



Labor & Employment Issues Client Alert

Pitta LLP
For Clients
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**“Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten,
every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed,
every date has been altered.**

**And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped.
Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right.”**

-George Orwell, 1984-

MOMENTUM BUILDS FOR NEXT ROUND OF COVID-19 ECONOMIC RELIEF

The momentum is building for another round of COVID-19 economic relief as the pandemic is surging across the country with several states reporting record levels of infections and deaths attributed to COVID-19. The Senate Majority is expected to consider at least a \$1 trillion package to provide economic relief to Americans hard-hit by COVID-19. The pressure is increasing as the additional \$600-per-week unemployment insurance will expire on July 31 for the 20 million to 30 million Americans that remain out of work.

The Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has expressed opposition to extending the enhanced unemployment benefit because he believes that it discourages workers from returning to work because they make more money by staying home. However, Leader McConnell is facing pressure from politically vulnerable Senators in the Majority to extend the benefits.

The Majority in the House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act on May 15, 2020. The HEROES Act is a \$3 trillion bill that provides a second stimulus check, extension of enhanced unemployment benefits, debt relief, student loan forgiveness and nearly \$1 trillion in aid for state and local governments to help prevent draconian cuts to balance their budgets.

Negotiations for the next COVID-19 economic package are also being upended by the Trump’s administration’s opposition to funding for states to conduct COVID-19 testing and contact tracing. The White House has taken the position that they have already approved billions in funding for testing and that some of that money remains unspent. Both Democrats and Republicans argue that much more funding is necessary for testing and tracing as COVID-19 surges throughout the country.

NYC ENTERS PHASE FOUR

Today, New York City joins the other nine regions in Phase Four of Governor Andrew Cuomo’s NY Forward Plan, however, several indoor activities are being held back as COVID-19 surges across the country.

Phase Four will include the reopening of low-risk outdoor venues such as zoos and the City's botanical gardens with capacity limits (only a third of the standard capacity). The venues will have to impose mandatory COVID-19 precautions such as mandating that all visitors wear face coverings and practice social distancing protocols.

As part of Phase Four, media and television shows will be able to resume productions. Professional sports will also be able to resume without fans. Professional sports resumed this weekend with the Yankees and Mets playing two exhibition games. Both teams will start a 60 games season on Thursday, July 23, 2020. Phase Four will not include the return of malls and museums and indoor dining because of fears of indoor COVID-19 transmission.

To help restaurants mitigate the loss of revenue because of restrictions against indoor dining, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that New York City's Open Restaurant initiative will be extended through Halloween with another 40 blocks expected to open for weekend al fresco dining in the next few weeks.

New York City enters Phase Four while it has started to crackdown on "mask-off" parties and all-night parties in Astoria, Queens which included many young New Yorkers failing to socially distance and wear masks which prompted Mayor de Blasio to have members of the New York Police Department and Sheriff's Office issue summonses.

When discussing these mask-off parties, Governor Cuomo said, "it's wrong, it's dangerous, it's selfish, it's unacceptable, it's also illegal."

**“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-**

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