

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY
LEGISLATORS TODARO, LORIGO, RATH, AND MILLS**

Support for Inquiry into Processing of State Unemployment Benefit Claims

WHEREAS, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a record number of Americans are out of work, leading to the national unemployment rate increasing to 14.7% in April, 2020, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics; and

WHEREAS, over 1.8 million New Yorkers have received more than \$7 billion in unemployment benefits since the beginning of the pandemic, while \$2.1 billion in benefits were paid in all of 2019; and

WHEREAS, thousands of individuals have been waiting numerous weeks or in many cases more than a month or two to successfully apply for unemployment benefits; and

WHEREAS, despite the NYS Department of Labor's efforts, which include (DOL) hiring an additional 3,000 employees to process and distribute unemployment benefits, implementing a new online portal for applications developed by Google Cloud after the DOL website crashed due to the volume, and a recent announcement that the DOL will begin emailing and texting applicants a status update for their claims; and

WHEREAS, the severe lag time between initially filing for unemployment and finally receiving unemployment benefits is causing major financial hardship for thousands of New York families; and

WHEREAS, it is the finding of this Honorable Body that there needs to be an efficient processing of existing and new unemployment benefit claims; and

WHEREAS, it is the finding of this Honorable Body that the state Assembly and state Senate need to hold hearings with the DOL and appropriate agency heads to seek an action plan and additional measures that could be implemented to reduce the backlog of claims and efficiently process new claims, and this Honorable Body requests the state Comptroller's Office conduct a performance audit of DOL's procedures and processing of unemployment applications; and

WHEREAS, several state lawmakers, including state Senators Joseph Griffo and James Seward, and Assemblymembers Marianne Buttenschon and Mark Walczyk are calling for the above noted action to increase oversight and accountability, to improve DOL's management of the unemployment claims process.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, this Honorable Body supports a state legislature inquiry into processing delays of unemployment benefits, and to seek measures to increase the processing of new and existing unemployment benefit claims; and, be it further

RESOLVED, this Honorable Body supports a performance audit to be conducted by the state comptroller of the Department of Labor's procedures and administration of the unemployment insurance program; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to Governor Andrew Cuomo, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon, WNY delegation of the State Senate and Assembly, and all other parties deemed necessary and proper.

Fiscal impact: None.