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I N   S E N A T E

March 4, 2014

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Introduced by Sens. DIAZ, KRUEGER, PERKINS, SAMPSON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Consumer Protection -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to implementing the immigrant assistance service enforcement act; to amend the executive law, in relation to creating the office of new Americans; and to amend the penal law, in relation to the crime of immigrant assistance fraud

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "immigrant  
2     assistance service enforcement act".  
3     S 2. Section 460-a of the general business law, as added by chapter  
4     463 of the laws of 2004, is amended to read as follows:  
5     S 460-a. Definitions AND APPLICABILITY. For the purpose of this arti-  
6     cle the following terms shall have the following meanings:  
7     1. "Immigrant assistance service" means providing assistance, for a  
8     fee or other compensation, to persons who have, or plan to, come to the  
9     United States from a foreign country, or their representatives, in  
10    relation to any proceeding, filing or action affecting the non-immi-  
11    grant, immigrant or citizenship status of a person which arises under  
12    the immigration and nationality law, executive order or presidential  
13    proclamation, or which arises under actions or regulations of the United  
14    States [bureau of] citizenship and immigration services, THE UNITED  
15    STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, the United States department of  
16    labor, or the United States department of state.  
17    2. "Provider" means any person, including but not limited to a corpo-  
18    ration, partnership, limited liability company, sole proprietorship or  
19    natural person, that provides immigrant assistance services, but shall  
20    not include (a) any person duly admitted to practice law in this state  
21    and any person working directly under the supervision of the person  
22    admitted; (b) any not-for-profit tax exempt organization that provides  
23    immigrant assistance without a fee or other payment from individuals or

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

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1 at nominal fees as defined by the federal board of immigration appeals,  
2 and the employees of such organization when acting within the scope of  
3 such employment; (c) any organization recognized by the federal board of  
4 immigration appeals that provides services via representatives accred-  
5 ited by such board to appear before the [bureau of] UNITED STATES citi-  
6 zenship and immigration services and/or executive office for immigration  
7 review, that does not charge a fee or charges nominal fees as defined by  
8 the board of immigration appeals; [or] (d) any authorized agency under  
9 subdivision ten of section three hundred seventy-one of the social  
10 services law and the employees of such organization when acting within  
11 the scope of such employment; OR (E) ANY INDIVIDUAL PROVIDING REPRES-  
12 TATION IN AN IMMIGRATION-RELATED PROCEEDING UNDER FEDERAL LAW FOR WHICH  
13 FEDERAL LAW OR REGULATION ESTABLISHES SUCH INDIVIDUAL'S AUTHORITY TO  
14 APPEAR.

15 S 3. Sections 460-b, 460-c, 460-d, 460-e, 460-f, 460-g and 460-i of  
16 the general business law, as added by chapter 463 of the laws of 2004,  
17 are amended and a new section 460-g is added to read as follows:

18 S 460-b. Immigrant assistance service contracts. 1. No immigrant  
19 assistance service shall be provided until the customer has executed a  
20 written contract with the IMMIGRANT ASSISTANT SERVICE provider [who will  
21 provide such services]. The contract shall be in a language understood  
22 by the customer, either alone or with the assistance of an available  
23 interpreter, and, if that language is not English, an English language  
24 version of the contract must also be provided. A copy of the contract  
25 shall be provided to the customer upon the customer's execution of the  
26 contract. THE INTERPRETER SHALL PROVIDE AN ATTESTATION AFFIRMING THE  
27 ACCURACY OF HIS OR HER TRANSLATION, TO BE ATTACHED TO THE CONTRACT.

28 2. (A) The customer has the right to cancel the contract within three  
29 business days after his or her execution of the contract, without fee or  
30 penalty. The right to cancel the contract within three days without  
31 payment of any fee may be waived when services must be provided imme-  
32 diately to avoid a forfeiture of eligibility or other loss of rights or  
33 privileges, and the customer furnishes the provider with a separate  
34 dated and signed statement, by the customer or his or her represen-  
35 tative, describing the need for services to be provided within three  
36 days and expressly acknowledging and waiving the right to cancel the  
37 contract within three days.

