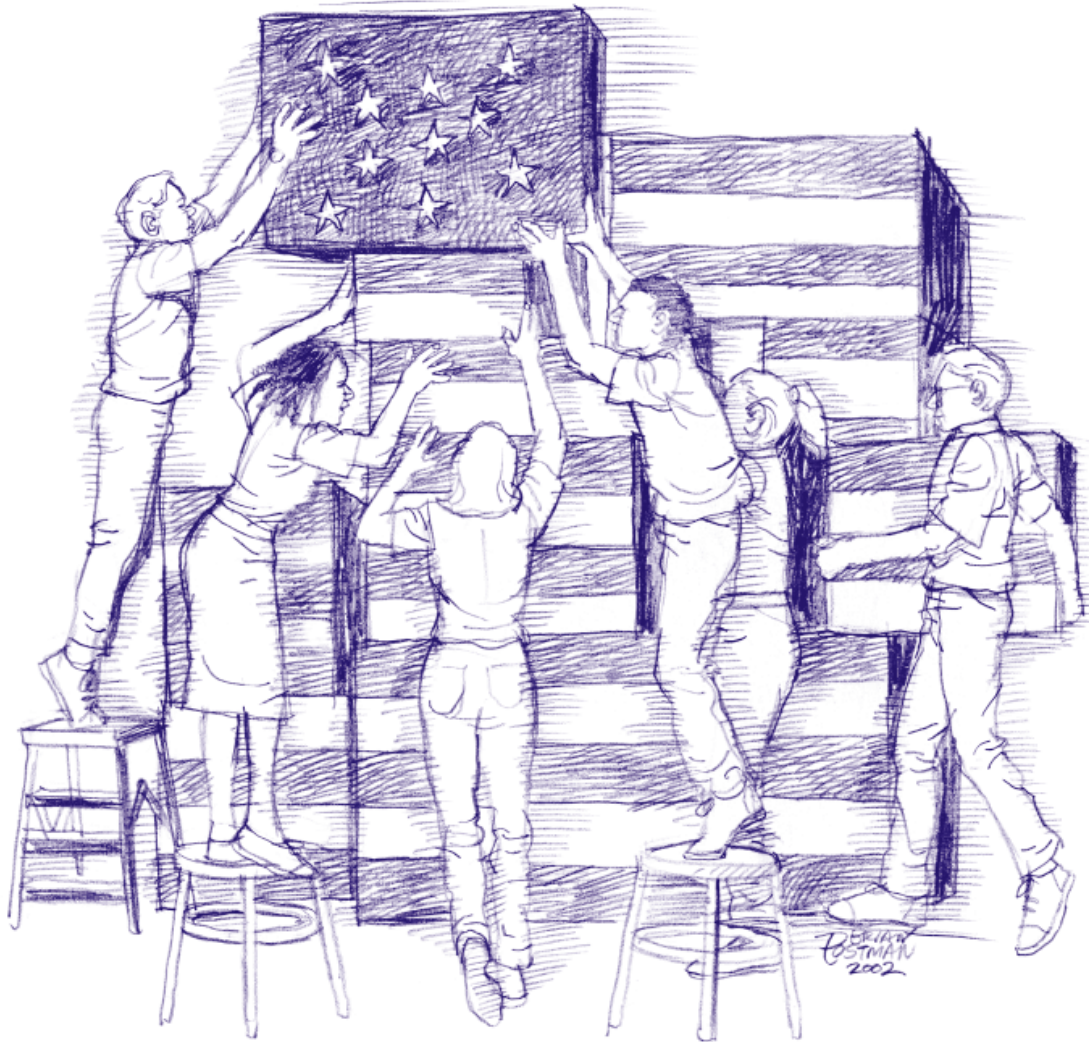


The 2001 Annual Report of the
New York State Assembly
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force
Where We Stand Today



Sheldon Silver, Speaker
Peter M. Rivera, Chair



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

PETER M. RIVERA
Assemblyman 76th District
Bronx County

DISTRICT OFFICE:
1262 Castle Hill Ave.
Bronx, NY 10462
(718) 931-2620

ALBANY OFFICE:
Room 842
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248
(518) 455-5102

CHAIR
Committee on Cities

CHAIR
NYS Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic
Task Force

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April 19, 2002

Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Speaker Silver:

It is with great pleasure that I forward to you the 2001 Annual Report of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force. This report documents the social and economic standing of Hispanics in the State of New York and highlights Assembly Majority efforts to address important issues impacting many of our communities.

