

NYIC IMMIGRATION NEWS

An update by The New York Immigration Coalition on issues affecting immigrants and their communities.

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BACKLOGS BLOCKING ACCESS TO THE BALLOT!

Join us on Thursday, October 7th, 12 noon at 26 Federal Plaza as we rally for an end to the naturalization backlogs that are preventing more than 100,000 immigrant New Yorkers from being able to vote in the upcoming election! Call Randy at ext. 236 to learn more.

IMMIGRATION

ALERT! Congressional Radicals Insert Draconian Anti-Immigrant Provisions in 9/11 Commission Bills

The House and Senate are considering legislation that would implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, and both bodies are working to pass their versions before October 8th, when they hope to adjourn until after the November elections. Unfortunately, anti-immigrant legislators in both chambers are attempting to use these bills as vehicles to enact some of the worst anti-immigrant measures this country has seen in years.

The House bill (H.R.10) contains extreme provisions that would put millions of immigrants at higher risk of deportation, further undermine due process for those detained and facing deportation, and make it impossible for many immigrants to get essential documents such as drivers' licenses. Anti-immigrant Senators are looking to amend the Senate bill (S.2845) to dramatically increase local police involvement in enforcing immigration law.

This is happening even after leading members of the 9/11 Commission spoke out against the inclusion of anti-immigrant measures in the legislation. Once both houses pass their versions of the bill, the different bills will be reconciled in a conference committee, which is likely to meet starting in October.

Please call your representative and senators and urge them to oppose the anti-immigrant provisions and future amendments in H.R.10 and S.2845. (See Action Box.) For more information, call Karin at ext. 244.

ALERT! DREAM Act Riding on DOJ Funding Bill

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) has re-introduced the DREAM Act as part of a Justice Department authorization bill (S.2836) that is scheduled to be marked up in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, October 5th. Please call Senator Schumer, who sits on the Judiciary Committee, and urge him to fight hard to make sure the DREAM Act makes it through the mark-up session intact! (See Action Box for details.) For more information, please call Minerva at ext. 238.

ICE Planning Immigration Sweeps as Election Nears

In the lead-up to the November 2nd elections, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is stepping up its efforts in major metropolitan areas to arrest non-citizens who are out of status, according to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), citing unspecified federal government sources. New York groups report that sweeps are taking place in New Jersey, Long Island, and Brooklyn already. Please visit www.adc.org for more information.

EDUCATION

Progress Made in Breaking Down Language Barriers Between Immigrant Parents and City Schools

For decades, immigrant and limited-English-proficient (LEP) parents have been prevented from being fully involved in their children's education due to language barriers and lack of translated documents and interpreters. Finally, after years of advocacy, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) and the New York City Council are seeking to address this problem.

On September 23rd, Schools Chancellor Joel Klein announced the creation of a centralized Translation and Interpretation Unit whose function is to "increase and improve the information available to parents, coordinate distribution of information, and provide standardized high-quality translation and face-to-face interpretation services at large DOE events." The NYIC welcomed the new unit as a significant step towards breaking down the language barriers between schools and LEP parents.

In addition, the City Council recently introduced Intro. 464, *The Education Equity Act*, which would go further than DOE's current plans by mandating *all* documents and signs to be translated into the eight most common languages and by requiring interpretation services for all LEP parents to be provided through qualified and trained bilingual staff or interpreters or through technologies such as telephone language lines.

Get involved in the School Language Access Campaign! For more information, call Jose at ext. 241.

CITY AND STATE BUDGET

Groups Push for Steady Human-Services Funding

Every year, proposed budget cuts leave human-services providers in a state of limbo, uncertain of the future of their programs. In an effort to achieve steady funding for human services in the city budget, groups including the NYIC have started a campaign to get this

funding baselined into the city budget. Groups are urging Mayor Bloomberg to issue a Financial Plan in January 2005 that includes full funding for four years for all ongoing human services, including ESL classes.