38 (B) The contract may be cancelled at any time after execution. If the  
39 contract is cancelled [after] MORE THAN three days AFTER IT WAS SIGNED,  
40 or within three days AFTER IT WAS SIGNED if the right to cancel without  
41 fee has been waived, the provider may retain fees for services rendered,  
42 and any additional amounts actually expended on behalf of the customer.  
43 All other amounts must be returned to the customer within fifteen days  
44 after cancellation.

45 3. The written contract shall be in plain language, in at least twelve  
46 point type and shall include the following:

47 [1.] (A) The name, address and telephone number of the provider.

48 [2.] (B) Itemization of all services to be provided to the customer,  
49 as well as the fees and costs to be charged to the customer FOR EACH  
50 SERVICE.

51 [3.] (C) A statement that original documents required to be submitted  
52 in connection with an application made to the [federal bureau of] UNITED  
53 STATES citizenship and immigration services or for other certifications,  
54 benefits or services provided by government may not be retained by the  
55 immigrant assistance service provider for any reason, including [payment  
56 of] FAILURE OF THE CUSTOMER TO PAY fees or costs OR OTHER FEE DISPUTE.

1 [4.] (D) A statement that the provider shall give the customer a copy  
2 of each document [filed with a governmental entity] PREPARED WITH THE  
3 PROVIDER'S ASSISTANCE.

4 [5.] (E) A statement that the customer is not required to obtain  
5 supporting documents through the immigrant assistance service provider,  
6 [but] AND may obtain such documents himself or herself, ALONG WITH THE  
7 STATEMENT: "THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PROVIDES INFORMATION ON REQUIRED FORMS  
8 AND DOCUMENTATION FOR FREE ONLINE AND BY PHONE".

9 [6.] (F) The statement: "You MAY CANCEL THIS CONTRACT AT ANY TIME.  
10 YOU have three (3) business days to cancel this contract WITHOUT FEE OR  
11 PENALTY AND GET BACK ANY FEES THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY PAID. Notice of  
12 cancellation [must be in writing, signed by you and mailed by registered  
13 or certified] MAY BE MADE BY COMPLETING THE CANCELLATION FORM INCLUDED  
14 IN THIS CONTRACT, OR OTHERWISE NOTIFYING THE PROVIDER IN WRITING AND  
15 DELIVERING SUCH FORM OR NOTIFICATION TO THE PROVIDER IN PERSON OR BY  
16 United States mail to (specify address). If you cancel this contract  
17 [within three days,] you will get back [your] ANY documents [and any  
18 fees that you paid] YOU SUBMITTED TO THE PROVIDER".

19 (G) EACH CONTRACT SHALL CONTAIN A SEPARATE FINAL PAGE TITLED "CANCEL-  
20 LATION FORM." THE CANCELLATION FORM SHALL CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING STATE-  
21 MENT: "I HEREBY CANCEL THE CONTRACT OF (DATE OF CONTRACT) BETWEEN (NAME  
22 OF PROVIDER, ADDRESS OF PROVIDER, AND PHONE NUMBER OF PROVIDER) AND  
23 (NAME OF CUSTOMER)." BELOW THE STATEMENT SHALL BE A CUSTOMER SIGNATURE  
24 AND DATE LINE. BELOW THE SIGNATURE AND DATE LINE, THE FORM SHALL CONTAIN  
25 THE STATEMENT REQUIRED BY PARAGRAPH (H) OF THIS SUBDIVISION, PRINTED IN  
26 TWELVE POINT OR LARGER TEXT.

27 [7.] (H) A statement that the [immigration services] IMMIGRANT ASSIST-  
28 ANCE SERVICE provider has financial surety in effect for the benefit of  
29 any customer in the event that the customer is owed a refund, or is  
30 damaged by the actions of the provider, together with the name, address  
31 and telephone number of the surety.

