



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1515-2012, **Version:** *

Res. No. 1515

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign S.1336, also known as the “Immigration Fraud Prevention Act of 2011,” which would impose criminal penalties on any person who falsely represents himself or herself as an immigration attorney or as an accredited immigration representative.

By Council Members Dromm, Brewer, Chin, Ferreras, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Mendez, Rose, Williams, Palma, Lappin and Rodriguez

Whereas, For many immigrants, the pathway to permanent residency in the United States can be complex and confusing; and

Whereas, According to the most recent census, approximately three million immigrants reside in New York City, many of whom are recent arrivals to this great City; and

Whereas, New immigrant populations are prone to fall victim to abuse and manipulation and are often misled by unlicensed and unqualified immigration service providers; and

Whereas, For example, among many Latino communities, fraudulent immigration service providers advertise as “notario publicos” to take advantage of the confusion created by the fact that certain Spanish-speaking countries allow notaries to practice law; and

Whereas, Unfortunately, opportunistic scam artists have defrauded immigrants applying for citizenship, petitioning for permanent residency for loved ones, and pursuing employment-based visas; and

Whereas, Such fraud undermines confidence in the legal system and in legitimate and ethical immigration attorneys; and

Whereas, In an ongoing effort to combat such fraud, New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman’s office recently filed suit against a Queens County woman who allegedly defrauded hundreds of immigrants out of approximately \$250,000; and

Whereas, Furthermore, last year the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) announced that over a two-year period it conducted more than 280 investigations of immigrant service providers suspected of breaking local laws, which resulted in the issuance of 134 violations and \$288,268 in fines for running various scams; and

Whereas, The New York State Attorney General's and DCA's efforts to eliminate the bad actors in this field to protect immigrants from unscrupulous immigration services providers is admirable, but unfortunately, it has not adequately addressed this overwhelming problem; and

Whereas, The Immigration Fraud Prevention Act of 2011, introduced in the United States Senate on July 7, 2011, seeks to impose criminal sanctions on individuals who take advantage of this population by fraudulently representing themselves as immigration attorneys or accredited immigration representatives; and

Whereas, If enacted, the Immigration Fraud Prevention Act would aid in curbing abusive practices against the immigrant community and additionally provide justice for victims; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign S.1336, also known as the "Immigration Fraud Prevention Act of 2011," which would impose criminal penalties on any person who falsely represents himself or herself as an immigration attorney or as an accredited immigration representative.

JSM
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