



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

State Senators Serrano and Hoylman Introduce Bills to Make New York a Sanctuary State

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL February 14, 2017

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(New York, NY) -- Today, in response to nationwide raids carried out by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), State Senators José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx) and Brad Hoylman (D, WF-Manhattan) announced they have introduced two pieces of legislation that would protect refugees, immigrants, and foreign students from the Trump Administration's ongoing discriminatory attacks against members of the immigrant community.

The New York State Liberty Act bill (S4075A) would make New York the first sanctuary state in the nation and protect immigrants from being victimized by unjust deportation procedures and racial profiling. The legislation would ensure that anyone in need of vital government services would not be unnecessarily questioned about their immigration status. The Liberty Act also prohibits local law enforcement agencies from stopping or arresting a person based on perceived immigration status or a suspected violation of federal immigration law, prevents them inquiring about the immigration status of persons contacting such agencies – including victims and witnesses – and provides the right to legal representation for all people facing deportation proceedings.

In addition, Senate Bill 4234 would prevent State and local governments from participating in any federal registry or database based upon race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or national or ethnic origin. Specifically, in order to ensure individuals and families remain willing to interact with state and local agencies without fear of potential entrapment, the legislation would prohibit state and local agencies from expending any resources to assist the federal government in the creation of a database with the purpose of tracking these particular groups.

"Our nation was built by generations of hardworking immigrants who came to America seeking new opportunities. New York State has always been the gateway to our nation and a leader in welcoming new Americans to our shores," said **State Senator José M. Serrano**. "Immigrants are the lifeblood of my district- and of this country and I will continue working to make New York a safe place for all who seek the American dream. Today, I urge leadership and my colleagues in the New York State Senate to join myself and Senator Hoylman in fighting to protect the rights of all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status."

State Senator Brad Hoylman, Ranking Member on the Senate Judiciary Committee said: "Donald Trump's unconstitutional and discriminatory Muslim ban was just the start of a concerted

effort by the President and his top advisors to attack anyone who does not look like them, pray like them, or adhere to their beliefs. With the federal government in the grips of a bigoted and xenophobic ideology, it's up to states like New York to defend the core American values of tolerance, justice, and equality. The package of immigrant protections I'm introducing with Senator Serrano will defend the diverse communities that make our state great and send a message that New York will not be silenced or subdued by federal efforts to undermine our rights and freedoms."

The Senators' package of immigrant protection legislation comes in response to aggressive new efforts at the federal level to crackdown on immigrant populations, including a nationwide surge in ICE raids last week that resulted in 600 arrests across 11 states, with more than 40 arrests in New York City alone. The ICE raids follow an executive order signed by President Trump on January 27th that would ban immigrants from seven predominately Muslim countries including Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. Reports indicate that President Trump's Muslim ban, which is currently being challenged in the United States' 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, has already affected upwards of 90,000 people around the world.

Javier H. Valdés, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York, said: "It's time for New York to stand up and lead the nation in protecting immigrant communities. Over the past week, ICE raids have terrorized immigrant communities and torn apart 40 families in the greater New York area. With Trump vowing to continue attacking our communities, it's more critical than ever that New York State pass legislation and do everything in its power to protect families and keep New Yorkers safe. The New York Liberty Act will help ensure that state and local government and law enforcement do not become part of Trump's immigration dragnet. This will help keep families together and foster public safety for all by promoting greater trust between our communities and state and local government."

"It is fundamentally unsafe to be LGBTQ or HIV-positive in over 80 countries. Immigration Equality's clients are LGBTQ and/or HIV-positive immigrants fleeing violence and persecution. Many tell us New York is the only place in the world they've ever felt safe. Thank you to Senators Serrano and Hoylman for introducing these critical pieces of legislation, which will make New York even safer for all its residents," said **Pamela Denzer, Client Programs Director of Immigration Equality Action Fund.**

"Empire Justice Center applauds Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the bill sponsors for moving ahead with the Assembly to enact these protections," said **Anne Erickson, President and CEO of Empire Justice Center.** "Empire Justice has been representing immigrants from our offices in Westchester County for two decades. We have seen immigration laws change over the years, but have never seen anything like this. Immigrant communities are a vital force in our state and they are under unprecedented attack. This legislation embraces our shared values of due process under law, to ensure that people are not detained without judicial warrant and to provide legal counsel to those facing a complex and daunting legal process that may result in their deportation from the very country in which they sought refuge. We urge its immediate passage in the Senate."