32 [8.] (I) The statement: "The individual providing assistance to you  
33 under this contract is not an attorney licensed to practice law or  
34 accredited by the board of immigration appeals to provide representation  
35 to you before the [bureau of] UNITED STATES citizenship and immigration  
36 services, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR  
37 IMMIGRATION REVIEW, the department of labor, the department of state or  
38 any immigration authorities and may not give legal advice or accept fees  
39 for legal advice[". FOR A FREE LEGAL REFERRAL CALL THE OFFICE FOR NEW  
40 AMERICANS HOTLINE AT (PHONE NUMBER OF THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS), THE  
41 NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AT (PHONE NUMBER OF THE  
42 OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL), OR YOUR LOCAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY OR  
43 PROSECUTOR." THE SERVICE PROVIDER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING  
44 THE ACCURATE AND UP-TO-DATE PHONE NUMBERS REQUIRED IN SUCH STATEMENT.

45 [9.] (J) The statement: "The individual providing assistance to you  
46 under this contract is prohibited from disclosing any information ABOUT  
47 YOU TO, or filing any forms or documents ON YOUR BEHALF with, immi-  
48 gration or other authorities without your knowledge and consent EXCEPT  
49 AS REQUIRED BY LAW." A PROVIDER SHALL PROMPTLY NOTIFY THE CUSTOMER IN  
50 WRITING WHEN SUCH PROVIDER HAS DISCLOSED ANY INFORMATION TO OR FILED ANY  
51 FORM OR DOCUMENT WITH IMMIGRATION OR OTHER AUTHORITIES WHEN SUCH DISCLO-  
52 SURE OR FILING WAS REQUIRED BY LAW AND DONE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND  
53 CONSENT OF THE CUSTOMER.

54 [10.] (K) The statement: "A copy of all forms completed and documents  
55 accompanying the forms shall be kept by the service provider for three

1 years. A copy of the [customers] CUSTOMER'S file shall be provided to  
2 the [client] CUSTOMER on demand and without fee."

3 (L) ON THE SAME PAGE AS THE SIGNATURE LINE, THE STATEMENT: "THE INDI-  
4 VIDUAL PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO YOU UNDER THE TERMS OF THIS CONTRACT MUST  
5 EXPLAIN THE CONTENTS OF THIS CONTRACT TO YOU AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS  
6 ABOUT IT THAT YOU MAY HAVE."

7 S 460-c. REQUIRED NOTICES. 1. Posting of signs. Every provider shall  
8 post signs, at every location where such provider meets with customers,  
9 setting forth information in English and in every other language in  
10 which the person provides or offers to provide immigrant assistance  
11 SERVICES. There shall be a separate sign for each language, and each  
12 shall be posted in a location where it will be visible to customers.

13 [1.] (A) One sign shall be at least eleven inches by seventeen inches,  
14 and shall contain the following in not less than sixty point type:

15 "THE INDIVIDUAL PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO YOU UNDER THIS [CONTACT]  
16 CONTRACT IS NOT AN ATTORNEY LICENSED TO PRACTICE LAW OR ACCREDITED BY  
17 THE BOARD OF IMMIGRATION APPEALS TO PROVIDE REPRESENTATION TO YOU BEFORE  
18 THE [BUREAU OF] UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES, THE  
19 DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION  
20 REVIEW, THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OR ANY IMMI-  
21 GRATION AUTHORITIES AND MAY NOT GIVE LEGAL ADVICE OR ACCEPT FEES FOR  
22 LEGAL ADVICE["]. FOR A FREE LEGAL REFERRAL CALL THE OFFICE FOR NEW  
23 AMERICANS HOTLINE AT (PHONE NUMBER OF THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS). TO  
24 FILE A COMPLAINT ABOUT AN IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICE PROVIDER CALL THE  
25 OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS HOTLINE AT (PHONE NUMBER OF THE OFFICE FOR NEW  
26 AMERICANS), THE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL AT (PHONE  
27 NUMBER OF THE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL), OR YOUR LOCAL DISTRICT ATTOR-  
28 NEY OR PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE AT (PHONE NUMBER OF THE LOCAL DISTRICT ATTOR-  
29 NEY)." THE SERVICE PROVIDER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE ACCU-  
30 RATE AND UP-TO-DATE PHONE NUMBERS REQUIRED ON SUCH SIGN.

