The New York City Council

City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Resolution calling on the Board of Elections to have representatives present at all Immigration and Naturalization Service ceremonies in order to pass out voter registration cards.

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Res. No. 1236

Resolution calling on the Board of Elections to have representatives present at all Immigration and Naturalization Service ceremonies in order to pass out voter registration cards.

By Council Members Fisher, Carrion, Malave-Dilan, Espada, Freed, Michels, Miller, Perkins; also Council Members Cruz, Harrison, McCaffrey, Povman, Quinn, Rivera, Robinson, Rodriguez, Sabini and Stabile

Whereas, According to a report released by The Department of City Planning entitled "Newest New Yorkers 1995-1996: An Update of Immigration to the City in the Mid-90's," over 231,000 immigrants settled in New York City from 1995 to 1996, representing a 2.7 percent increase from the average in the early 1990's; and

Whereas, According to the same report, as of 1996, more than one-third of New York City's population was foreign-born; more than half of the population is made up of immigrants and their U.S. born children and these numbers are increasing every year, with New York City seeing the largest influx of immigrants in an urban area since the 1930's; and

Whereas, Immigrants from all over the world have decided to settle in New York City in search of a better life and according to the Department of City Planning, a good part of the increase in immigration was due to "the growth in refugee flows and a surge in those entering under the 'diversity' provisions of immigration law, which were enacted to increase the flow of groups underrepresented in the immigration stream to the U.S.," implying that many of these new immigrants are arriving from nations where individual voting is not as valued a part of the political process as in America; and

Whereas, Now is the time to reverse declining voter participation in New York and make the entire population count when it comes to partaking in the most important and symbolic political process that America has to offer - the act of voting; and

Whereas, The City of New York was built on the labor of immigrants and in its current form, the City is a great testament to the achievements of the immigrant population in America; and

Whereas, It is necessary for recent immigrants, who will doubtlessly play a tremendous role in the future of our City and our Nation, just as scores of immigrants have before them, to register to vote and become an official part of the democratic process; and

Whereas, According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, in Fiscal Year 1999, 110,450 New Yorkers were naturalized which means that 110, 450 new New Yorkers could have voted immediately after their naturalization ceremony; and

Whereas, It needs to be made clear to the thousands of new immigrants that are coming to our City each year, from places like the former Soviet Union, the Dominican Republic, China, Jamaica and Guyana, that the United States and the City of New York want to include these newest New Yorkers in the free election process; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the Board of Elections to have representatives present at all Immigration and Naturalization Service ceremonies in order to pass out voter registration cards.

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