File #: Res 0468-2024, **Version:** *

Res. No. 468

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.5964/A.8263, also known as the Empire State Licensing Act, which provides all New Yorkers with access to professional, occupational, commercial, or business licenses, permits, certificates, or related registrations regardless of an applicant's citizenship or immigration status, or lack thereof

By Council Members Hudson, Rivera, Hanif, Cabán, Gutiérrez, Avilés, De La Rosa, Bottcher, Farías and Mealy

Whereas, According to the 2021 American Community Survey, in New York State there are roughly 4.4 million immigrant residents; and

Whereas, According to further analysis by the Migration Policy Institute, about 835,000 of the immigrants in New York State are undocumented; and

Whereas, Undocumented immigrants face many barriers to accessing the workforce; and

Whereas, Notwithstanding these barriers, according to the American Immigration Council, immigrants make up a significant proportion of New York State's workforce at 27.2%, despite only making up 22% of the state's population; and

Whereas, Immigrants contribute significantly to some of the state's fastest growing industries, some of which have workforce shortages, including healthcare and education; and

Whereas, The growing workforce demand, in particular for healthcare, social work, and education, include a growing demand for workers with bilingual skills; and

Whereas, However, in New York State access to the workforce is complicated by legal restrictions that prohibit undocumented immigrants from obtaining many professional licenses, regardless of education; and

Whereas, Under New York State law, some immigrants are prohibited from accessing professional, occupational, commercial, or business licenses, permits, certificates, and registrations because of their

immigration status; and

Whereas, S.5964, introduced by Senator Gustavo Rivera and pending in the New York State Senate, and companion bill A.8263, introduced by Assembly Member Catalina Cruz and pending in the New York State Assembly, seek to provide access to professional licensing for all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status; and

Whereas, S.5964/A.8263, also known as the Empire State Licensing Act, would amend numerous New York State laws and repeal certain provisions to remove barriers for licensing that New Yorkers face because of their immigration status; and

Whereas, The Empire State Licensing Act would increase the workforce in New York State in important areas, including nursing and teaching; and

Whereas, According to a report from the Office of the New York City Comptroller, there are roughly 476,000 undocumented immigrants residing in New York City and many could benefit from a change to the licensing regulations; and

Whereas, Increasing the number of available employees by increasing access to licenses could help combat the significant labor shortages in New York; and

Whereas, Immigrants are huge contributors to the New York economy, and curtailing access to fields that would benefit from licensed and capable professionals only exacerbate New York’s labor shortages; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.5964/A.8263, also known as the Empire State Licensing Act, which provides all New Yorkers with access to professional, occupational, commercial, or business licenses, permits, certificates, or related registrations regardless of an applicant's citizenship or immigration status, or lack thereof.

LS #17062
06/03/2024

RLB