31 [2.] (B) A separate sign shall be posted in a location visible to  
32 customers in conspicuous size type and which contains the schedule of  
33 fees for services offered and the statement: "YOU MAY CANCEL ANY  
34 CONTRACT WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS AND GET BACK YOUR DOCUMENTS AND ANY  
35 MONEY YOU PAID."

36 [S 460-d.] 2. Notice in advertisements. Every provider who advertises  
37 immigrant assistance services, whether by signs, pamphlets, newspapers,  
38 or any other written communication shall post or otherwise include with  
39 such advertisement a notice in the language in which the advertisement  
40 appears. This notice shall be of a conspicuous size and shall state:  
41 "THE INDIVIDUAL [PROVIDING] OFFERING TO PROVIDE IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE [TO  
42 YOU] SERVICES IS NOT AN ATTORNEY LICENSED TO PRACTICE LAW OR ACCREDITED  
43 BY THE BOARD OF IMMIGRATION APPEALS TO PROVIDE REPRESENTATION [TO YOU]  
44 BEFORE THE [BUREAU OF] UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION  
45 SERVICES, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR  
46 IMMIGRATION REVIEW, THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE OR  
47 ANY IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES AND MAY NOT GIVE LEGAL ADVICE OR ACCEPT FEES  
48 FOR LEGAL ADVICE[".]."

49 S [460-e.] 460-D. Prohibited acts. No provider shall:

50 1. Give legal advice, or otherwise engage in the practice of law.

51 2. Assume, use or advertise the title of lawyer or attorney at law, or  
52 equivalent terms in the English language or any other language, or  
53 represent or advertise other titles or credentials, including but not  
54 limited to "notary public", "accredited representative of the board of  
55 immigration appeals[", "NOTARIO PUBLIC", "NOTARIO", "IMMIGRATION  
56 SPECIALIST" or "immigration consultant," that could cause a customer to

1 believe that the person possesses special professional skills or is  
2 authorized to provide advice on an immigration matter; provided that a  
3 notary public licensed by the secretary of state may use the term "nota-  
4 ry public."

5 3. State or imply that the [person] PROVIDER can or will obtain  
6 special favors from or has special influence with the [bureau of] UNITED  
7 STATES citizenship and immigration services, THE UNITED STATES DEPART-  
8 MENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW  
9 or any other governmental entity[, or threaten].

10 4. THREATEN to report the [client] CUSTOMER to immigration or other  
11 authorities or THREATEN TO undermine in any way the [client's] CUSTOM-  
12 ER'S immigration status or attempt to secure lawful status.

13 [4.] 5. Demand or retain any fees or compensation for services not  
14 performed, SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED IN THE FUTURE, or costs that are not  
15 actually incurred.

16 [5.] 6. Advise, direct or permit a customer to answer questions on a  
17 government document, or in a discussion with a government official, in a  
18 specific way where the provider knows or has reasonable cause to believe  
19 that the answers are false or misleading.

20 [6.] 7. Disclose any information to, or file any forms or documents  
21 with, immigration or other authorities ON BEHALF OF A CUSTOMER without  
22 the knowledge or consent of the customer EXCEPT WHERE REQUIRED BY LAW. A  
23 PROVIDER SHALL PROMPTLY NOTIFY THE CUSTOMER IN WRITING WHEN SUCH PROVID-  
24 ER HAS DISCLOSED ANY INFORMATION TO OR FILED ANY FORM OR DOCUMENT WITH  
25 IMMIGRATION OR OTHER AUTHORITIES WHEN SUCH DISCLOSURE OR FILING WAS  
26 REQUIRED BY LAW AND DONE WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF THE  
27 CUSTOMER.

28 [7.] 8. Fail to provide customers with copies of documents filed with  
29 a governmental entity or refuse to return original documents supplied  
30 by, prepared on behalf of, or paid for by the customer, upon the request  
31 of the customer, or upon termination of the contract. Original documents  
32 must be returned promptly upon request and upon cancellation of the  
33 contract, even if there is a fee dispute between the immigration assist-  
34 ance service provider and the customer.

35 [8.] 9. Make any misrepresentation or false statement, directly or  
36 indirectly.

37 [9.] 10. Make any guarantee or promise to a customer, unless there is  
38 a basis in fact for such representation, and the guarantee or promise is  
39 in writing.

