



NOTICE OF JOINT SENATE AND ASSEMBLY PUBLIC HEARING

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOR
SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON BANKS
SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS**

**ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOR
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON BANKS
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, ANALYSIS
AND INVESTIGATION**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Subject: Impact of COVID-19 on the Workforce

Purpose: To investigate the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce, including unemployment insurance, workplace safety standards, and the impact of the federal Payroll Protection Program on maintaining employment.

August 13, 2020

10 a.m.

Web link:

ORAL TESTIMONY BY INVITATION ONLY

As of June 2020, the statewide unemployment rate was 15.7% and New York City's unemployment rate reached 20.4%. Compared to the same time last year, when the unemployment rates were 3.9% statewide and 4% in New York City, it is clear that workers in New York State are still in an unemployment crisis caused by the novel coronavirus COVID-19.

The Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 greatly enhanced unemployment insurance benefits for workers impacted by COVID-19 by providing up to an additional 13 weeks of benefits for individuals that exhausted their regular benefits under state or federal law, an extra \$600 per week on top of a claimant's normal unemployment insurance compensation, and eligibility for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for individuals who have not traditionally qualified for unemployment benefits, such as gig workers, independent contractors, individuals who do not have sufficient wages to qualify, and the self-employed. The CARES Act also included the creation of the Payroll Protection Program (PPP), which was intended to help businesses keep their workforce employed during the COVID-19 crisis.

However, as states across the country began experiencing an unprecedented surge in unemployment claims, many workers reported various difficulties in obtaining the benefits for which they were entitled due to the inability to reach relevant agencies for assistance and confusion over the process. Further, the additional \$600 per week in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits provided by the CARES Act expired on July 31, 2020 and it is uncertain whether these benefits may be reauthorized.

In addition, during the New York State on PAUSE order, many businesses deemed essential were forced to continue operations and bring in their workers during this period even though they had difficulties obtaining personal protective equipment (PPE) for themselves or their employees. Since New York State has fully entered “Phase 4” of reopening, many New Yorkers returning to work remain concerned about what their employers and the government are doing to make sure that their job is safe. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has not introduced infectious disease standards and has varied non-binding guidance, leaving states and localities to enforce workplace safety.

The Committees seek to receive input from stakeholders across the State related to the handling of unemployment benefits, worker safety requirements and standards, and the effectiveness of stimulus programs, including the PPP, in keeping workers employed.

Persons invited to present pertinent testimony to the Committees at the above hearing should complete and return the enclosed reply form as soon as possible. It is important that the reply form be fully completed and returned so that persons may be notified of means by which to testify and/or in the event of emergency postponement or cancellation.

Oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes’ duration. In preparing the order of witnesses, the Committees will attempt to accommodate individual requests to speak at particular times in view of special circumstances. These requests should be made on the attached reply form or communicated to Committees staff as early as possible.

Attendees and participants at any legislative public hearing should be aware that these proceedings are video recorded. Their likenesses may be included in any video coverage shown on television or the internet. In order to further publicize these hearings, please inform interested parties and organizations of the Committees’ interest in hearing testimony from all sources.

In order to meet the needs of those who may have a disability, the Legislature, in accordance with its policy of non-discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made its facilities and services available to all individuals with disabilities. For individuals with disabilities, accommodations will be provided, upon reasonable request, to afford such individuals access and admission to the Senate’s facilities and activities.

Jessica Ramos
Chair, Senate Committee on
Labor

James Sanders
Chair, Senate Committee on
Banks

James Skoufis
Chair, Senate Committee on
Investigations and
Government Operations

TBD
Chair, Assembly Committee
on Labor

Thomas Abinanti
Chair, Assembly Committee
on Banks

John McDonald
Chair, Assembly Committee
on Oversight, Analysis and
Investigation

PUBLIC HEARING REPLY FORM

Persons invited to present testimony at the public hearing on COVID-19's impact on the workforce are requested to complete this reply form as soon as possible and send it to:

Phone: (518) 455-4857

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I have been invited to make a public statement at the hearing on COVID-19 impact on the workforce conducted by the New York State Senate and Assembly on August 13, 2020. My statement will be limited to 10 minutes, and I will answer any questions which may arise. My remarks will focus on the following:

- I do not plan to attend the above hearing.
- I will require assistance and/or handicapped accessibility information. **Please specify the type of assistance required:**

All information below must be completed:

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Telephone: _____