

STATE OF NEW YORK

6070

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 28, 2023

Introduced by Sen. GOUNARDES -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to establishing that it is an unlawful discriminatory practice to deny a refugee resettlement in certain instances

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

- 1 Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature hereby finds and
2 declares all of the following:
- 3 a. Under federal law, a refugee is a person who is forced to flee
4 their country of origin due to persecution, or a well-founded fear of
5 persecution, based upon their religion, nationality, membership in a
6 particular social group, or political opinion;
- 7 b. At the end of 2020, there were 82.4 million forcibly displaced
8 people in the world, 25.9 million of which were refugees. This is double
9 the recorded number in 2010, and the highest it has ever been;
- 10 c. Recognizing the importance of refugee resettlement, the United
11 States created the Refugee Act of 1980;
- 12 d. Since 1980, the United States Refugee Resettlement program has
13 saved more than 3.6 million refugees, and resettled them across the
14 country;
- 15 e. New York was one of the top four states in the country resettling
16 the most refugees in 2020;
- 17 f. On September 19, 2016, the United Nations General Assembly unan-
18 imously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,
19 which reaffirms the importance of the international refugee regime and
20 contains a wide range of commitments to strengthen and enhance mech-
21 anisms to protect these individuals;
- 22 g. Research from reputable sources including the Fiscal Policy Insti-
23 tute, Urban Institute, Pew Research Center, and New American Economy

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 find a positive economic and social impact of refugees across New York
2 State;

3 h. Governor Kathy Hochul reaffirmed New York State's commitment to
4 helping refugees on August 19, 2021 by welcoming those fleeing Afghanis-
5 tan;

6 i. The Statue of Liberty, a national monument and icon of freedom that
7 has been welcoming immigrants from across the world to New York State
8 since 1886, states, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses
9 yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
10 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside
11 the golden door!"

12 § 2. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 296-e to
13 read as follows:

14 § 296-e. Unlawful discriminatory practices relating to refugees. It
15 shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for the state, or any agen-
16 cy or bureau thereof, or for any other entity to deny a refugee
17 resettlement anywhere within the state based on any criterion, method of
18 administration, or practice that has the purpose or effect of discrimi-
19 nating on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, reli-
20 gion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression,
21 military status, familial status, predisposing genetic characteristics,
22 disability, marital status, or status as a victim of domestic violence.

23 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.