

Governor Murphy Signs Immigrants' Rights Legislation to Strengthen Workers' Rights and Recognize the Diversity of New Jersey

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TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed a series of immigrants' rights bills to strengthen rights of domestic workers, promote language access to government services and benefits, and accurately understand the diversity of New Jersey's communities, building on the Murphy Administration's commitment to building a fairer and more inclusive state for all.

"In New Jersey, our greatest strength lies in our diversity," **said Governor Murphy**. "These bills recognize that our state's immigrant families and diverse communities enrich our cultural, social, and economic identity. I am proud to sign legislation that supports New Jerseyans in achieving the American Dream, accessing government services, and being appropriately represented in data and analytics that may inform our work."

The Governor signed the following three bills into law:

S-723/A-822 (Codey/Timberlake, Jasey, Reynolds-Jackson) – Creates 'New Jersey Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights Act'

S-2459/ACS for A-3837 (Ruiz, Pou, Cruz-Perez/Jaffer, Park, Stanley) – Requires State government entities provide vital documents and translation services in at least seven most common non-English languages

A-3092wGR/S2415 (Stanley, Jaffer, Mukherji/Gopal, Ruiz) – Requires State agencies update demographic data collection methods on Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, North African, and South Asian and Indian Diaspora residents of this State.

"Language barriers can make it very difficult for New Jersey's immigrant communities to navigate government programs and access important information, services and worker protections as they make our state their home. The new laws signed by Governor Murphy today will break down these barriers and reinforce New Jersey's commitment to supporting and building trust with the communities we serve. NJ Human Services is grateful to Governor Murphy and our legislative partners for the doors these new laws will open," **said NJ Human Services' Office of New Americans Director Johanna Calle**.

"I applaud Governor Murphy and the Legislature for once again demonstrating their ongoing commitment to making New Jersey a place of inclusion, where we recognize, respect and protect the rights of all. Bridging language barriers and safeguarding the civil rights of domestic workers are two significant mileposts along this path," **said Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. "The Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights remedies a historical legacy of racial prejudice that led to the exclusion of domestic workers from our wage and hour laws. And increasing language access for vital government services will help keep our residents safe, healthy, and properly informed."

"We are committed to making New Jersey the best state for workers. This law is another step forward to ensure all workers, especially those who can be vulnerable, marginalized or unseen, are afforded our rigorous protections and generous benefits," **said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**

The New Jersey Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights Act (S-723/A-822) establishes a broad range of rights and employment protections for domestic workers.

The legislation signed by Governor Murphy today provides domestic workers with anti-discrimination and anti-harassment rights, health and safety protections, and privacy rights. It also removes the current exclusion of certain domestic workers from the New Jersey State Wage and Hour Law, requires domestic employers to enter into a written contract with the domestic worker, sets requirements regarding rest and meal break times, and requires employers to give advance notice to domestic workers prior to termination. The bill also establishes penalties for violations of its provisions, including penalties against retaliation by the employer, and requires employers to provide notice to domestic workers about their rights.

"Domestic workers support roughly a third of New Jersey families, and many of their work is only expected to increase as the country ages. Despite their critical services, they have been carved out of many labor protection laws, allowing many of New Jersey's roughly 50,000 domestic workers to fall victim to wage theft, employer intimidation, as well as the denial of basic rest and meal breaks," **said former Governor Codey**. "The signing of this legislation will give these essential workers the legal protections and rights that every worker deserves, and help prevent the employer abuse they often face."

"This law establishes basic legal rights for New Jersey's 50,000 workers, many of whom are experiencing wage theft, denial of breaks, and lack of sick leave," **said Senator and former Assemblywoman Britnee Timberlake**. "Domestic workers care for families and homes across our state. They deserve basic rights and dignity. In honor of my grandmother, Mary L. Whitely, a career domestic worker who cared for countless children and worked long, hard hours, I am very proud to see my bill signed into law."

"This law will guarantee fundamental rights for a long-underserved community," **said former Assemblywoman Mila Jasey**. "This law will also ensure employers are aware of their responsibilities and employees are aware of their rights. In addition, it includes provisions to support local and State authorities in enforcement."

"No worker in New Jersey should face abuse or discrimination," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "This law will provide protections for the vulnerable, like child care and live-in domestic workers. It will make a tremendous impact in their day-to-day lives and offer a measure of justice for this workforce, made up overwhelmingly of women."