The Hispanic population in New York State has grown considerably within the last decade and unfortunately so have its daily struggles. In order to emphasize the need for action, the 2001 Task Force Report details the problems encountered by many Hispanics in communities across our State and this report highlights the important work that has been done by the Task Force Members and the Assembly Majority in efforts to better the lives and the living conditions of Hispanic children and families in New York State.

Since 1988, you have supported the Puerto Rican Hispanic Task Force with great endeavor. Thus, we remain confident that under your leadership, the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force will be able to continue the necessary work to better the lives of Hispanics across our great State.

Finally, I would like to take the time to express my gratitude and appreciation of your commitment in helping us achieve many of our goals, throughout the years, and in embracing the issues of the Hispanic community. I also want to recognize the hard work and dedication of my colleagues who serve on the Task Force, and their staff for their timely and insightful professional input.

I am optimistic that the needs of the Hispanic community will continue to be addressed. I look forward to our collective efforts and I am confident that the New York State Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force will continue to be a catalyst towards that end.

Sincerely,

Peter M. Rivera
Chairman

Where We Stand Today

The 2001 Annual Report of the **New York State Assembly** **Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force**

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Guillermo A. Martínez, Legislative Director

Report Staff

Guillermo A. Martínez, Researcher, Writer and Editor
Jessica Centino, Researcher and Writer
Guerlyne Gracia, Research Support
Katia Núñez, Research Support

Cover Art by Brian Postman

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Where We Stand Today

The 2001 Annual Report of the **New York State Assembly** **Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force**

Introduction

The 2000 Census and the information provided through its fact gathering techniques have allowed the nation and New York State to better understand the range of important indicators that measure the strengths and weaknesses of our democracy. Of particular interest to the work of the New York State Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force are the results that provide the measured population growth of the State's Hispanic population, and relevant socioeconomic findings.

In this report, the 2000 Census along with over two dozen research findings were used to provide a brief overview of the social and economic conditions of Hispanic communities across New York. Attempts by the New York State Assembly and members to the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force to address the problems documented in this report have also been provided and categorized under 15 areas of importance to the Task Force. While this report is not a comprehensive accounting of all the important factors that impact the daily lives of Hispanics, it does provide an accurate picture of the issues discussed and of the work that lays ahead in future attempts to remedy highlighted problems.

The social and economic forces that shape the lives of Hispanics in New York are themselves becoming increasingly influenced by Hispanics. The large and growing Hispanic population in New York State, its impact on the State's economy, its relationship with the private and public sectors, and its significant future role in determining policy issues are factors that cannot be underestimated in any equation. The social and economic health of Hispanic communities will directly impact the social and economic health of New York State. This report documents this relationship and the critical issues that need focused policy attention. After all, it is well understood that when Hispanics advocate for better housing, a quality education, greater access to health care, and a host of other important community-building issues, they are doing so for all New Yorkers.

By documenting needs, this report offers points from which to begin the process of strengthening communities, all their inhabitants and an entire landscape.

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The 2000 Census & Hispanics

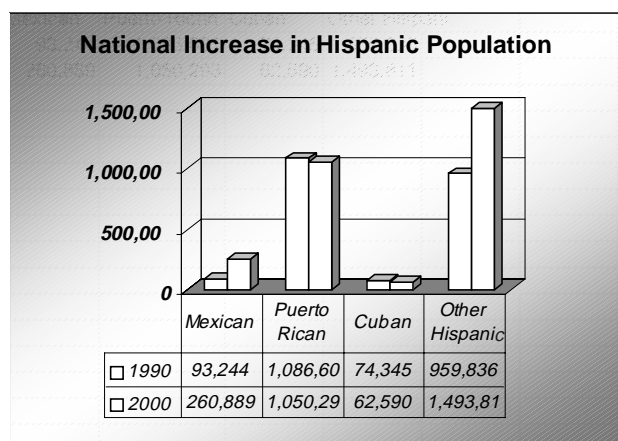
According to the 2000 Census, there are over 35 million Hispanics in the United States. The political and economic strength of this diverse community has grown tremendously over the last 10 years. It is now estimated that the purchasing power of the Hispanic community is well over \$450 billion annually. And throughout the nation, at all levels of government, corporate and civic affairs, Hispanics are making their mark. Whether running for public office, heading small to large corporations and actively involved in grassroots issues, Hispanics are a tremendous social force that is shaping the future of America.

Under the 2000 Census, Hispanics were asked to classify themselves along racial lines. Therefore, 167,608 Hispanics identified themselves as black and another 168,810 classified themselves as multiracial. Based on a complicated set of personal questions on ethnic origin, it is totally possible that Hispanics make up more than 3 million of New York's 18.9 million residents, not the current estimated 2.87 million.

