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Immigrant Blueprint for New York NYIC 2016 State Advocacy Agenda

Introduction to the “Immigrant Blueprint for New York”

The “Immigrant Blueprint for New York” is the New York Immigration Coalition’s (NYIC) long-term vision for New York’s immigrants to achieve their rightful place in this state. The Blueprint outlines a comprehensive plan for the State to improve outcomes for immigrant communities. The Blueprint is comprised of five major “pillars” that describe a key policy area.

NYIC 2016 State Advocacy Agenda

Each year, the NYIC will release policy and budget priorities that can be seen as strategic steps towards realizing the long-term outcome as defined by the Blueprint.

Below please see the five major “pillars” of the NYS Immigrant Blueprint and the corresponding 2016 State advocacy agenda.

Strengthen Integration Efforts for New Americans

New York should provide immigrants the full, robust opportunity to move up the economic ladder by ensuring that enough seats and programming for adult education exist for immigrants that need them, that limited-English speakers are able to access government services, and that workforce development dollars properly serve immigrant communities.

2016 State priorities include:

- **Adult Education & Workforce Development:** Limited English Proficient individuals (LEPs) are routinely held back from workforce training programs, despite being a priority of service. New York must better its investment in Adult Literacy Education (ALE) with an increase of funding by \$10.9 million to bring the total available amount to \$17.2 million.
- **Language Access:** Convene a statewide Language Access Taskforce to provide recommendations for how to improve enforcement of existing language access laws, and increase access for LEP individuals across the State, particularly in regions north of the Hudson Valley.

Educate and Empower Our Next Generation

New York must address the persistent achievement gap for many immigrant students and English Language Learners. Educational policies and resources must be directed to support immigrant students to succeed academically, allow all immigrant students the proper opportunities to achieve their educational and career dreams, and ensure that youth have the developmental resources to find educational and life success.

2016 State priorities include:

- **NYS DREAM Act:** Win the NYS DREAM Act (S.2378 and A.2597) or ensure that \$27 million is included in the enacted FY 2017 state budget to fully cover the expanded Tuition Assistance Program costs.
- **Multiple Pathways:** Continue expanding multiple pathways to a high school diploma by developing performance-based assessments, reducing the required number of Regents exams from 5 to 3, and investing \$65 million to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

Ensure Healthy Immigrant Communities

Health care reform is incomplete; New York must address this persistent gap and eventually pass legislation that will open proper access to health and mental health care for undocumented immigrants who are excluded from coverage by federal law. In addition, New York must continue to improve access, coverage and care for immigrants who are eligible to participate in New York's health exchange.

2016 State priorities include:

- **Health Care:** Expand health care coverage for New Yorkers by (1) committing \$10 million for Essential Plan coverage for immigrants who are permanently residing under color of law (PRUCOL) individuals who would otherwise be eligible for state-funded Medicaid, but who cannot enroll because their income is too high; and (2) passing legislation establishing a state-funded Essential Plan to extend coverage to all New York State residents.

Advance Immigrant Justice and Uphold Due Process

New York should end collaboration between local and state law enforcement and immigration officials, to improve trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, and to make our communities stronger and safer. Moreover, New York should ensure that all immigrants have access to legal counsel to navigate our complex immigration laws, and ensure that all New Yorkers have the right to due process and equal protection under the law.

2016 State priorities include:

- **Legal Services:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable legal services to immigrants by including \$30 million for the Office of New Americans (ONA) in the final budget, invest \$1 million to coordinate a statewide anti-fraud campaign, and fund a pilot project at \$2 million to place immigration attorneys in underserved areas around the State.
- **Enforcement:** Ensure full implementation of existing agreements with state law enforcement officials to cease collaboration with ICE and CBP. In addition, oppose anti-immigrant legislation such as S6032, which requires collaboration between local/state law enforcement and immigration officials.

Protect Immigrant Workers' Rights

Immigrant workers are often vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers because of lax labor law enforcement; farmworkers in particular (almost all of whom are immigrants) are denied the same basic protections under the law as other workers. New York must protect immigrant workers, pass the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act and meet basic needs such as access to driver's licenses, which are crucial for New Yorkers to get to work and be fully insured, making roads safer for all drivers.

2016 State priorities include:

- **Farmworkers:** Ensure that farmworkers receive the same basic rights and protections available to other workers by passing the New York State Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act (S1291-2015 and A4762-2015) or through an executive order that extends the right to overtime pay to farmworkers in New York State.
- **Driver's Licenses:** Expand access to driver's licenses for all New York residents, regard through regulatory, legislative and community education efforts.