



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jessica Ramos

## Warehouse Worker Protection Act Passes Both Houses in the Legislature

JESSICA RAMOS June 3, 2022

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**ALBANY, NY** - The Warehouse Worker Protection Act (S8922A/A10020 - Ramos, Joyner) has passed through both houses of the New York State Legislature in the final days of the legislative session and is now awaiting a signature from the Governor.

Bolstered by the momentum of the Amazon Labor Union election victory in Staten Island and reporting on the [drastic spike of injuries in New York's Amazon warehouses](#), the Warehouse Worker Protection Act gained rapid momentum through the legislature after its introduction in April.

"I'd like to extend my gratitude to Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie for taking such swift action to help us move the Warehouse Worker Protection Act and protect New York's workers," said **Senator Jessica Ramos (D, WF - SD13), Chair of the Senate Labor Committee**. "We have a responsibility in the labor committee to ensure that our labor laws keep pace with the changing nature and conditions of work. The algorithms that drive these productivity quotas in warehouses and fulfillment centers come at a serious physical toll on the workers. We simply cannot allow any multi-national corporation - like Amazon, FedEx, or Walmart - to drive their profits on the literal backs of working people in our state.

Tackling the quotas is a huge first step, and I'm eager to continue the work next session to ensure that every gap that allows employers to treat their workers as disposable is closed."

Manual warehouse and fulfillment center work is one of the two fastest-growing forms of employment in New York State, and Amazon in particular has expanded its fulfillment center drastically across the state as e-commerce demand grew during the pandemic. The New York State Department of Labor projects that the warehouse industry will grow faster than any other industry in the state between 2018 and 2028. A [report released by the New Yorkers for a Fair Economy Coalition in May](#) detailed a 65% spike in worker injury in Amazon Warehouses, compared to a nationwide 20% spike in 2021.

“Protecting workers from the potential stress and physical injuries that they face as high-pressure quota systems become more commonplace in warehouses and distribution centers throughout New York, the Warehouse Worker Protection Act is a crucial workplace safety measure and I am proud the Assembly has passed it,” **Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77thAD), chair of the Assembly Labor Committee**, said. “Removing the incentives for e-commerce giants like Amazon to engage in unsafe practices, the Warehouse Worker Protection Act enhances workplace safety protections for thousands of New Yorkers and I look forward to Governor Hochul signing it into law.”

### **About the Warehouse Worker Protection Act**

New Yorkers working in the two industries that have powered the growth of e-commerce - warehousing and couriers and messengers – experience serious work-related injury and illness at more than 3 times the average rate for private industry in the state. The Warehouse Worker Protection Act (WWPA) protects New York State workers doing manual warehouse work, including at warehouses operated by courier and delivery services, from the hazards of abusive production quotas by:

- Ensuring transparency in the workplace by requiring employers to provide workers and their representatives with a written description of each mandated quota they are assigned, how the quotas are developed, and how they may be used by the employer for disciplinary purposes
- Requiring mandated quotas to accommodate basic worker rights such as rest periods, bathroom breaks, or compliance with other federal health and safety laws.

Recently leaked internal documents from Amazon demonstrate how these quotas and the meticulous tracking of worker activity builds a culture of discipline and high worker turnover into Amazon’s operational model.

### **The WWPA unified members of a re-energized labor movement**

The Warehouse Worker Protection Act was backed by the New Yorkers for a Fair Economy Coalition - comprised of RWDSU, Teamsters JC 16, coalition of labor organizations, small businesses, and immigrant and community organizations uniting to safeguard our communities from abusive practices of big corporations and achieve an economy that works for all New Yorkers. NYFE is led by ALIGN

(Alliance for a Greater New York) and includes labor unions Teamsters Joint Council 16, Retail Wholesale, and Department Store Union, UAW Region 9A; community groups New York Communities for Change, Make the Road New York, and Restaurant Opportunities Center New York; and national research and advocacy organizations Institute for Local Self Reliance, American Economic Liberties Project, and Strategic Organizing Center. The bill also had the vocal support of the newly formed Amazon Labor Union, who travelled to Albany to meet with leadership and advocate for the bill.

"The warehousing industry is one of the most dangerous as well as one of the fastest-growing in New York. Amazon alone opened an additional 30 facilities over the last twelve months, and we know that the serious injury rate at Amazon is 54% higher than the state's entire warehousing industry. High injury rates and dangerous work quotas, especially at Amazon, simply need to be addressed and thankfully the Warehouse Worker Protection Act helps address this urgent problem. The RWDSU congratulates the New York legislature for passing this important bill, which will improve the lives of countless workers and families by making sure that those who work in warehousing get home safe. We thank Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie as well as the bill sponsors Senator Ramos and Assemblywoman Joyner for their leadership on this important bill and look forward to seeing it signed into law," said **Stuart Appelbaum, President RWDSU**.

"Amazon is driving down standards in the warehouse industry that Teamsters have achieved over generations," said **Thomas Gesualdi, President of Teamsters Joint Council 16 in New York City**. "The Warehouse Worker Protection Act is needed to finally bring transparency to unsafe quotas that are pushing workers to the brink. Thank you to Senator Ramos, Assemblymember Joyner, and the State Legislature for your leadership on behalf of warehouse workers."

"The Amazon Labor Union organized because we were tired of our health not being taken seriously by the company. We've seen too many of our coworkers get worn down and injured on the job, and it's important to remember that the high profits we are creating for this company have a human cost. Giving us access to these quotas is a game-changer as we fight for recognition and prepare to bargain for a contract that recognizes the value of our work and the importance of our safety," said **Chris Smalls, President of the Amazon Labor Union**. "I'm grateful to Senator Ramos and Assemblymember Joyner for their work on this bill and look forward to continuing the fight for our dignity on the job."

"For too long, Amazon has profited off the backs of workers, putting their health and safety at risk. The Warehouse Worker Protection Act is a great first step to empower workers and paves the way for New York to lead with labor in the face of corporate abuse. We applaud the New York State Senate for passing this essential bill and urge the Assembly and Governor Hochul to take swift action to put workers first," said **Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN, leader of the New Yorkers for a Fair Economy coalition**.

"Amazon has used quotas to foster a climate of fear among their warehouse workers, forcing them to push their bodies to the brink or risk losing their jobs. The WWPA takes a crucial step towards reducing worker

injuries by providing greater protection against retaliation for workers who speak up or ask about their quotas and work rates," said **Irene Tung, Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst, National Employment Law Project.**

"This is a huge victory for worker safety. Amazon and other e-commerce companies have profited from the dangerous working conditions in their warehouses and delivery routes. The WWPA will protect 1000's of warehouse and logistics workers," said **Olivia Leirer, Co-Executive Director of New York Communities for Change.**

"Amazon workers in NY — and across the nation — urgently need protection from abusive, computer-driven hidden workload quotas that are causing skyrocketing injury rates. But most of all they need their own unions to stop bosses from threatening and intimidating workers till they drop and their bodies can't ever recover," said **Eric Frumin, Health and Safety Director, Strategic Organizing Center.**

The Warehouse Worker Protection Act now heads to Governor Hochul. The bill sponsors, New Yorkers for a Fair Economy Coalition, and Amazon Labor Union are hoping for swift action and urge Governor Hochul to prioritize signing the bill into law.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S8922A

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Establishes the warehouse worker protection act

April 28, 2022

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Jessica Ramos**

Do you support this bill?