Hispanics are now the largest minority group in New York City and Hispanic youth now comprise the majority of ethnic students in K-12 grade in all of the Big Five School Districts in New York State (New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, and Yonkers).

"Based on a complicated set of personal questions on ethnic origin, it is totally possible that Hispanics make up more than 3 million of New York's 18.9 million residents."

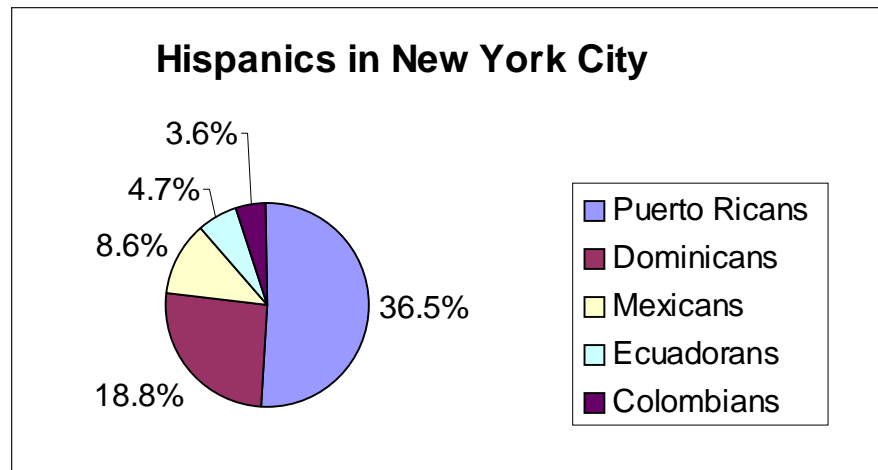
- 18,976,457 people live in the state of New York.
- Of the 18,976,457 people in the State of New York, 3,747,968 are foreign-born; about 2,008,390 are not citizens; and 1,739,578 are naturalized citizens.
- The largest foreign-born population comes from Latin America, with 1,818,773 persons coming from the region.
- Of the 18,976,457 people, 2,867,583 are Hispanic, making up 15% of the total population.
- Puerto Ricans make up the largest percentage of Hispanics in New York State, 1,050,293 — 5.5%.
- 260,889 Mexicans comprise the second largest Hispanic group in New York State, making up 1.4% of the total population.



Overall, the Hispanic population has significantly increased since 1990. Although the number of Puerto Ricans has decreased from 6% to 5.5%, they continue to be the

largest group of Hispanics in New York State. The fastest growing sub-group is Mexicans. This sub-group has seen close to 200% growth since 1990.

In New York City, Hispanics make up 1 of every 3 city dwellers. Puerto Ricans are the largest group, representing 36.5%. Dominicans make up 18.8%, Mexicans 8.6%, Ecuadorans 4.7% and Colombians 3.6%. Almost half of the Hispanic population in New York did not declare itself white or black, but chose other. 36% chose white and 8% chose black. Many also chose more than one race. The multiracial composition of many Hispanics was evident in the data collected by the census.



“To decrease the class size to an average of 25 pupils per class would require a 20% increase in the number of teachers and construction of well over 100 new schools.”

Education

For the past several years, the New York State Assembly has made it a priority to pass comprehensive school violence legislation to keep children safe and remove the threat of violence from New York’s classrooms. The Task Force also supports many of the legislative measures taken to help and improve the quality of New York’s teacher work force.

According to education experts, New York City schools suffer from inadequate funding. The cost-per-student of educating City children is way too low. Class sizes are way too high. To decrease the class size to an average of 25 pupils per class would require a 20% increase in the number of teachers and construction of well over 100 new schools. To decrease class size to 20 pupils per class, what is considered by education experts to be a manageable class size, education funding would have to increase to accommodate a 50% increase in the number of teachers and the construction of over 300 new schools.

Children growing up in our fast-paced world have enough to be concerned about without having to live in fear of violence at the hands of a classmate or having their work interrupted by disruptive students. Maintaining structure and discipline in our schools is an essential element of preventing violence, but dealing with violence in schools is only part of the work needed to ensure a better education for children.

