today, Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblyman Michael Blake announced the introduction of a bill that would require employers to disclose how many of their employees depend on public assistance in an effort to inform New Yorkers of companies who rely on taxpayers to support their business. The bill would require the Department of Labor to identify and disclose on their website the names of employers with 50 or more employees who work 26 weeks a year or more and ten hours a week or more and who receive public assistance.

“Hard working New Yorkers should not have to rely on public assistance to cover basic living expenses and New York taxpayers should not have foot the bill for thriving businesses,” **said State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. “At a time when we are fighting to establish a decent minimum wage across New York State, this bill will call attention to how low wages are keeping working families in poverty and leaving taxpayers to pay for companies who are not appropriately compensating their employees.”

Cost of living increases and poverty-level wages have left millions of working families across New York State reliant on public assistance to cover their basic necessities. A report by the University of California/Berkeley’s Center for Labor Research and Education found that on average 52 percent of what states’ spent on Medicaid/Children’s Health Insurance Program, Temporary Aid to Needy Families, SNAP and Earned Income Tax Credit went to supporting families with jobs. In New York, \$3.3 billion of taxpayer money went to providing public benefits

to working New Yorkers.

“The best way to improve economic equality is through having a quality job with quality wages. But when a hard working New Yorker also needs public assistance to get by in life, it is our job to ensure that everyone knows about who employs our people in need in large number so we don't let up until they have better wages, better opportunities and better services,” **said Assembly man Michael Blake.**

On May 7th, Governor Cuomo directed the labor commissioner of New York State to convene a Wage Board to examine wages in the fast-food industry and make a recommendation on establishing an adequate wage. If passed, the Public Assistance Disclosure Act could help identify other industries in our state that use public assistance at an alarming rate to subsidize the cost of their workforce.

The Public Assistance Disclosure Act is modeled after a law in California that will be implemented in 2016. California spends \$3.7 billion on public assistance to support working families.