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Good afternoon,

my name is Gabriella Carr. I work as the Associate Director at the Tompkins County Workers Center in Ithaca, New York

The Tompkins County Workers' Center provides mutual aid resources and support around workers rights and labor organizing. We work with constituents across the state but with a particular focus on the Finger Lakes/Southern Tier region. I am also here today as a member of the Fund Excluded Workers coalition. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's Workforce Development Hearing.

I am testifying today in support of the Unemployment Bridge Program in this year's New York State budget, which would provide unemployment coverage to 750,000 workers excluded from traditional insurance with 30,000 people expected to get benefits at any given time.. This includes low-income New Yorkers - freelancers, self-employed workers, undocumented workers, people released from prison or immigrant detention, and those in the cash economy. Senator Jessica Ramos has re-introduced this bill - S3192 - to create this program and Assemblymember Karines Reyes carries it in the Assembly.

To ensure the Unemployment Bridge Program is revenue-neutral, the bill adds a digital ad tax that is expected to raise up to \$1 billion for NYS. This tax would collect a small portion of annual revenues of digital advertising services from companies with gross annual revenues of \$100M from these services - leaving no burden on the state, small businesses, or individual taxpayers.

Studies show that for every dollar provided in unemployment compensation, recipients generate \$1.93 back into the economy. The Immigration Research Initiative estimates upwards of millions to be re-invested right back into New York. The solution is clear - ensuring access to the safety net is morally imperative, good for workers, the economy, and our communities.

Excluded workers my mother, will always face a crisis, because they are excluded from the social safety net. This program must be included in this year's budget. Here's why:

My mom is a self employed worker who works on the books and for cash as well as being an immigrant but has documentation. My name is Gabriella Carr. I am a first generation Brazilian American. My mom, Sonia Tavares Da Silva Carr, arrived as an immigrant in 1984 on a student visa to learn English. My mom started off working as a cash worker under the table at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel for no wages and just tips before she had working papers. My mom worked in the hospitality industry until she found a pathway to citizenship in the early 90s. My mom eventually became a self employed entrepreneur subletting apartments of NYC residents to affluent Brazilian tourists in the 90s. Her business was completely killed by 9/11 and she found herself as a single parent and survivor of domestic violence without any income. My mom was

almost 50 years old at this time and couldn't find work in a professional field due to both xenophobia and age discrimination despite having a bachelor's degree. My mom found herself entering the field of home care and domestic work such as housekeeping and home care aid work ever since. My mom is now 69 years old and continues to work as a home care aid. She now does a combination of independent contracting on the books and informal cash home care hired by the family directly. During the pandemic, her client caught covid as well did the entire domestic staff and he died by march 25th, 2020. My mom once again found herself without an income and now people were scared to allow strangers into their homes. PUA (pandemic unemployment assistance) saved my mom financially. She was able to prove she was a self employed entrepreneur doing homecare. Now if she finds herself out of work from a client dying of covid which could very much happen again, she would have no social safety net despite being a lifeline to these families who need care. My mom currently works for 8 dollars an hour in 24 hour shifts as a home care aid which doesn't even equal minimum wage per hour for a private family. My mom has been servicing the affluent and wealthy of NYS the entirety of the almost 40 years she has been in America since immigrating. The people she works for have the social safety net of unemployment but she is left out and discarded as a latinx domestic worker. She has been paying taxes and contributing to social security, medicaid, and unemployment insurance for over 30 years. She is considered disposable and replaceable and not seen as an equal contributor. But those families wouldn't be able to work and receive unemployment benefits if needed without her managing and handling the care of their loved ones making their lives easier.

My story is not unique. Over 130,000 New Yorkers were able to access the historic Excluded Workers Fund, but in only nine weeks - what we witnessed is the enormous need for jobless aid - and just how many New Yorkers live in the margins of the safety net.

The UBP is a lifeline for the self-employed. Freelance work is a growing part of our economy, Often denied or exempt from critical labor protections - the UBP would cover 180,000 thousand street vendors, truly self-employed beauty and nail salon workers, writers, photographers and digital media artists, management and technical consultants, auto repair and maintenance workers, and farm owners.

This is a carceral justice issue. 20,000 workers re-entering the labor force after prison or detention would be covered during their first year post release. Providing recently incarcerated people access to UI is cost-effective. Recidivism can cost the state upwards of \$50,000 per person per incident; this fund would provide a maximum of \$7,200 per year in benefits (6 months times \$1,200), and would give everyone the security of knowing they could be covered if they needed it.

This is an immigrant justice issue. Immigrant workers pay over \$100 million a year into the Unemployment Insurance system in New York - but cannot access a cent. Undocumented workers pay \$1.1 billion every year in New York state and local sales, property, and income taxes.

For those in the shadows of the cash economy - the street vendors, the domestic workers, nannies, service and restaurant workers and day laborers often exploited in informal industries - the UBP would provide a critical support in hard times.

Lastly, this is a racial and economic justice issue.

The Immigration Research Initiative has [found](#) that 73% of the New Yorkers who would benefit from the Unemployment Bridge Program are non-white, compared to 27% who are white. Black and brown workers are disproportionately impacted by unemployment with for example Black unemployment rates typically running nearly twice as high as the rate for white..

While we continue on the path to New York's full recovery, we urge the state legislature to invest in social safety net programs that prepare us, safeguard our communities, and sustain our economy.

My families ability to survive and put food on the table depends on it.

To summarize, I submit this testimony in wholehearted support of the Unemployment Bridge Program. We are counting on you, our elected representatives - to bring this program home.

Thank you for your time.

Gabriella Carr

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Tompkins County Workers' Center