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Lackluster Legislative Session Leaves Important Proposals for Child Care, Immigrants, and Homeowners on the Table

At the beginning of this legislative session Empire Justice Center noted that this year provided an opportunity for New York State to uphold our shared values in the face of significant shifts in policy perspective at the federal level. While we are pleased that we were able to accomplish the vast majority of our [2018 legislative priorities](#) during this year's [budget process](#), a series of bills we worked to pass before the end of session that would have helped working parents and children, immigrants, and homeowners were left on the table.

Access to affordable child care is key to ensuring working parents can stay employed. [A.0290 \(Jaffee\)/S.1455 \(Avella\)](#), which passed the Assembly but failed to advance in the Senate, would have authorized the development of a cost estimation model to determine the actual cost of quality child care by geographic region. This model has been used as a tool for improving child care subsidy rates in over a dozen other states, and would have provided a robust tool to policy makers. [A.11242 \(Jaffee\)/S.8804-A \(Helming\)](#) would have enacted the criminal the background check provisions required by the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). An alternate version of the bill, [A.11055 \(Jaffee\)](#) would have provided critical due process protections as well as protection to immigrant families. The consequences of not passing these bills could be significant: the state may face fines of \$12 million, which will be pulled from already scant child care resources. Neither bill advanced in the Senate, while the latter bill was passed by the Assembly.

While immigration issues have been dominating the headlines, here in New York State, the Legislature did not advance a number of bills that would have provided relief to immigrant communities impacted by the relentless negative actions of the federal government. This includes: [A. 10607-A \(Solages\)/S. 7569-A \(Sepulveda\)](#), which would provide continued access to health coverage for immigrants who lose their Temporary Protected Status (TPS); [A.8054-A \(Gottfried\)/S. 8618 \(Rivera\)](#), which would expand access to the Child Health Plus insurance program to through 29 years of age who are ineligible for other health insurance coverage due to their immigration status; [A.10273 \(Crespo\)/S.8680 \(Sepulveda\)](#) which

would provide access to standard drivers licenses for immigrants; and ensuring access to justice for all New Yorkers with A.11013-A (Solages)/S. 8925 (Alcantara), also known as the [Protect Our Courts Act](#), which would protect the integrity of our state's court processes by requiring U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to only enter NYS courtrooms if they have a judicial warrant.

The Assembly unanimously approved, but the Senate failed to pass [A.1408 \(Weinstein\)/S.6171 \(Hamilton\)](#), which would protect home owners, by providing protections to address ever evolving deed theft and foreclosure prevention scams.

Another year has gone by without the passage of A.0628 (Rosenthal)/S.0579 (Peralta), also known as [Securing Wages Earned Against Theft \(SWEAT\)](#), which would create tools that are needed to ensure accountability in cases of wage theft, giving employees and the State a better chance to collect the money they are owed while removing unfair competition for law-abiding businesses.

And on a final, more positive note, the Senate did include critical funding to provide legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence in the final days of the session.

For more information about our 2018 State Legislative Priorities, please visit our website:
www.empirejustice.org

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Empire Justice Center is a statewide, multi-issue, multi-strategy, public interest law firm focused on changing the "systems" within which poor and low-income families live. Empire Justice protects and strengthens the legal rights of people in New York State who are poor, disabled or disenfranchised through: systems change advocacy, training and support to other advocates and organizations, and high quality direct civil legal representation. Empire Justice has four offices in Albany, Rochester, Yonkers, White Plains and Central Islip on Long Island.