



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

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LEE M. ZELDIN June 18, 2014

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Contact: Kara Cumoletti (518) 455-3570

cumolett@nysenate.gov

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Bill Would Grant Citizenship to Illegal Immigrants

ALBANY—Senator Lee Zeldin (R, C, I—Shirley), just released the following statement in response to the introduction of a bill by Senator Gustavo Rivera (S. 7879) that would grant citizenship to illegal immigrants and provide them with rights as such including access to Medicaid and tuition assistance:

“This bill, the New York is Home Act, is not a viable solution to the immigration problem plaguing our State or our country. I find it absurd that the bill’s justification calls this measure ‘commonsense.’ Absolutely nothing about this bill makes sense.

The sponsor argues that this measure will enable the full and equal participation of everyone in New York, but how can that be when these people are not legally allowed to work under federal law and therefore, cannot pay federal taxes? That fact exempts them from a major portion of the tax burden that the rest of New Yorkers shoulder, yet the bill makes them eligible for State Medicaid, a program funded by those federal dollars.

The bill also rolls in the DREAM Act, a measure I openly opposed earlier in the Session. While I understand that our nation is one built by immigrants and I appreciate the desire of this particular group to continue their education, I cannot in good conscience, support expanding eligibility for State financial aid to undocumented immigrants at the expense of citizens and other immigrants who are lawfully in our country.

The fiscal impact of this bill has not yet been determined, but I find it hard to believe that it would be minimal, given the fact that the bill will make a massive amount of people eligible for state benefits including Medicaid and tuition assistance.

We should call this what it is: a Democratic attempt to gain a leg up in the voting base. The bill does not provide any real solution to the immigration problem that our state or our nation is facing. What it does is provide extensive voting rights to a massive, untapped base and provides them with particular, expensive rights as an incentive.

Clearly, our country's current immigration system is not working, and it is my hope that the federal government develops a more effective process that will resolve the serious concerns plaguing this bill."