40 [10.] 11. Represent that a fee may be charged, or charge a fee for the  
41 distribution, provision or submission of an official document or form  
42 issued or promulgated by a state or federal governmental entity, or for  
43 a referral of the customer to another person or entity that is qualified  
44 to provide services or assistance which the immigrant assistance service  
45 provider will not provide.

46 12. FOR A FEE OR OTHER COMPENSATION REFER A CUSTOMER TO AN ATTORNEY OR  
47 ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL OR ENTITY THAT CAN PROVIDE SERVICES THAT THE IMMI-  
48 GRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICE PROVIDER CANNOT PROVIDE.

49 13. GIVE ADVICE ON THE DETERMINATION OF A PERSON'S IMMIGRATION STATUS,  
50 INCLUDING ADVISING HIM OR HER AS TO ANSWERS ON A GOVERNMENT FORM REGARD-  
51 ING SUCH DETERMINATION.

52 14. PROMISE TO EXPEDITE IMMIGRATION OR OTHER IMMIGRATION RELATED  
53 GOVERNMENTAL BENEFIT PROCESSES, THROUGH CLAIMS TO HAVE SPECIAL RELATION-  
54 SHIPS WITH OR SPECIAL ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WHO WILL EXPEDITE  
55 APPLICATIONS OR ISSUE FAVORABLE DECISIONS FOR ANY REASON OTHER THAN THE  
56 MERITS OF THE APPLICATION.

15. KNOWINGLY PROVIDE MISLEADING OR FALSE INFORMATION TO A NONCITIZEN ABOUT HIS OR HER INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY'S ELIGIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION BENEFITS OR STATUS, OR TO NONCITIZENS OR CITIZENS ABOUT THEIR INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY'S ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER GOVERNMENT BENEFITS, WITH THE INTENT TO INDUCE AN INDIVIDUAL TO EMPLOY THE SERVICES OF THE SERVICE PROVIDER TO OBTAIN SUCH IMMIGRATION BENEFITS OR STATUS, OR SUCH OTHER GOVERNMENT BENEFITS.

S [460-f.] 460-E. Retention of documents. [Every] A provider shall retain copies of all documents prepared or obtained in connection with a customer's request for assistance for a period of three years after a written contract is executed by the provider and the customer, whether or not such contract is subsequently cancelled.

S [460-g.] 460-F. Surety requirement. Every provider shall maintain in full force and effect FOR THE ENTIRE PERIOD DURING WHICH THE PROVIDER PROVIDES IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES AND FOR ONE YEAR AFTER THE PROVIDER CEASED TO DO BUSINESS AS AN IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICE PROVIDER, a bond, contract of indemnity, or irrevocable letter of credit, payable to the people of the state of New York, in the principal amount of fifty thousand dollars; provided, however, that every provider that receives in excess of two hundred fifty thousand dollars in total fees and other compensation for providing immigrant assistance service during any twelve-month period shall maintain in full force and effect a bond, contract of indemnity, or irrevocable letter of credit, payable to the people of the state of New York, in the principal amount of twenty percent of such total fees and compensation. Such surety shall be for the benefit of any customer who does not receive a refund of fees from the provider to which he or she is entitled, or is otherwise injured by the provider. The attorney general on behalf of the customer or the customer in his or her own name, may maintain an action against the provider and the surety.

S 460-G. ACTION. AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS HARMED BY A PROVIDER AS A RESULT OF A PROVIDER'S VIOLATION OF THIS ARTICLE MAY BRING AN ACTION IN HIS OR HER OWN NAME AGAINST A PROVIDER TO ENJOIN SUCH UNLAWFUL ACT OR PRACTICE, AN ACTION TO RECOVER HIS OR HER ACTUAL DAMAGES OR TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS, WHICHEVER IS GREATER, OR BOTH SUCH ACTIONS, IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER REMEDY AVAILABLE IN LAW OR EQUITY. THE COURT MAY AWARD COSTS AND REASONABLE ATTORNEY'S FEES TO A PREVAILING PLAINTIFF.

