



# Labor & Employment Issues Client Alert

Pitta LLP  
For Clients  
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**“We believe in the ideas of family, mutuality,  
the sharing of benefits and burdens  
for the good of all, feeling one another’s pain,  
sharing one another’s blessing  
recognizing that at the heart of the matter  
we are bound to each other.”**

**-Mario M. Cuomo-**

## **ACCORDING TO LABOR LEADERS RECORD UNEMPLOYMENT AND WORKER UNREST FROM COVID-19 MAY RESULT IN SURGE IN DEMAND FOR UNION REPRESENTATION**

On May 21, 2020 the Department of Labor reported that last week 2.4 million people filed initial claims for unemployment. The nine-week total which dates back when states began closing non-essential businesses amid the COVID-19 pandemic brings the total to 38 million people. Some labor analysts believe that the unemployment rate is over 20 percent.

In the midst of the record unemployment rate, labor leaders and elected officials believe that there will be a surge in union organizing efforts. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started thousands of workers across the country including nurses, meat processing workers, fast-food and retail workers have staged strikes and walkouts demanding hazard pay, sick leave and personal protection equipment.

Labor unions have reported receiving a large volume of calls from nonunion workers fearful of contracting COVID-19 at their places of employment. The surge of calls has prompted the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to launch an online resource center that seeks to help nonunion workers understand their labor rights. The website is called [Solidarity is Essential](#).

Iain Gold, the strategic research and campaigns director for the Teamsters said “there is a pandemic that’s creating an environment where workers fearful for their lives are taking action with their co-workers that they hadn’t contemplated before.”

The Communications Workers of America (“CWA”) has also reported a significant increase in requests for help from nonunion workers seeking worker protections. The CWA posted a resource guide for nonunion workers on its website which includes a template for demanding protections and a guide to their National Labor Relations Act right to take a concerted action. <https://cwa-union.org/COVID19Organizing>.

At the first ever UNITE-HERE! tele-town hall members meeting, Senator Elizabeth Warren lauded the union for working to provide healthcare to all employees that have lost their healthcare by helping to draft the healthcare provisions of the Heroes Act which provides federally subsidized COBRA coverage to workers that have lost their healthcare benefits because of unemployment. Senator Warren said that she believed that more workers will seek to become members of labor unions after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

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