



Protecting low-wage workers from predatory employment agencies.

- About
- [About Us](#)
- [The Problem](#)
- [The Solution](#)
- [Endorsers](#)
- [In the News](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [Take Action!](#)
- [Sign Our Petition](#)
- [Tell your Story](#)
- [File a Complaint](#)
- [Justice for Job Seekers Community Forum](#)
- [Materials](#)
- [Testimonies](#)
- [Testimonies \(English\)](#)
- [Historias \(Español\)](#)

[Home](#) » Press Release – J4JS Introduced into the NYS Senate!

Subscribe to Justice4JobSeekers

Email Address* (Required)

First* (Required)

Last* (Required)

Zip Code* (Required)

J4JS Twitter Feed

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 13, 2014

[#Justice4JobSeekers](#), [#J4JS](#), and [#NoMoreScams](#)

Contacts: Alex Gomez (La Fuente)

(201) 286-2180

alexgomez@lafuenteinc.org

Low Wage Worker Advocates Applaud Senator Savino

Low-wage workers, advocates and lawmakers join forces to combat the exploitation of thousands of job seekers by fraudulent employment agencies

(New York, NY) — Workers, advocates, and community leaders applaud and thank Senator Diane Savino (IDC, North Shore/Brooklyn) for introducing the Justice for Job Seeker Bill (S07742). We applaud the leadership of Senator Savino in introducing this bill into the NYS Senate, and the Senator's timely introduction, shortly after the introduction into the NYS Assembly, by A.M. Francisco Moya (District 39). We support both of our champions as they take the next steps to ensure that the bill arrives on Governor Andrew Cuomo's desk for signature.

"I am proud to be the Senate sponsor the "justice for job-seekers" bill which would provide updated protections for all workers seeking jobs through employment agencies. New York's employment agency laws offer insufficient protection for job seekers, especially low-wage workers. Protecting workers rights while on a job or seeking a job has always been the focus of my career and I hope to gain passage of this valuable legislation. **New York State Senator Diane Savino (District 23)**

"Predatory employment agencies take advantage of our most vulnerable population, unemployed low-wage and immigrant workers desperate for work. The NICE community is celebrating the introduction of S07742, the Justice for Job Seekers bill that will overhaul New York's outdated and weak laws governing employment agencies. This comprehensive legislation will provide much needed relief to low wage job seekers. Job seekers will no longer fear being sent to non-existent job placements in order for scamming agencies to collect their advanced fee. It is now time to call on legislators in Albany to support this bill and stand for justice for low wage job seekers." **Valeria Treves, Executive Director of New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)**

Job Seekers speak out:

"Low wage immigrant workers face enough challenges in terms of poor working conditions and attempting to maintain their families" **said La Fuente Member and job seeker Orfila Hernandez.** "Now with the Justice for Job Seekers bill introduced both in the Assembly and Senate, it is only a matter of time for the scales of justice to tip in our favor. We need our Albany leaders to take action immediately on this measure and ensure it makes it to the governor's desk for signature."

"We depend on agencies to get work quickly. Agencies know the desperate state of immigrants, and they take advantage of the fact that they are new to the country and don't know how things work or the language. It's important to educate people about their rights with agencies. And it's equally important to take a harder stance with agencies and control their practices more to ensure they follow the laws" **said Ynes Marticorena, affected job seeker and member of the New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE).**

"They sent me to a job in Long Island but it was not a good fit, and I was fired after a couple of weeks. When I went back for my deposit they refused. I never got my deposit, \$243, or 18% of my monthly salary. The money I lost was and is still a lot of money for me, **said Narbada Chhetri, affected job seeker and member of Adhikaar.** "I would like to call on our elected officials and government agencies to create strong protections for all job seekers and create a just job market."

If enacted, the legislation would:

- Better regulate employment agencies
- End discrimination against low-wage workers. (As currently structured, the law allows agencies to charge low-wage workers a fee before placing them in a job while other types of workers pay a fee only after placement. The proposed law would bring the rules governing advance fees for "Class A" and "Class A1"¹

workers in line with those governing all other workers.)

- Require employment agencies to create written agreements with job applicants that specify: the hours of work per day and number of work days per week, the rate of pay, the anticipated period of employment, etc.
- Require employment agencies to notify applicants, in writing and in their primary language that “an employment agency may not charge you, the job applicant, a fee before referring you to a job that you accept.”
- Require employment agencies to refund any advance fees collected prior to October 1, 2014, if such fees did not result in employment
- Increase the penalty for violating the state’s employment agency laws
- Allow people who have been victimized by fraudulent employment agencies to go to court
- Protect job applicants from retaliation for exposing wrongdoing at employment agencies

“All too often, employment agencies take advantage of low wage workers and immigrants in particular in their search for work,” **said Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Julie Menin.** “DCA is deeply committed to protecting our city’s most vulnerable job seekers through our enforcement work and mediation of complaints. We applaud the Justice for Job Seekers Coalition, Senator Savino, and Assembly Member Moya for their leadership on this crucial issue and their efforts to ensure all job seekers, including domestic and manual workers, are protected from being charged a fee before they are placed in a job.”