Funding for the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, which supports ESL and civics classes and legal services for immigrants, was appropriated for only one year and is not part of the Mayor's long-term spending plan. If successful, the baseline campaign will alleviate the uncertainty and disruptions that providers face every year during the budget negotiations. Join the campaign! For more information, please call Minerva at ext. 238

New York State Budget Still Unresolved

On September 19th, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver called the Assembly back to Albany for the purpose of overriding Governor Pataki's vetoes of additional TANF, health care, and higher education funding. In the end, however, the Assembly failed to override the governor's vetoes, because every Republican Assembly member voted against the overrides, and three Democratic Assembly members failed to show up for the vote.

Senator Majority Leader Bruno indicated that he will call senators back to Albany after the November elections but did not commit to overriding any of the governor's vetoes. It is possible that the Senate and Assembly will override some of the governor's vetoes or that the governor will reach an agreement with the legislature to support additional funding without an override of the vetoes. Many important programs were vetoed, including funding for ESL classes, child-welfare services, housing, and health care. (See Action Box.) For more information, call Mark at ext. 231.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & THANKS

Voter Registration Deadline Fast Approaching

Friday, October 8th is the deadline to register to vote in the November 2nd general election. Registering to vote is easy. Eligible New York State residents can register by mail or in person at their local county board of elections. Registration forms are widely available in English and Spanish at post offices, libraries, and various state, county, and city offices. In New York City, forms also are available in Chinese and Korean. Visit www.elections.state.ny.us to download forms. New York City residents also can download forms at www.vote.nyc.ny.us/register.jsp. As a reminder to all registered voters who recently moved, you must re-register in order to vote at your new polling site. For more information, contact Randy at ext. 236.

New Yorkers Fast for Immigrant Rights

Thanks to all the dedicated individuals and groups who participated in the *National Week of Action* events

from September 15th through the 21st in support of immigrant rights. The events included five days of fasting and vigils that highlighted an important immigrant issue each day. More than 100 people participated in one or more days of the fast, with 9 people fasting for the entire five-day period.

Following the fast, New Yorkers took the message to Washington, D.C., where they joined hundreds of others for a nationwide lobby day to demand action on key immigrant issues. Participants vowed to keep up the fight until they see action on their demands, including passage of the DREAM Act, SOLVE Act, AgJOBS, and CLRA. For more information, contact Jackie V. at ext. 239 or Minerva at ext. 238.

Immigrant Voices Heard During the RNC

Thanks to everyone who participated in the rallies, marches, press conferences, and other events organized by the NYIC in the lead-up to and during the Republican National Convention (RNC). Your work and support were critical in ensuring that immigrant issues were raised and immigrant voices heard in the coverage of the RNC. As a result of our efforts, more than 200 stories covering immigrant concerns ran in newspapers and on radio and television stations across the country. For more information, contact Benjamin at ext. 234.



ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE RIGHT NOW TO HELP PROTECT IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS

1. **Stop the radicals in Congress from poisoning the 9/11 Commission bills with anti-immigrant provisions!** Urge your House representative to work to remove the anti-immigrant provisions in *The 9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act* (H.R.10) or else oppose the bill in its current form! Call Senators Schumer and Clinton and urge them to oppose the Sessions/Miller/Cornyn amendment to *The National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004* (S.2845). Congressional switchboard: 202-224-3121. Detailed action alert available at www.thenyc.org.
2. **Call Senator Schumer and urge him to defend the DREAM Act in the Senate Judiciary Committee mark-up session on Tuesday, October 5th!** Tell him to fight hard to keep the DREAM Act in the DOJ authorization bill (S.2863) and oppose any damaging amendments that would weaken it. Washington, D.C. office: 202-224-6542; New York office: 212-486-4430; Long Island office: 631-753-0978. Detailed action alert available at www.thenyc.org.
3. **Call your state legislators and urge them to fix the budget and restore funding for ESL classes!** State Senate: 518-455-2800. State Assembly: 518-455-4100.

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