

STATE OF NEW YORK

9520

IN ASSEMBLY

March 16, 2022

Introduced by M. of A. SAYEGH -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental 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
24 find a positive economic and social impact of refugees across New York
25 State;

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

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

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

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

12 § 296-e. Unlawful discriminatory practices relating to refugees. It
13 shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for the state, or any agen-
14 cy or bureau thereof, or for any other entity to deny a refugee
15 resettlement anywhere within the state based on any criterion, method of
16 administration, or practice that has the purpose or effect of discrimi-
17 nating on the basis of age, race, creed, color, national origin, reli-
18 gion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression,
19 military status, familial status, predisposing genetic characteristics,
20 disability, marital status, or status as a victim of domestic violence.

21 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.