S-2459/ACS for A-3837 requires State government entities in the Executive Branch that provide direct services to the public to translate vital documents and information, including public documents such as forms and instructions provided individuals with limited English proficiency in this State in at least the seven most common non-English languages spoken by Community Survey data, and relevant to services offered by each State government entity.

The bill takes effect immediately, but the required translations would be implemented on a rolling basis, with translations in all required languages completed no later 23 months after the effective date of the bill. In addition, the bill requires each State government entity that offers direct services to the public to develop and implement a language access plan, which would include an assessment of the interpretation needs of members of the public with limited English proficiency and a plan to provide interpretation services to those who need it.

"This legislation will remove the language barrier faced by so many of our communities by ensuring all state entities are prepared to assist our residents regardless of what language they speak," **said Majority Leader Ruiz**. "Now that Governor Murphy has signed this bill into law, when people are in need, and especially in crisis, they will be able to connect to the resources available to them. This was highlighted all the more during the pandemic where we saw various obstacles preventing individuals from accessing real-time government information and routine government services. This is a step to close that crucial accessibility gap."

"Dealing with state agencies and formal applications can be confusing for native speakers, but it becomes that much more challenging when dense information is presented in a language you don't know well," **said Senator Nellie Pou, chair of the Legislative Latino Caucus**. "This legislation will ensure residents have access to vital documents in their first language, so they don't have to rely on others to connect them to the services they need."

"Translating for your parents is simply a part of life for many first generation children, but as one of the most diverse states in the country our residents deserve better," **said Senator Cruz-Perez**. "This law will help to ensure we aren't relying on kids to connect families to life-saving resources."

"As a state that takes pride in its rich diversity, New Jersey is committed to making sure everyone has the best possible access to government services," **said former Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer**. "Expanding these documents and translation services beyond English and providing them in several of the most commonly spoken languages is extremely timely and important."

"Diversity is one of the Garden State's greatest assets and nearly a third of New Jerseyans age five and older speak a language other than English," **said Assemblywoman Ellen Park**. "By requiring essential documents and other information to be available in seven of the most commonly spoken non-English languages, New Jersey will ensure access to public services will be determined by eligibility, not by language proficiency, and I could not be prouder to see this legislation now signed into law."

"Here in New Jersey we pride ourselves on our diversity, which is why I am incredibly proud to stand with the Governor and my colleagues in the legislature as we recognize our responsibility to ensure our State does not abdicate its responsibility to serve every New Jerseyan regardless of what language they happen to speak by making sure all forms and documents are accessible to every New Jerseyan," **said Assemblyman Sterley Stanley**.

A-3092wGR/S2415 will require State agencies to update demographic data collection and reporting methods to better reflect the unique identity of New Jersey's Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI), Middle Eastern and North African (MENA), and South Asian and Indian Diaspora communities. This disaggregation

of demographic data will help State agencies account for the unique socioeconomic distinctions of a person's ancestry, leading to improvements in the administration of government programs and better-informed policymaking. AANHPI, MENA, and South Asian and Indian Diaspora communities are vitally important in New Jersey, and nearly one million Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders reside in the State.

The Legislature concurred with the Governor's conditional veto ([https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/nj7quk/nrddit/nvwie7_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!OzFTs-odlloLsSsZy_i8gNY7yqwwEjf8z5XdCzov4vjcbARP7LdDPDoUcbD_Ex_HbzR9kKKUNbNP0xDAHZF2ib_D6tBQn\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/nj7quk/nrddit/nvwie7_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!OzFTs-odlloLsSsZy_i8gNY7yqwwEjf8z5XdCzov4vjcbARP7LdDPDoUcbD_Ex_HbzR9kKKUNbNP0xDAHZF2ib_D6tBQn$)) of an earlier version of the legislation. The Governor recommended changes to afford State agencies the flexibility to comply with any distinct data collection and reporting practices required by federal laws, regulations, programs, or surveys, and to account for evolving standards and guidance that may be issued by the federal Office of Management and Budget or the United States Census Bureau in the future.

"A fair and representative democracy requires that we acknowledge and validate the contributions and the needs of the diverse communities we have in the Garden State," **continued Senate Majority Leader Ruiz**. "Now that we will be better able to capture accurate data, we can keep a pulse on the specific needs of all individuals in New Jersey."

"Our state has long been a cultural and ethnic melting pot, welcoming new immigrants from all over the world. As more and varied race and ethnic groups continue to come into New Jersey, state agencies must review and when necessary adjust data collection methods so as to reflect the demographic information of these newcomers in order to help agencies meet their specific needs as they arise," **said Senator Vin Gopal**.

