



2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

-  **Access to Representation Act (S.0081):** New York's diverse culture, vibrant communities, and economy thrive thanks to immigrant families. The measure will create a statutory right to an attorney for New Yorkers who cannot afford representation in an immigration case. **ASK: Pass the Access to Representation Act.**
-  **Liberty Defense Project (LDP):** The Liberty Defense Program helps immigrant New Yorkers navigate the complex systems of naturalization, permanent residency, employment authorization as well as representation through deportation screenings and other cases important for keeping friends, coworkers, communities, and families together. **ASK: Continue funding of at least \$10 million for the Liberty Defense Program.**
-  **Disability Advocacy Program (DAP):** For three decades DAP has provided legal assistance to low income disabled New Yorkers seeking Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability (SSD). DAP serves approximately 4,000 New Yorkers each year and has returned over \$1.1 billion to the state and local counties since its inception in 1983, making it one of NYS's most long-lasting and respected legal programs. **ASK: Continue level funding of \$8.26 million for DAP.**
-  **Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP):** HOPP provides counseling and legal services to distressed homeowners. Since 2012, HOPP grantees have served an average of 15,833 families per year. Every \$1 million invested in HOPP yields a return of over \$5 million in tax and property cost savings alone. **ASK: Continue level funding of \$20 million for HOPP.**
-  **Office of Court Administration/Legal Services Assistance Fund:** Civil Legal Services help low income people protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families. Office of Court Administration's proposed budget for civil legal services and the Legal Service Assistance Fund from the legislature are both essential to equal access to justice. **ASK: Continue level funding for civil legal services in the OCA budget (\$100 million); maintain Legislative Funding for civil legal services in LSAF (\$2.4million).**



Community Health Advocates (CHA): CHA helps New Yorkers navigate today's complex health care system by providing individual assistance, outreach, and education to communities throughout New York State. Since 2010 CHA has helped 337,000 New Yorkers – individuals, families, and small businesses. **ASK: Level funding of \$4.3 million for CHA.**

SOCIAL JUSTICE



Gender Recognition Act (A.3457/S.0056): Access to accurate identity documents is a necessity in many areas of life, whether that is employment, education, housing, medical care, or travel. This comprehensive bill will create streamlined and privacy-protective processes for transgender and nonbinary New Yorkers to update and obtain accurate identification documents. **ASK: Pass the Gender Recognition Act.**



Provide Access to Language (Joyner/Kennedy): Lack of language access is one of the most significant barriers that NYS's immigrant and refugee communities face in accessing critical services. This bill would require vital documents, including public documents such as forms, be translated into the 12 most common non-English languages spoken by Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals, and codify existing executive orders to include documents used at the DMVs and Dept. of Education. **ASK: Pass Providing Access to Language bill.**

ECONOMIC JUSTICE



Tenant Defense Project: The [Tenant Defense Project](#) is the first project in NYS to combine all aspects of legal advocacy in a single project for low-income people to address eviction and housing instability. It is the only project outside of NYC to provide free access to attorneys to all who need one. **ASK: New funding of \$1.5 million.**



Fix Partial Unemployment Insurance(A.2355-A/S.1042): NYS's part-time employment laws bar workers from collecting unemployment benefits if they work four or more days a week, even if a person is only working one or two hours a day. This bill would bring NY in line with other states and provide much needed relief to workers already suffering from the economic effects of COVID-19. **ASK: Pass partial unemployment insurance reforms.**



Eliminate the Benefits Cliff: For too many low income New Yorkers, going to work or getting a modest raise means losing child care, health care, SNAP food subsidies, or other critical benefits – and leaving them worse off than before, unable to keep up with new expenses, and usually ending up back on benefits before reaching stability. This phenomenon is known as the “benefits cliff,” and results in entrenched inequality, as people get trapped in an almost impossible to escape cycle. **ASK: Pass benefits cliff reforms.**