

### NYIC Sways Senator Gillibrand to Back Immigrants' Rights



Immigrant communities had reason to worry when, in late January, Governor David Paterson announced that he was appointing Representative Kirsten Gillibrand to replace Hillary Clinton as New York's junior senator. During her two-year stint in the House, Gillibrand had backed several anti-immigrant measures and opposed a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

The NYIC urged Senator Gillibrand to reconsider her positions, and our advocacy, together with that of other elected officials and advocates, resulted in a commitment from the senator to support a path to citizenship for the undocumented, a moratorium on raids, and the Dream Act. Senator Gillibrand also pledged to oppose local police enforcement of immigration laws and renounce her prior enforcement-only approach to the issue.

Today, we are proud to have Senator Gillibrand as a strong partner, and we look forward to working closely with her to address critical immigrant community concerns and redirect other members of Congress onto the path to achieving just and humane immigration reform.

### New Yorkers Rally for Immigration, Health, Labor Reforms



On May 1st, the NYIC took part in a national day of action in honor of our nation's workers by holding a rally in Madison Square Park in support of immigration, health, and labor reforms.

Despite the threat of rain, many hundreds of New Yorkers from the city's immigrant, faith, and labor communities came out. Also joining us were Representative Nydia Velazquez, chairwoman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, who is poised to play a critical role in this year's fight for immigration reform, and Representative Steve Israel of Long Island, who pledged to work hard to move reforms in Congress.

In addition to calling for immigration reform, ralliers sought to step up the pressure on Congress to pass universal health care reform and the Employee Free Choice Act to protect workers' right to organize. The rally was one of dozens taking place in towns and cities across the nation.

## Albany Advocacy Day Helps Win Fairer Budget for All



Faced with the threat of devastating budget cuts to critical immigrant programs, the NYC mobilized close to a thousand New Yorkers to educate Albany policymakers and advocate before the governor and State Legislature as part of our ninth annual Immigrants' Day in Albany in early February.

In meetings with more than 60 state legislators and officials, including Governor Paterson himself, the NYC urged restoration of funding for critical immigrant services, including ESL, adult literacy, and citizenship assistance. We stressed that the budget must not be balanced solely on the backs of the most vulnerable New Yorkers, but that the wealthiest New Yorkers should be asked to contribute their fair share.

Our message was heard loud and clear, and it made a difference. In the end, the state enacted a budget that restored \$600,000 for the New York State Citizenship Initiative, \$1.9 million for refugee assistance, \$2 million for Adult Literacy Education, and \$1 million for TANF English Instruction grants. And in a victory for low-income families, the governor and legislature adopted a progressive income tax increase on the state's wealthiest, restoring a sense of fairness to the tax structure.

## City Advocacy Day Galvanizes Immigrant NY'ers for Budget Battle

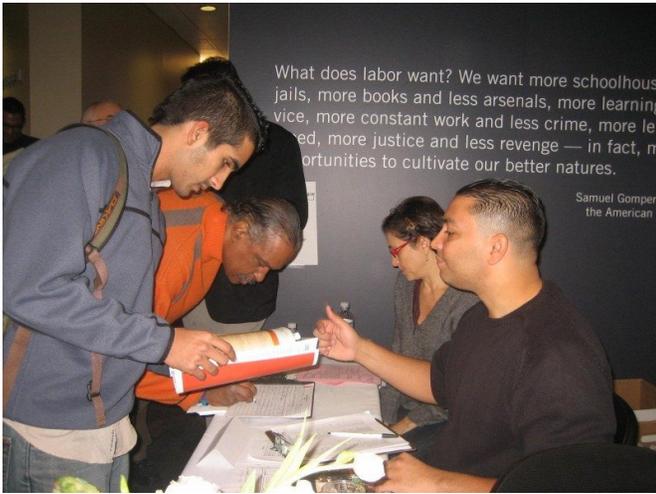


In early March, more than a thousand New Yorkers marched from Battery Park to an NYC-sponsored rally at City Hall, calling on the city to enact policies that leverage immigrants' commitment to hard work and entrepreneurial spirit in order to strengthen and rebuild the city's economy.

In some two dozen meetings with senior Bloomberg administration officials, City Council members, and other elected officials, immigrant community members called on the city to use fiscal stimulus funds to support crucial services for immigrants and to strengthen public-school programs for English language learners (ELLs), whose graduation rates are in decline.

The momentum and visibility gained from City Advocacy Day are especially important now, as the campaign for immigrant and ELL programs in the city budget kicks into high gear in May and June. Stay tuned, and get ready to keep vigil on the steps of City Hall!

## Immigrants & African Americans Turning Power Into Action



On a brisk Saturday morning last November, more than 200 participants from immigrant and African-American communities came together for the Building Bridges Initiative's second-annual conference, "Galvanizing Our Power for Action."

Participants shared lessons learned from years of experience and took part in skills-building workshops on topics such as grassroots organizing, innovative organizing models, civic engagement, and new ways of framing economic justice and civil rights issues. Attendees came away with valuable tools to help them continue to build bridges in their everyday advocacy work.

For more information about the Building Bridges Initiative and to sign up for updates, please contact Frances Liu at 212-627-2227 x246.