"Aggregated data can mask health disparities within Asian American and other communities and thwart efforts to eliminate barriers to accessing resources," **said Senator Raj Mukherji, President-elect of the National Asian Pacific American Caucus of State Legislators**. "By embracing the richness of our diversity and disaggregating data, our state will be empowered to advance evidence-based policy and make informed decisions reflective of our diverse communities' needs and aspirations."

"By collecting demographic data in a more nuanced and accurate manner, we can create more targeted and effective policies, amplifying the voices of often underrepresented populations," **continued former Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer**. "The passage of this bill will help us truly serve our community, particularly addressing the needs of residents with backgrounds from the Middle Eastern, North African, and Asian American communities, which are incredibly diverse and require more granular data collection methods."

"As one of the architects of this bill, I am incredibly grateful to join Governor Murphy as he signs this important piece of legislation into law," **continued Assemblyman Sterley Stanley**. "In New Jersey and many other States throughout our country, countless Americans have been rendered invisible by the unfortunately broad manner by which we collect and report demographic data. Which is why I am proud to stand with the Governor and my colleagues in the legislature as we recognize our responsibility to ensure that no New Jerseyan may go uncounted by requiring state agencies to update their demographic data collection methods so that every New Jerseyan can feel seen and safe."

"This trio of bills sends a loud, clear message: New Jersey is a proud home for immigrants. With the foundation these bills lay, we will one day have a New Jersey where no one hesitates to stand up for their rights because of language barriers. It will be a New Jersey where children are no longer the primary translators for entire households or where our fastest growing populations are not erased or excluded because of poorly captured data. Today, New Jersey reaffirms that not only are immigrants welcome here, but that every New Jerseyan deserves a state that speaks for all of us," **said Amy Torres, Executive Director of New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice**. "Beyond the transformative changes these policies bring, it is notable how the campaigns for these bills were won. Today is a landmark win by and for immigrants – from the communities who spoke out when they felt erased and silenced, to our lawmaker champions who centered the experience of themselves, their families, and their constituents to bring these bills to the Governor's desk. We are so grateful to the many voices that contributed to this fight, and especially to the Governor's office for signing them into law."

"As one of the most diverse states in the nation where one in four residents is an immigrant, New Jersey has a responsibility to protect and ensure the rights and well-being of our immigrant communities," **said ACLU of New Jersey Executive Director Amol Sinha**. "The legislation signed by Governor Murphy today signifies New Jersey's commitment to this responsibility and underscores community needs: expanding language access is imperative for our state officials to communicate with constituents and build trust; protecting the rights of domestic workers will help ensure the safety of some of the most vulnerable in our labor force; and requiring the collection of disaggregated demographic data is an important step toward equity, particularly within our AAPI and MENA communities which have diverse and varying experiences and needs. In a time when anti-immigrant rhetoric is on the rise, New Jersey is taking a stand. We commend Governor Murphy and the bill sponsors for taking steps to ensure New Jersey is fair and welcoming for all who call it home."

"As we ring in the new year, today marks a special and transformative day for domestic workers in New Jersey. The New Jersey Domestic Worker Bill of Rights is more than just a piece of legislation; it's a genuine show of respect for the dignity and invaluable work of domestic workers," **said Jenn Stowe, Executive Director of the National**

Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA). "We're incredibly excited that Governor Phil Murphy's signature has officially enacted the New Jersey Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, delivering equitable workplace protections for domestic workers, who make all other work possible. This is a huge win not just for domestic workers in New Jersey but also a ray of hope for domestic workers all over the country, who deserve to work with the protection, dignity, and respect they rightfully deserve. The passage of this bill is a testament to what can be achieved when organizers, domestic workers, and our partners come together to make historic change happen."

"As a home care worker and an organizer in New Jersey, today's signature of the New Jersey Domestic Worker Bill of Rights fills me with immense pride and hope," **said Evelyn Saz, a previous home care worker and an NDWA home care organizer in New Jersey.** "This legislation is not just a legal document; it's a testament to the strength and resilience of domestic workers who have long been undervalued and unprotected. My journey, from the challenges faced in El Salvador to the struggles as a home care worker in New Jersey, has shown me the importance of standing up for our rights and dignity. This bill is a critical step towards justice, not only for us in New Jersey but for domestic workers across the nation. We deserve to work with protections, dignity, and the respect we have rightfully earned. This victory is for all the domestic workers who have tirelessly cared for others while enduring injustices in silence. Today, we celebrate our collective strength and the brighter future that awaits us all."

