



## *Immigrants' Day of Action in Albany, March 2, 2010*

### ***2010 STATE BUDGET & LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: A BLUEPRINT FOR JUSTICE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR IMMIGRANTS***

**Ensure Equal Access to Government Services:** Establish statewide inter-agency language access and confidentiality policies similar to New York City's Executive Order 120 and 41.

**Stimulus Oversight:** The NYIC is playing a leadership role in the New York Stimulus Alliance to ensure stimulus funds and services funded with stimulus monies reach communities with the most need, including immigrant New Yorkers.

#### **Protect Critical Services for Immigrant and Low-Income New Yorkers:**

- **Restore cuts** to modest and critical immigrant services including the Citizenship Initiative (*\$695,000 or 28% cut*), New York State Refugee Resettlement Assistance Program (*\$2.1 million or 55% cut in top of 50% cut from FY'10*), and Adult Literacy Education (*\$2.6 million or 38% cut*).
- **Protect our schools in these difficult economic times and deliver on our state's constitutional obligation to our children.** Restore *\$1.4 billion in school cuts* and ensure funding of Foundation Aid to avoid destabilizing our schools. Ensure that New York City and other districts with high English language learner (ELL) populations get their fair share, which includes targeting possible Race to the Top funds towards ELL strategies and strengthening accountability under the Contracts for Excellence to ensure that funds intended for ELLs are targeted to ELL programs and services.
- **Improve accountability of funding to hospitals through the Indigent Care Pool and ensure sufficient funding for hospitals that care for the uninsured.** 100% of funding through the Indigent Care Pool should be allocated based on actual care provided to uninsured and underinsured patients. Protect this funding from budget cuts to ensure that the most vulnerable patients have access to affordable care.

**Ensure funding support for Haitian-related services,** including legal assistance to apply for TPS and social services and other assistance to meet their needs.

#### **Support Legislation That Strengthens Protections for Immigrant Workers:**

- Pass the **Domestic Workers Bill of Rights**, which would institute paid time off and a weekly day of rest, medical leave, health insurance, and an annual cost of living adjustment for domestic workers. [*A1470, Sponsor: Assem. Wright*]
- Enact the **Farm Worker Fair Labor Practices Act** to eliminate exclusions in labor law that allow farm workers a weekly day of rest, overtime, and the right to collectively bargain. [*A1867, Sponsor: Assem. Nolan and Assem. Breslin*]

**Rent Regulation:** We support the following two pieces of legislation that would slow down landlords from increasing rents on tenants with the aim of displacement:

- **Repeal High-Rent Vacancy Decontrol.** Currently, landlords can permanently deregulate rent-controlled and rent-stabilized apartments if the legal rent is \$2,000 per month or higher. It is estimated that New York City and the suburban counties of Nassau, Westchester, and Rockland have

lost at least 200,000 apartments to this decontrol mechanism. The tenants moving into the apartments have no rent or tenure protections. [S5149, *Stewart-Cousin* / A7416, *Rosenthal*]

- **Reform Major Capital Improvement Rent Increase System:** This bill makes rent increases for building-wide Major Capital Improvements temporary surcharges, so that once tenants have paid them off, the rent increase disappears. [S745-A, *Liz Krueger, et al.* / A1928, *Daniel O'Donnell, et al.*]
- **Reform Individual Apartment Improvement Rent Increase System:** A bill that makes three necessary and reasonable reforms that address the key problems in the 1/40th rent increase loophole: (1) it lengthens the amortization period for rent increases from 40 to 84 months, thus bringing it into line with the MCI program. (2) It allows direct agency oversight of such rent increases to discourage fraud. (3) It strengthens tenant notification. [S5296, *Daniel Squadron, et al.* / A5316-A, *Sheldon Silver, et al.*]

#### **Improve Access to Health Care for All:**

- New York State must preserve its public health insurance coverage for everyone who is currently eligible, and expand insurance programs towards achieving universal coverage for all residents of the state through the *New York's Partnership for Coverage Initiative*.
- Streamline enrollment and improve hospitals' utilization of restricted-scope Medicaid for emergencies by establishing a **community screening and enrollment process for emergency Medicaid** to enable low-income immigrants to receive a Medicaid card that can be presented in case of a medical emergency.
- **Enable federal Medicaid reimbursement for interpreting and translation services** for limited-English-proficient patients at hospital, clinics, and community health centers. [*Gottfried A733/ Duane S3740*].
- **Support community-based efforts to educate immigrants** about their rights to health and mental-health care, and address their growing fears surrounding their access to health care coverage, including public charge, sponsor liability, and confusion stemming from the national health reform debate.

**Ensure Equity and Services for High Risk Immigrant Students:** Approximately, one in every ten ELL students is a Student with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). These students are characterized as being several years behind in schooling from their peers in literacy and math and make up a significant portion ELLs who are at high risk of dropping out of school. We urge the State Legislature, the State Education Department, and the Regents to: 1) improve systems to identify, assess and place SIFE students; 2) undertake a review of current SIFE initiatives and articulate a more comprehensive plan for immediate SIFE program creation that matches the needs of SIFE and hold districts accountable for serving SIFEs; and 3) develop and implement professional development and training for staff that work with SIFE.

**Ensure full funding and implementation of law expanding the number of languages required for state and local voting systems (instructions, materials, and ballots- both paper and electronic- into Russian).**