April 30, 2020

Hon. Corey Johnson
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10038

Speaker Johnson:

As representatives of New York City’s employers, large and small, we urge you to re-think the approach to the COVID-19 pandemic that is reflected in Intros. 1918, 1923 and 1926. This legislative package sends a terrible message to the business community, which is doing everything in its power to maintain jobs and to keep the city viable during this crisis.

All New Yorkers are experiencing the impact of the pandemic, not just workers identified in this legislation. The vast majority of employers are doing everything possible to protect and support their employees and to continue to serve their customers. The proposed legislation suggests that business owners and employers are willfully failing to meet their responsibilities, which is neither fair nor accurate.

Business owners, managers and workers in essential categories are collectively providing goods and services to keep the city going during the crisis, often at great personal risk and with uncertain prospects for resumption of “normal” business activity in the foreseeable future. For example, catering companies, restaurants, nonprofit organizations and for-hire vehicle and delivery firms have teamed up to ensure the most vulnerable populations have access to food and critical supplies. Large grocery stores are running long hours and already paying bonuses to workers as well as premium wholesale prices in order to meet local demand. Hospitals are suffering lost revenue due to deferring non-COVID-19 procedures, all while incurring added expenses for personnel and critical supplies. These and many other essential businesses simply cannot absorb additional cost and regulatory burdens.

Despite loss of revenues and uncertainty about the future, employers are striving to voluntarily maintain wages and benefits for as many employees as possible. Cursory research by the Council would reveal that these businesses cannot remain viable if they must comply with additional mandates. Moreover, larger businesses, especially those that have adjusted to working remotely during the pandemic, will take note of anti-employer actions by the Council when making their decisions about the desirability of continuing to locate in such an unsympathetic environment.

There is certainly a need for New Yorkers to come together to heal our city, protect its most vulnerable residents and workers, and rebuild our economy and tax base. Employers are your allies in these efforts, not the enemy. We ask that the proposed legislation be withdrawn and replaced with a collaborative effort to tackle the enormous challenges before us.
Sincerely,

American Beverage Association
American Car Rental Association
American Council of Engineering Companies of New York
Association for a Better New York
Bronx Chamber of Commerce
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater New York
Building Trades Employers’ Association
Construction Safety Advisory Committee of New York
Energy Coalition of New York
Food Industry Alliance of New York State, Inc.
Greater New York Hospital Association
International Franchise Association
Internet Association
Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
Metropolitan Parking Association
Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade
National Restaurant Association
National Supermarket Association
National Waste and Recycling Association NYC
New York Building Congress
New York City BID Association
New York City Hospitality Alliance
New York City Special Riggers Association
New York State Association of Grocery Stores
New York State Energy Coalition, Inc.
New York State Latino Restaurant, Bar & Lounge Association
New York State Restaurant Association
Partnership for New York City
Queens Chamber of Commerce
Real Estate Board of New York
Retail Council of New York State
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
Tech:NYC
Trucking Association of New York
Yemeni American Merchants Association

CC:  Members of the New York City Council
      Mayor de Blasio
      Governor Cuomo