

VETO MESSAGE - No. 249

TO THE ASSEMBLY

I am returning herewith, without my approval, the following bill:

Assembly Bill Number 158-A, entitled:

"AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to implementing the immigrant assistance enforcement act"

NOT APPROVED

I fully support the goals of this bill and applaud its sponsors for their work to enhance protections for new immigrants, to more strictly regulate immigrant assistance service providers in New York State, and to increase penalties on those who would unscrupulously exploit a vulnerable population. Unfortunately, this bill fails to achieve its stated purposes, because, among other things, some of its key provisions are preempted by federal law, so they are unenforceable as State law.

Nevertheless, I commit to working jointly with the Legislature, advocates and the immigrant community this legislative session to achieve the goals of this bill.

In addition, I am immediately directing the Secretary of State to launch a statewide initiative to protect immigrants from fraud and exploitation. This will include a multi-lingual public education campaign to ensure immigrants understand their rights, opening the New York State New Americans hotline to accept complaints against immigrant service providers and refer them to the proper authorities, and seeking to increase penalties against people convicted of immigration fraud.

Because of the technical shortcomings of this legislation, I disapprove this bill, but I do so with the full confidence in knowing that together, we can achieve its aims.

The bill is disapproved.

(signed) ANDREW M. CUOMO

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