



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy, Byrne, on N.Y. Sanctuary State Bill: Keep Dreaming

TERRENCE MURPHY February 7, 2017

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ALBANY, NY - Is New York set to become a sanctuary state for illegal immigrants?

As the debate over illegal immigration rages at the national level, the New York State Assembly this week passed a package of bills by a slim two-vote majority which would prohibit state and local law enforcement from cooperating with federal immigration authorities. State Senator Terrence Murphy says however that the bills are dead on arrival in the State Senate.

"I want to give everyone the opportunity to succeed, so long as they are here legally," Senator Murphy said. "Ellis Island was the bastion of legal immigration. As long as there is a queue of people coming here the right way and seeking work or refuge here, we cannot be rewarding lawbreakers with free college tuition, free healthcare, driver's licenses and a get out of jail free card. This bill is a slap in the face to everyone trying to immigrate the right way."

The Assembly package of bills contained several revolutionary provisions, including a measure which would prohibit social service agencies from determining whether an applicant is lawfully present in the country. Another provision would reward illegal immigrants with free college tuition.

Only two of Westchester's nine Assembly-members voted in favor of the controversial bill. Assemblyman Kevin Byrne, whose district overlaps with Senator Murphy's, joined six of his Westchester colleagues in voting no.

"My heritage proudly includes immigrants from Ireland, Germany, and England. Diversity is an American strength when immigration is legal. We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws," Assemblyman Byrne said. "As legislators, our priority should be to better serve our citizenry and support those who obey the laws of our nation and our state. Instead, we're debating the merits of free college for illegal immigrants while at the same time weakening current prison sentences in an effort to shield criminal immigrants from federal deportation proceedings."

Under recent interpretations of the United States Constitution's anti-commandeering doctrine, the State is not required to cooperate with immigration authorities, nor is it prohibited from doing so. This makes it truly a matter for lawmakers to decide what information will be transmitted to federal immigration authorities upon request.

In addition to ending immigration detainer warrants and the use of state and local facilities to hold illegal immigrants convicted of all but the most serious crimes, the Assembly's package would have also exempted New York City's controversial IDNY municipal ID program from the Freedom of Information Law and other forms of disclosure. In response by a recent attempt by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio to destroy all records associated with the program, Senator Murphy recently drafted and introduced legislation which would require a copy of the records to be maintained by the Office for New Americans and Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Murphy said that while security is paramount, he maintains the American dream of a great melting pot where all are welcomed here to integrate and enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

"Illegal immigration is modern day feudalism," Senator Murphy said. "The Assembly's sanctuary policies would perpetuate it, create an even bigger drain on taxpaying citizens and the labor market, and risk further exploitation by unscrupulous landlords and employers who skirt the law,. The federal government needs to get its act together, get the border under control and stop the flow of heroin, drugs and human trafficking. It is not the state's place to encourage that broken system. We are a nation of laws, or we are nothing at all, and the same goes for the great State of New York."