



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senator Gianaris Introduces Legislation to Protect Immigrants from Discrimination and Abuse

MICHAEL GIANARIS January 11, 2017

| ISSUE: **IMMIGRATION**



(New York, NY) – Senator Michael Gianaris introduced legislation that would add immigration status to the list of protected classes in the state's Human Rights and Civil Right Laws. Senator Gianaris's proposal would make it a violation to discriminate against a person based on immigration status and would expand current civil remedies for bias-related crimes to include those targeted due to their immigration status.

"Immigrants are under siege like never before and we have an obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of those who came to our country seeking a better life," said Senator Gianaris, whose own parents came to the U.S. from Greece.

New York's Human Rights Law protects people from a wide range of discrimination on the basis of age, race, sexual orientation and gender, among other categories. The law provides a remedy for those discriminated against in the provision of several services including but not limited to housing, employment and public accommodation. Current Civil Rights Law, which would also expand to include immigration status under this legislation, provides the opportunity for victims of hate crimes to bring civil actions against their attackers.

NYCLU Executive Director, Donna Lieberman said, "With our president-elect threatening to deport millions of immigrants who came to America to build a better life for themselves and their families, this bill is one way to resist the hate and stand up for a free New York."

Steven Choi, Executive Director of New York Immigration Coalition said, "We commend State Senator Gianaris on introducing this bill calling to include "immigration status" in the definition of "national origin" in anti-discrimination law. Given the current political climate that has been marked by an increase in hate crimes, it is more important than ever that we ensure that New Yorkers, including undocumented New Yorkers, legal permanent residents, visa holders, and others, are equally protected."

Following the election, documented incidents of hate crimes, harassment and intimidation soared throughout the country including here in New York. Senator Gianaris joined civil rights groups to condemn local hate crimes as well as the overall hostile climate.

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