S 460-i. Violations. Any violation of any provision of this article shall be a class A misdemeanor, and upon conviction THEREOF, SHALL BE PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS, OR BY IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT MORE THAN ONE YEAR, OR BY BOTH SUCH FINE AND IMPRISONMENT; PROVIDED HOWEVER, A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE SHALL BE PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS OR BY IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT MORE THAN ONE YEAR, OR BY BOTH SUCH FINE AND IMPRISONMENT. IN ADDITION, the court may order as part of the sentence imposed restitution or reparation to the victim of the crime pursuant to section 60.27 of the penal law. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SHALL HAVE THE POWER TO PROSECUTE ANY VIOLATION OF THIS ARTICLE.

S 4. Section 460-h of the general business law, as added by chapter 463 of the laws of 2004, is amended to read as follows:

S 460-h. Enforcement. Upon any violation of this article, an application may be made by the attorney general in the name of the people of the state to a court having jurisdiction to issue an injunction, and upon notice to the respondent of not fewer than five days, to enjoin and restrain the continuance of the violation. If it shall appear to the satisfaction of the court or justice that the defendant has, in fact,

1 violated this article, an injunction may be issued by such court or  
2 justice, enjoining and restraining any further violation, without  
3 requiring proof that any person has, in fact, been injured or damaged  
4 thereby. In any such proceeding, the court may make allowances to the  
5 attorney general as provided in paragraph six of subdivision (a) of  
6 section eighty-three hundred three of the civil practice law and rules,  
7 and direct restitution. Whenever the court shall determine that a  
8 violation of this article has occurred, the court may impose a civil  
9 penalty of not more than [seven thousand five hundred dollars] TEN THOU-  
10 SAND DOLLARS for each violation.

11 S 5. The general business law is amended by adding a new section 460-k  
12 to read as follows:

13 S 460-K. ADDITIONAL CIVIL PENALTY FOR CONSUMER FRAUDS COMMITTED  
14 AGAINST USERS OF IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES. 1. (A) IN ADDITION TO  
15 ANY LIABILITY FOR DAMAGES OR A CIVIL PENALTY IMPOSED PURSUANT TO  
16 SECTIONS THREE HUNDRED FORTY-NINE, THREE HUNDRED FIFTY-C AND THREE  
17 HUNDRED FIFTY-D OF THIS CHAPTER, REGARDING DECEPTIVE PRACTICES AND FALSE  
18 ADVERTISING, AND SUBDIVISION TWELVE OF SECTION SIXTY-THREE OF THE EXECU-  
19 TIVE LAW, REGARDING PROCEEDINGS BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR EQUITABLE  
20 RELIEF AGAINST FRAUDULENT OR ILLEGAL CONSUMER FRAUD, A PERSON OR ENTITY  
21 WHO ENGAGES IN ANY CONDUCT PROHIBITED BY SAID PROVISIONS OF LAW, AND  
22 WHOSE CONDUCT IS PERPETRATED AGAINST ONE OR MORE PERSONS SEEKING OR  
23 USING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES, MAY BE LIABLE FOR AN ADDITIONAL  
24 CIVIL PENALTY NOT TO EXCEED TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
25 PARAGRAPH (B) OF THIS SUBDIVISION.

26 (B) IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO IMPOSE A SUPPLEMENTAL CIVIL PENALTY  
27 PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH (A) OF THIS SUBDIVISION, AND THE AMOUNT OF ANY  
28 SUCH PENALTY, THE COURT SHALL CONSIDER, IN ADDITION TO OTHER APPROPRIATE  
29 FACTORS, THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE FOLLOWING FACTORS ARE PRESENT:

30 (1) WHETHER THE DEFENDANT KNEW THAT HIS OR HER CONDUCT WAS DIRECTED TO  
31 ONE OR MORE PERSONS SEEKING OR USING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES OR  
32 WHETHER THE DEFENDANT KNOWINGLY ACTED WITH DISREGARD FOR THE RIGHTS OF A  
33 PERSON SEEKING OR USING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES;

