

News from Senator George M. Borrello

57th Senate District

Representing Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and portions of Livingston County

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SENATOR BORRELLO AND GOP COLLEAGUES ADVOCATE FOR RESUMING SESSION TO ADDRESS SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF

Senators emphasize that rising toll of economic shutdown demands action

ALBANY, NY – With the latest unemployment figures showing that more than 1.8 million New Yorkers have filed for unemployment since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, Senator George Borrello and other members of the state Senate Republican Conference sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins urging that the Senate resume the 2020 Legislative Session to address the rapidly growing economic toll of the crisis.

“New York State has mobilized extraordinary resources and resolve towards combating the public health threat posed by COVID-19. That commitment has helped us avoid some of the truly catastrophic scenarios that were advanced at the start of the pandemic,” said Senator Borrello. “We need to marshal the same determination to tackle the economic disaster that has resulted from this crisis. The abrupt shutdown of our economy has created an unprecedented spike in unemployment at levels not seen since the Great Depression. Without intervention, this situation is only going to escalate, potentially to a point of no return.”

Senator Borrello noted that New York’s National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) has cited that small businesses have been hurt by the shutdown even more sharply than the broader economy, with approximately 75 percent applying for federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, which represents an unprecedented demand for assistance. He pointed out that while the state’s difficult tax and regulatory environment is challenging for business even in the best of times, such obstacles can prove to be insurmountable in a downturn.

“There are several critically-important pieces of legislation that members of our Conference have advanced that could determine whether countless small businesses in the state survive or succumb to this crisis. As state leaders, it is incumbent on us to do everything we can to help this sector and the nearly four million New Yorkers whose livelihoods and paychecks come from these businesses,” Senator Borrello said.

He noted that most of the measures they are advancing would not involve an outlay of state funds, but are generally more aimed at preserving cash flow. The legislation includes the following bills:

- **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; offer 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 and seasonal 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.

In their letter to Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, the Senate Republicans concluded, “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.”

In addition to Senator Borrello, the following Senate Republicans signed the letter: George Amedore, Patrick Gullivan, Pamela Helming, Chris Jacobs, Tom O’Mara, Michael Ranzenhofer, James Seward and Sue Serino. [see attached copy of today’s letter]

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