

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



GEORGE M. BORRELLO
SENATOR
57TH DISTRICT

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

BUDGET AND REVENUE

STANDING COMMITTEES

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AND SMALL BUSINESS

INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY

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May 13, 2020

The Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
NYS Senate Majority Leader
Room 907, Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins,

As we move through the COVID-19 crisis, the foremost priority for us as elected officials continues to be the health and safety of our residents. We are seeing hopeful signs that we are on the other side of the curve in our battle against COVID-19. Rates of infection and hospitalizations are slowing as a result of our vigilance. This is the good news.

Yet, great sacrifices have been made to reach this point. Tragically, we've lost many New Yorkers to this virus and that human toll is incalculable. However, our citizens are also suffering from the rapidly growing economic toll of this crisis. The near-total closure of businesses statewide has put New Yorkers out of work. More than 1.8 million state residents have filed for unemployment and thousands are turning to food banks for help, many for the first time in their lives.

As state leaders, it is incumbent on us to do everything we can to address this unfolding economic disaster.

We believe the first step in that process is to take up measures that will help save many small businesses who are at or nearing the financial brink. Small businesses employ nearly half of our state's private sector workforce and are the backbone of New York's economy. If we allow this crisis to put them out of business, our state's economy, and more importantly – our residents – will suffer for years from a devastating loss of jobs and opportunity.

That is why we are respectfully requesting that the Senate resume its Legislative Session.

Our conference members have advanced important proposals aimed at providing relief to small businesses to help sustain them until their doors open again. A few of those measures include:

- **S8179-Small Business Relief Bill** (Borrello) – Comprehensive measure includes provisions that would give businesses a 90-day extension on monthly sales and payroll taxes; eliminate penalties for late payment of business and property taxes; make no interest loans and lines of credit from the NY Mortgage Corp., and extend the cure period for various violations.

- **S8172- Paid Family Leave** (Borrello) -- This legislation would support both employees and employers by ensuring employees subject to mandatory or precautionary quarantine are eligible for compensation through the paid family leave program after the utilization of any available paid sick leave. This measure would alleviate the burden on small employers of providing paid sick leave for periods of quarantine.
- **S8249- Unemployment Insurance and COVID-19** (Helming) – While layoffs by an employer typically result in higher unemployment insurance rates, this bill would recognize the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic by exempting COVID-19 related layoffs from being used in unemployment rate calculations for the following year.
- **S8319- Coronavirus Business Interruption and Municipal Recovery Program** (Akshar) – This measure would establish a financial recovery grant program through the Empire State Development Corporation that would provide monthly relief to businesses, non-profits and local governments who have suffered serious economic loss due to COVID-19 and who have not received insurance payouts or other state or federal assistance.

While we recognize that COVID-19 has created extraordinary challenges with regard to bringing our members together for the Legislative Session, we believe we can resume the session safely by taking recommended social distancing measures and other precautions, as we did for passage of the state budget. In our communities, vital services are continuing, thanks to the tremendous dedication and selflessness of essential employees. As public servants, we should be willing to stand with them and do our jobs as well.

The sacrifices of everyday New Yorkers across the state are making a difference and giving us hope that better days are imminent. However, we need to ensure that when this crisis has passed, that there are jobs and opportunities waiting for them. That is a goal that needs our support and action right now.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



George M. Borrello
57th Senate District



George Amedore
46th Senate District



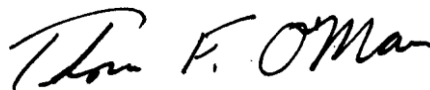
Patrick M. Gallivan
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Pamela Helming
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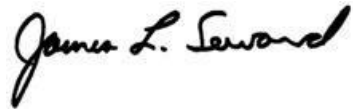
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Handwritten signature of Michael H. Ranzenhofer in black ink.

Michael H. Ranzenhofer
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Handwritten signature of James L. Seward in black ink.

James L. Seward
50th Senate District

Handwritten signature of Sue Serino in black ink.

Sue Serino
41st Senate District