“I applaud Senator Diane Savino for choosing to champion the Justice for Job Seekers Bill in the Senate. I have been proud to sponsor this important legislation in the Assembly and am pleased to have such a strong partner in the Senate. For too long, predatory employment agencies have taken advantage of our most vulnerable—the unemployed, low-wage workers, and recent immigrants who are desperate for work. Together, we’ll make sure that labor sharks stop preying on people who are just looking to make an honest living.” **Assemblyman Francisco P. Moya (D-Jackson Heights)**

“I commend Assembly Member Moya and Senator Savino for introducing legislation that cracks down on fraudulent employment agencies,” **said Council Member Daniel Dromm (D-Jackson Heights, Elmhurst).** “There are too many agencies making a dirty living by taking money from the unemployed who are often new immigrants and then not finding them a job. Other times, they connect them with employers who pay less than the minimum wage. These illegal practices must stop!”

“I would like to thank Assembly Member Moya and State Senator Savino for taking up the fight against fraudulent employment agencies by introducing legislation to help combat this problem,” **stated Council Member Rafael L. Espinal, Jr., the Chair of the New York City Council’s Consumer Affairs Committee.** “It’s going to take a concerted effort between the State, the City and organizations like NICE to put these fraudulent employment agencies out of business so that they can’t take advantage of our most vulnerable New Yorkers! Hopefully, with the introduction of the Justice for Job Seekers bill we are taking the first step towards putting an end to this type of abuse.”

New York’s current laws fail to protect low-wage and immigrant workers who search for jobs through employment agencies. New York’s legislators should enact the Justice for Job Seekers employment agency bill in order to bring our state’s laws up-to-date and strengthen protections for vulnerable job seekers,” **said Laura Huizar, Equal Justice Works Fellow at LatinoJustice PRLDEF sponsored by Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP.**

“The Justice for Job Seekers Bill, recently introduced by Assemblyman Moya and Senator Savino, will make a huge difference in ensuring that New York’s low-wage workers are protected from exploitative employment agencies,” **said Charlene Obernauer, Executive Director of NYCOSH**

“The Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center commends Senator Diane Savino’s introduction of the Justice for Job Seekers bill (S07742/ A09742). It is a key step in having this important legislation passed. Without the Justice for Job Seekers bill, unscrupulous employment agencies will continue take advantage of New York’s most vulnerable workforce, low wage workers, and workers will continue to have minimal protections.” **Diana Marin, Staff Attorney at the Community Development Project of**

the Urban Justice Center

“We thank Senator Savino for listening to the workers who spoke up against fraudulent employment agencies. The Justice for Job Seekers bill represents an important step in bringing justice to immigrant workers and strengthening New York State’s labor force. We call upon other members of the New York State Senate to act, as Senator Savino has, to fully support this bill and end predatory practices by employment agencies.” **Stephanie Mulcock, Esq., Executive Director of Cidadão Global**

“We applaud the remarkable legislation that provides our vulnerable community members the fundamental right to access justice as job seekers. The bill is a welcome development that ultimately ends the discrimination of low wage earners and equips our loved ones to assert rights against victimization and retaliation,” **said Abraham Paulos, Executive Director of Families for Freedom.**

New York State’s most economically distressed workers are spending thousands of dollars to find jobs through employment agencies only to be scammed and exploited by those agencies. Currently the laws that govern employment agencies in New York are outdated and weak; they fail to offer meaningful protection for workers. In a study conducted by NICE and the Urban Justice Center², 81% of survey respondents who did not find a job through an agency were still charged a fee (average, \$122). One third of survey respondents were offered jobs by agencies paying below the state minimum wage of \$7.25, a violation of New York Labor Law and the General Business Law (2012). Community organizations are calling on the state to crack down on these predatory agencies and create protection for low-wage workers across the state.

Justice for Job Seekers campaign has a coalition of over 30 community organizations from through the state aiming to reform the New York employment agency laws in order to: 1) Deter employment agency abuse; 2) Facilitate enforcement; 3) Empower workers; and 4) Improve the job market for low-wage workers.

Organizing committee: Adhikaar, African Services Committee, Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM), La Fuente, Laundry Workers Center, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, and New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE); full list of coalition partners at: www.justice4jobseekers.org

[1] Class “A” workers are classified as domestic workers, household employees, unskilled or untrained manual workers and laborers, including agricultural workers. Class “A1” workers are classified as non-professional trained or skilled industrial workers or mechanics. _

[2] NICE and the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, Dreams and Schemes in Queens, New York, <http://www.cdp-ny.org/report/DreamsandSchemes.pdf>, (October, 2012)_

[Return To All Articles](#)



· © 2014 [Justice For Job Seekers](#) · Designed by [Themes & Co](#) ·

[Back to top](#)