



June 27, 2019

New York Moves Closer to Extending Unemployment Benefits For Striking Workers

On June 20, 2019, New York State Assembly voted in favor of New York Assembly Bill 6592, which decreases the length of time individuals involved in a labor strike must wait before collecting unemployment benefits. Under the law, striking employees will be eligible to receive unemployment benefits after just *one week*. Under the current law, employees are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits until they have been off the job for seven consecutive weeks.

The New York State Senate previously voted in favor of the bill on May 1, 2019. If signed by Governor Cuomo, the bill represents a substantial shift in the balance of power between workers and management. Compensating striking union members for lost wages is a high cost for unions, and that burden may now be shifted onto employers.

Takeaway for Employers

New York City appears poised to follow other states such as California and New Jersey that have recently passed laws allowing striking workers to claim unemployment benefits shortly after declaring a strike. Employers are advised to consider how this significant shift in the cost of striking may affect their labor negotiations. At minimum, unions will be empowered to continue strikes in hopes of strengthening their bargaining positions.

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We are of course available to assist and provide counsel as these situations emerge.