



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo wants to see restaurant, bar and casino workers be allowed to safely return to their jobs for Labor Day

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. September 8, 2020

| ISSUE: **LABOR DAY, CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC; COVID-19, DOWNSTATE CASINOS GAMING, RESTAURANT WORKERS, ADDABBO**

As Labor Day approaches, it is a time to reflect on the many important contributions laborers have made to the advancement of the country, and New York in particular, such as essential workers. However, now with more than 1.5 million New Yorkers unemployed in July, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. wants to honor other laborers this Labor Day by promoting the need for getting employees to safely return to work.

As the country continues to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses remain partially or fully shutdown. This has caused higher-than-usual unemployment rates since March. According to New York State labor statistics for July 2020, the unemployment rate in New York City was at 19.8 percent.

Between July 2019 and July 2020, the biggest industry that lost jobs across the state is the Leisure & Hospitality sector, New York State statistics said. Within that sector, job losses were greatest in accommodation and food services, with a loss of 329,000 jobs, with the food services and drinking places being hit hardest with 256,100 jobs lost over the one-year period.

“Restaurants and bars in New York City have been able to operate with outdoor seating, but that is not nearly enough to allow them to continue surviving this pandemic,” Addabbo said. “By not allowing indoor dining — especially when just over the border into Nassau County allows it and with the cold weather approaching — it will cripple many businesses. Our city and county continue to meet the low COVID criteria set forth by Governor Cuomo that would allow them to open their doors. We need a plan to safely bring indoor dining back so our local restaurants and bars can not only survive, but thrive again.”

The Senator pointed out that according to the Governor, New York has witnessed over 20 straight days with an infection rate below 1 percent. It was further noted that Queens’ positivity rate seven-day average was actually slightly lower than that of Nassau County.

Another job sector that has recently lost thousands of jobs is the state’s casinos, which have been shuttered since March.

Addabbo believes that the downstate casinos could create credible reopening plans that include face covering requirements, limited capacity, social distancing and enhanced cleaning procedures, much like the New York’s schools are doing in preparing to safely reopen this fall.

Much like the restaurants and bars in the city seeing their neighbors in Nassau County operating with indoor dining, the state’s casinos are watching the other casinos on the land of the New York Native American tribes opening and operating safely, while also losing New York state revenue to the reopened New Jersey casinos. The shuttered casinos in New York are also not providing much-needed educational funds, as the state faces looming budget cuts.

“It is truly unfortunate to see so many casino workers being laid off because of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Addabbo, Chair of the Senate Committee on Racing, Gaming and Wagering, said. “Casinos across the state are suffering from the shutdown and they are being forced to lay off their furloughed workers. Over 4,000 casino employees — including 955 employees at Resorts World Casino New York City in my district — received WARN letters, alerting them of their pending unemployment. If we do not reopen the casinos, we need to take action to help protect the gaming industry in the state during this pandemic, which in turn will help their employees who make running the casino possible.”

Because of these reasons, Addabbo believes it is imperative that Governor Cuomo look into reopening the state’s casinos. Addabbo also believes that the casinos have a good blueprint to follow on reopening since New York’s upstate tribal casinos have been open since June without any major virus issues.

“This Labor Day we should honor the great strides workers have made in helping us navigate through this pandemic,” the Senator added. “We should also assist those who want to safely return to work and provide for their families. As long as measures can be taken to protect one’s health, I believe we should implement indoor dining and reopen our entertainment businesses, such as our casinos.”