NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel G. Stec

# Stec: State budget may include unemployment benefits for illegal aliens

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Senator Dan Stec today said budget negotiations underway in Albany include a proposal that would set aside $2.1 billion in unemployment insurance benefits to be paid to illegal aliens, ex-convicts and others working 'off the books'.

The so-called "Excluded Worker" proposal was advanced by Senate Democrats last month as part of their one-house budget plan. The State Budget is now officially late and details on the anticipated $200 billion spending plan remain largely unknown.

"My office continues to hear from residents who lost their jobs because of COVID and have struggled for months to get their unemployment benefits," said Stec.  "Instead of focusing on helping them, the Democrats are focused on people who are here illegally, ex-cons and others who have not been part of paying into the

unemployment system.  Their plan is another example of progressives catering to people who break the rules."

Stec said the Democratic plan would provide a weekly unemployment benefit of $600 applied retroactively to March 27, 2020 to July 31, 2020, and a weekly benefit of $300 from August 1, 2020 to September 6, 2021.  The total benefit could equate to $27,900.  To qualify as an Excluded Worker, a claimant would need to be a New York State resident, not have received payments from other UI programs and either suffered a loss of work-related earnings OR been unable to find employment due to COVID-19.

Applicants would not be required to prove that they are in the United States lawfully to be eligible for the Excluded Worker benefit.  The proposal also would make it unlawful to disclose excluded worker records to an agency that primarily enforces immigration law.

"Employers who pay people 'under the table' aren't contributing to the UI program," said Stec.  "That shifts the financial burden to those who are doing things the right way.  It's not fair and shouldn't be rewarded as this proposal certainly would do."

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