



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1475-2020, Version: *

Res. No. 1475

Resolution calling on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation to create a universal basic income program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Council Member Treyger

Whereas, The new coronavirus, COVID-19, has severely impacted the economy of New York; and

Whereas, Governor Andrew Cuomo issued the “New York State PAUSE” executive order, that among other things, closed all non-essential businesses, effective March 22, 2020; and

Whereas, The PAUSE order and similar orders in other states shut down huge swaths of the economy, putting millions of people out of work; and

Whereas, According to the New York State Department of Labor, the number of unemployed New York State residents increased by 931,600 in the month of April 2020, a monthly record; and

Whereas, During that same month, New York State's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 4.1 percent to 14.5 percent, the state’s largest recorded monthly increase since current record keeping began in 1976; and

Whereas, The number of private sector jobs in New York State decreased over the month of April 2020 by 1.8 million, or 21.4 percent, the state’s largest monthly employment drop on record; and

Whereas, On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued an executive order declaring a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures for 90 days, and on May 7, 2020 extended the moratorium on evictions until August 20, 2020; and

Whereas, New Yorkers have not experienced any mortgage or rent relief, leading many to fear an avalanche of evictions after the moratorium is lifted; and

Whereas, On March 27, 2020, President Donald Trump signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, an approximately \$2.2 trillion relief package that included, among other things, a one-time “economic income payment” of \$1,200 for adults earning up to \$75,000 annually; and

Whereas, This one-time payment was helpful, but New Yorkers need ongoing financial assistance in the form of direct cash payments during this crisis to avoid evictions, utilities shut-offs and hunger; and

Whereas, New York State needs to take action immediately to create a Universal Basic Income (UBI) program for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, UBI refers to the idea of implementing a universal payment to all citizens that is non-taxable and non-means tested; and

Whereas, The COVID-19 UBI program should include monthly payments of \$2,000 to every New Yorker over the age of 16 and an additional \$500 payment per child, up to three children; and

Whereas, Monthly payments should be decreased and phased out as income increases; and

Whereas, The monthly payments should be provided for individuals who are not U.S. citizens or residents; and

Whereas, The legislation should be drafted to ensure UBI payments shall not be included in determining eligibility for the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) or temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), thus participants would not be at risk of losing their public assistance or food benefits; and

Whereas, A COVID-19 UBI program will help New Yorkers stay on their feet, keep their housing, feed their families and stay out of the shelter system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign legislation to create a universal basic income program during the COVID-19 pandemic

CP
LS 14392
6/25/20