

May 18, 2021

RE: Hazard Pay for Essential State Workers, S.496/A.6559

Dear Legislator:

As a taxpayer, a constituent and a member of the New York State Public Employees Federation, I urge you to pass legislation to recognize essential state workers with a \$2,500 bonus for working during a declared state of emergency (S.496 by Sen. Gounardes/A.6559 by Asm. Abbate).

Many of the frontline and essential members of the state workforce are PEF members. These members include the nurses and other healthcare professionals at New York's understaffed public hospitals; the state correctional facility staff and parole officers working to keep inmates and parolees secure and communities safe; the workers at the state-operated residential facilities providing continuous care and treatment and keeping our most vulnerable citizens safe and secure; the staff at the Department of Labor, the State Insurance Fund, Workers' Compensation Board, and the Office of the State Comptroller all struggling to help New Yorkers apply for unemployment, disability, and workers' compensation claims, and the staff at the Department of Health; and for the staff at all of the agencies that have been involved in supporting the state's response efforts. Many of these workers contracted the virus through no fault of their own and, in some instances, because of the lack of proper personal protective equipment (PPE).

These members literally put their lives on the line to perform their jobs at a time when many workers were ordered to stay home. By providing this benefit, New York will give these workers a small token of the state's appreciation. Many private employers provided their workers with a similar benefit. This bill is another way that New Yorkers can make sure that we take care of those who took care of us.

As my elected representative, I kindly ask that you work to pass S.496/A.6559 at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sincerely,