"The package of bills Governor Murphy signed today is critical for advancing the cause of fairness and equity for communities of color in the workplace and in their interactions with government," **said Dr. Jesselly De La Cruz, Executive Director of the Latino Action Network Foundation.** "Our state's Latino community will benefit enormously from the protections provided for under the New Jersey Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, which will protect home health aides, cleaners and others from discrimination. At the same time, these bills will ensure that Latinos and other immigrant communities have increased access to government through the availability of interpreters and that the state will have the demographic data it needs to make informed decisions about how government policies impact communities of color. We want to thank the leadership of Governor Murphy and these bills' sponsors for their tireless efforts to make New Jersey a fairer state."

"As a Muslim civil rights group that represents a sizable non-English speaking population, we are thrilled to see the Governor move forward and sign S-2459/ACS for A-3837 into action. This means that our parents, our siblings, and our friends who may not have a strong command of English can feel empowered to ask questions and advocate for themselves in their experiences at hospitals, schools, government offices, and more," **said Selaedin Maksut, CAIR-NJ Executive Director.** "Data disaggregation has long impacted the Muslim community across New Jersey. When we are not counted, we are not helped. We are hopeful that A-3092wGR/S2415 will play a role in ensuring that Muslim communities – especially the pockets of our population that have long been categorized as "white" – receive the services they need to thrive and excel. These strides would not have been possible without the support of our allies within the legislature and our friends and comrades at the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, among others."

"The New Jersey Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights Act is a very important legislation as it brings long overdue rights to an industry mainly composed of low-income women of color and immigrants," **said Diana Mejia, Wind of the Spirit.** "Wind of the Spirit was founded 23 years ago and for all these years its membership has been composed of a majority of domestic workers struggling for basic Human Rights and Dignity, this legislation will help close the gap between workers with and without rights. Wind of the Spirit commends the legislature and the governor for getting this done and all the community members that worked hard for several years to get us here onto this historic moment."

"Nearly one quarter of New Jersey's population comprises of immigrants in communities that represent significant geographic and language diversity," **said Anjali Mehrotra, Commissioner, New Jersey AAPI Commission.** "Improving data collection and providing better access to services for these communities is essential to creating a state that is truly welcoming. We thank the Governor and all our sponsors in the legislature – Senators Gopal, Ruiz, Pou, and Cruz-Perez, and Assembly members Stanley, Mukherji, Jaffer and Park for championing these measures. The bills signed into law today will ensure that information about each of our communities is collected and reported so no one is left out of the solution and that language is not a barrier to accessing available services."

"Today, New Jersey takes a tremendous step forward in ensuring that its 1.1-million-strong Asian American and Pacific Islander community is seen, heard, and understood," **said Amber Reed, President, AAPI New Jersey.** Effectively implemented, these laws will further our safety, health, prosperity, and well-being, while sending the important message that we belong and that we matter. We are grateful to Governor Murphy, the Legislature, and the immigrant-led, cross-racial coalition who made this landmark legislation a reality."

"These critical pieces of legislation will help state government better serve New Jersey's diverse communities and protect the rights of those often overlooked," **said Marleina Ubel, Senior Policy Analyst at New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP).** "Most importantly, by championing these bills, Governor Murphy is making sure the state lives up to our values of caring for every resident, regardless of what language they speak or where they were born. Policies like this are how we foster a more inclusive state, and the governor and bill sponsors deserve a lot of credit for all of their work on the Language Access Bill, the Data Disaggregation Bill, and the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights."

"The Domestic worker bill of rights is important because we need notification of termination of termination if we are no longer needed because my life can change in an instant," **said Elda Vargas, domestic worker and Leader of New Labor's Domestic Worker Committee.** "We now have the protections in the law that I can use to fight for my rights and have peace in mind and have time to look for a new job. Also meal and rest breaks to eat so that I can always provide my best work possible!"

"I applaud Governor Murphy, the bill sponsors that championed these vital bills and the legislature for showing the rest of the country how a state can truly love thy neighbor by building a fairer and more welcoming New Jersey for immigrant families. By lifting language barriers, loved ones can begin to thrive and fully participate in their community. Data disaggregation will make visible the often unseen stories of who New Jerseyans are, what challenges they face, and help us to chart an inclusive path forward. While the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights provides vital protections for primarily Black and Brown women that are the backbone to care and domestic support across the state. These bills honor the inherent worth and dignity of New Jerseyans and are an important step on the path to a New Jersey we can all be proud of," **said Charlene Walker, Executive Director of Faith in New Jersey.**

Governor Phil Murphy

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