



**New Jersey Consortium
for Immigrant Children**

For Immediate Release

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NJCIC Celebrates the passing of Language Access and Data Disaggregation Legislation in New Jersey

On January 8, 2024, the New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children was present at the Statehouse in Trenton, New Jersey for the floor vote of language access and data disaggregation bills.

1/9/2024, Trenton, NJ - The New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children (NJCIC) was honored to witness the floor vote of legacy legislation: S2459/A3837 Language Access and S2415/A3092 Data Disaggregation.

Nearly one in four New Jersey residents is an immigrant, and one in six residents is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent. Our immigrant children, youth, and families are integral to New Jersey's history and future. Yesterday, the New Jersey Legislature passed two critical pieces of legislation advancing the rights of immigrant children and families in New Jersey. The Language Access bill requires state agencies to provide vital documents and translation services in at least seven most common non-English languages. The Data Disaggregation bill requires state agencies to collect demographic information to disaggregate data for Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. This ensures accurate representation, allowing targeted allocation of resources based on specific ethnic or origin data and impacting the accessibility of healthcare services. We are calling on Governor Murphy to sign both bills into law in the upcoming days.

"The advancing of the Language Access Bill and the Data Disaggregation is a testament to the power of community voices and the commitment of our leaders to address language justice and raise visibility for communities across the state. Long overdue, we are closer to breaking down language barriers and ensuring all communities across New Jersey have visibility and accessibility to essential services," said Priscilla Monico Marin, Executive Director at the New Jersey Consortium for Immigrant Children.

In a statement released by Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), the organization "applauded the passing of this bill, which takes the important steps of ensuring all unaccompanied children and their caregivers can access services they need to thrive in their communities in New Jersey, irrespective of the language they speak. Language Access will help to break down the language barriers that keep so many NJ residents, including children, from receiving the support and assistance they need from our state agencies."

"Translation and interpretation are vital to ensuring access to education rights and so many other essential services," said Jessica Levin, Education Law Center's Acting Litigation Director. "We applaud the Legislature for this important step toward ensuring that everyone in our diverse state can fully interact with government agencies, which must serve all members of the public."

"Our communities need visibility so we can better advocate for essential services and we need language accessibility. Translation and interpretation should never fall on the shoulders of the child. However, that is the reality of many children across our state. Language Access brings us a step closer to ensuring



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children remain children so they can focus on school and their childhood experiences” said Marlene Muhammad, member of NJCIC’s Immigrant Youth Advocates program.

We remain grateful to our community partners and the New Jersey Legislature for championing these bills during the 2022-2023 legislative session. The passing of these bills marks a significant leap toward inclusivity, fostering a New Jersey where language is not a barrier, and data disaggregation ensures visibility and understanding of the diverse needs of our communities. With optimism, we look forward to Governor Murphy signing these bills into law, advancing equity and raising visibility for immigrant communities across the state.

About the NJ Consortium for Immigrant Children

NJCIC works with New Jersey’s young immigrants and their allies to advance their full, fearless participation in our society. We seek lawful status for immigrant children and youth and advocate for systemic change in how they access legal and social services.

For more information or to join our efforts visit our website at <https://njcic.org/>