34 (2) WHETHER THE DEFENDANT'S CONDUCT: (I) CAUSED A PERSON SEEKING OR  
35 USING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES TO SUFFER LOSS OR ENCUMBRANCE OF A  
36 PRIMARY RESIDENCE, LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT OR SOURCE OF INCOME, SUBSTANTIAL  
37 LOSS OF PROPERTY OR ASSETS ESSENTIAL TO THE HEALTH OR WELFARE OF THE  
38 PERSON SEEKING OR USING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES; OR (II) WHETHER  
39 ONE OR MORE PERSONS SEEKING OR USING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES WERE  
40 SUBSTANTIALLY MORE VULNERABLE TO THE DEFENDANT'S CONDUCT BECAUSE OF  
41 IMPAIRED UNDERSTANDING, OR ANY OTHER PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGE, AND ACTUAL-  
42 LY SUFFERED PHYSICAL OR ECONOMIC DAMAGE RESULTING FROM THE DEFENDANT'S  
43 CONDUCT.

44 2. RESTITUTION ORDERED PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF LAW LISTED IN  
45 SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS SECTION OR PURSUANT TO ANY OTHER SECTION OF LAW  
46 SHALL BE GIVEN PRIORITY OVER THE IMPOSITION OF CIVIL PENALTIES ORDERED  
47 BY THE COURT UNDER THIS SECTION.

48 S 6. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 94-b to read  
49 as follows:

50 S 94-B. OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT. THE LEGISLA-  
51 TURE HEREBY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT, ACCORDING TO THE 2010 CENSUS,  
52 APPROXIMATELY TWENTY-TWO PERCENT OF NEW YORKERS WERE NOT BORN IN THE  
53 UNITED STATES, NINE PERCENT ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. FOR YEARS IMMI-  
54 GRANTS HAVE COME TO THE UNITED STATES TO MAKE A BETTER LIFE FOR THEM-  
55 SELVES. IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO THE STATE THAT THESE NEW AMERICANS  
56 BE GIVEN THE TOOLS TO ASSIST THEM IN MAKING A BETTER LIFE FOR THEM-

SELVES, PARTICULARLY THROUGH PROGRAMS THAT HELP DEVELOP AND LEVERAGE THEIR SKILLS AND STRENGTHEN THEIR CONNECTIONS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THROUGH PROGRAMS TO REDUCE EXPLOITATION OF VULNERABLE IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS.

2. DEFINITIONS. FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE TERMS "NEW AMERICAN" AND "IMMIGRANT" SHALL REFER TO NON-CITIZEN DOMICILIARIES OF NEW YORK STATE WHOSE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IS OTHER THAN THE UNITED STATES.

3. OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS; DIRECTOR. THERE IS HEREBY CREATED WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS. THE SECRETARY SHALL APPOINT A DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO ACCOMPLISH THE RESPONSIBILITIES SET FORTH IN THIS SECTION. SUCH DIRECTOR SHALL RECEIVE AN ANNUAL SALARY WITHIN AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED AND SHALL SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF THE SECRETARY.

4. ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS. THE SECRETARY SHALL HAVE THE POWER TO ESTABLISH, CONSOLIDATE, REORGANIZE, OR ABOLISH ANY ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS WITHIN THE OFFICE AS HE OR SHE DETERMINES TO BE NECESSARY FOR EFFICIENT OPERATION THEREOF. THE SECRETARY SHALL ASSIGN FUNCTIONS TO ANY SUCH UNIT AND MAY APPOINT STAFF, AGENTS, AND CONSULTANTS, PRESCRIBE THEIR DUTIES, AND FIX THEIR COMPENSATION WITHIN AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED.

5. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS. THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS SHALL HAVE THE POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY TO:

(A) CREATE A NETWORK OF NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED OPPORTUNITY CENTERS;

(B) INCREASE ACCESS TO ENGLISH-FOR-SPEAKERS-OF-OTHER-LANGUAGES (ESOL) TRAINING, INCLUDING BY ENGAGING NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER QUALIFIED PROVIDERS OF ESOL TRAINING SERVICES;

(C) ASSIST IMMIGRANTS IN MATTERS RELATING TO IMMIGRATION STATUS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ASSISTING WITH THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS AND APPLICATIONS FOR DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS;

(D) CONNECT IMMIGRANTS TO BUSINESS RESOURCES THAT HARNESS THEIR SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT REFERRAL PROGRAMS, AND OTHER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;

(E) DEVELOP AND LEVERAGE THE SKILLS OF IMMIGRANTS TO BENEFIT THEIR COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE;

(F) STRENGTHEN THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT;

(G) REDUCE EXPLOITATION OF IMMIGRANTS;

(H) ESTABLISH A TOLL-FREE MULTI-LINGUAL HOTLINE AND A WEBSITE FOR PURPOSES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS, REFERRAL FOR SERVICES, AND RECEIPT OF COMPLAINTS RELATING TO FRAUD AND OTHER RELATED CRIMES AGAINST IMMIGRANTS;

(I) ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS REFERRED BY THE OFFICE ARE DIRECTED TO SERVICE PROVIDERS WHO ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE TWENTY-EIGHT-C OF THE GENERAL BUSINESS LAW OR PROVIDERS CERTIFIED BY THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION APPEALS;

(J) USING INFORMATION DEVELOPED BY THE OFFICE THROUGH THE HOTLINE, ASSIST LAW ENFORCEMENT IN COMBATTING CRIMES AGAINST IMMIGRANTS;

(K) ADVISE THE GOVERNOR AND SECRETARY CONCERNING MATTERS AFFECTING IMMIGRANTS IN THE STATE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE STATE'S CIVIC AND ECONOMIC LIFE;

(L) COORDINATE WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHERWISE MARSHAL THE RESOURCES OF THE STATE TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS;

(M) ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG IMMIGRANTS AND IN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES; AND



(N) BEGINNING IN TWO THOUSAND FIFTEEN, BY JUNE FIFTEENTH OF EACH YEAR, PRODUCE A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR, THE SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY, AND THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE DESCRIBING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, SUMMARIZING CALLS RECEIVED THROUGH THE HOTLINE AND WEBSITE, INFORMATION ON ESOL TRAINING SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE, THE NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS ASSISTED THROUGH THE OPPORTUNITY CENTERS, OR AN ESTIMATION THEREOF, THE STATUS OF ANY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION.

S 7. The penal law is amended by adding a new section 190.87 to read as follows:

S 190.87 IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES FRAUD IN THE SECOND DEGREE.

A PERSON IS GUILTY OF IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES FRAUD IN THE SECOND DEGREE WHEN, WITH INTENT TO DEFRAUD ANOTHER PERSON SEEKING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES, AS DEFINED IN ARTICLE TWENTY-EIGHT-C OF THE GENERAL BUSINESS LAW, FROM SUCH PERSON, HE OR SHE VIOLATES SECTION FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-D OF THE GENERAL BUSINESS LAW WITH INTENT TO OBTAIN PROPERTY FROM SUCH OTHER PERSON BY FALSE OR FRAUDULENT PRETENSES, REPRESENTATIONS OR PROMISES, AND THEREBY WRONGFULLY OBTAINS SUCH PROPERTY.

IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES FRAUD IN THE SECOND DEGREE IS A CLASS A MISDEMEANOR.

S 8. The penal law is amended by adding a new section 190.89 to read as follows:

S 190.89 IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES FRAUD IN THE FIRST DEGREE.

A PERSON IS GUILTY OF IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES FRAUD IN THE FIRST DEGREE WHEN, WITH INTENT TO DEFRAUD ANOTHER PERSON SEEKING IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES, AS DEFINED IN ARTICLE TWENTY-EIGHT-C OF THE GENERAL BUSINESS LAW, FROM SUCH PERSON, HE OR SHE VIOLATES SECTION FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-D OF THE GENERAL BUSINESS LAW WITH INTENT TO OBTAIN PROPERTY FROM SUCH OTHER PERSON BY FALSE OR FRAUDULENT PRETENSES, REPRESENTATIONS OR PROMISES, AND THEREBY WRONGFULLY OBTAINS SUCH PROPERTY WITH A VALUE IN EXCESS OF ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE SERVICES FRAUD IN THE FIRST DEGREE IS A CLASS E FELONY.

S 9. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.