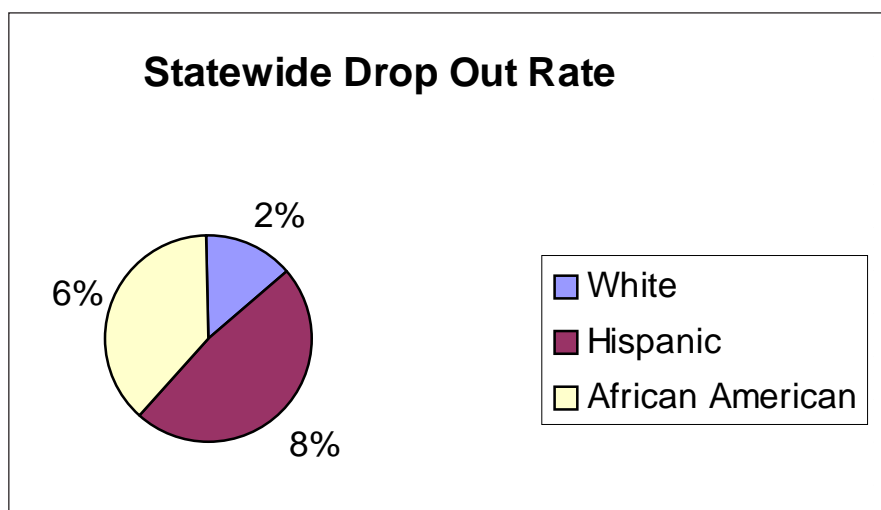
Through most of the past decade, the state's share of support for public education declined, falling to just 38.5% in 1996-97 — nearly a 40-year low (the average state share nationwide that year was 46 percent). The decline has been especially damaging to schools in low-income communities, which find it very difficult to replace lost state support from limited local resources. In more recent years, the state has begun increasing its share of school aid costs but the demands on schools have increased as well. The Board of Regents has adopted more rigorous academic standards for all students, including a requirement that all aspiring high school graduates pass five Regents examinations. The Educational Conference Board — a coalition of statewide education organizations — estimates that districts will face costs in excess of \$300 million in helping students to meet this requirement. School facilities are aging and estimates for new school construction are placed in the tens of billions of dollars. In addition to space needs created by rising enrollments, many school districts must also address huge backlogs in repairs to existing school buildings. The estimate to repair and renovate existing facilities is a staggering figure. For example, immediate repair needs for the New York City schools are estimated at \$5-7 billion, while estimates for total school facility needs are \$25 billion over the next 10 years. The State Education Department estimates the deferred maintenance needs statewide are between \$7.5 and \$15 billion. The greatest needs tend to be concentrated in the districts that serve the poorest children.

"In the Fall of 1998, 74 out of every 100 K-12 Hispanic students in New York State attended a school in one of the big 5 school Districts..."

New York State's public education system is the nation's largest. Over a million pre-Kindergarten through 12th-grade students attend its 1,100-plus schools. By the year 2005, Hispanics will represent the largest minority group in New York State's school-age population. Statewide, Hispanic students are already the majority of minorities in the big 5 school districts. In the Fall of 1998, 74 out of every 100 K-12 Hispanic students in New York State, attended a school in one of the Big 5 School Districts: New York, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, Yonkers.

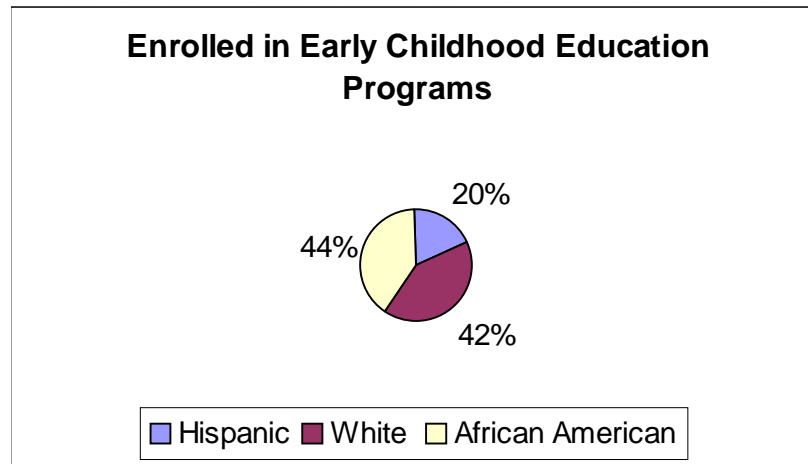
These five districts have concentrations of poverty, less educational resources, and fewer certified teachers than other districts.

- Only 5.7% of the total number of New York State public school classroom teachers are of Latino descent.
- Latinos have the largest statewide drop out rate at 7.6% compared to Blacks at 6.3% and Whites at 2.3%.



“Hispanic children under the age of 5 are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs.”

- Less than half of each high school class graduates in four years. Even with extra time, only 70% of New York State kids can count on a diploma.
- Hispanic children under the age of 5 are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs. In 1998, only 20% of Hispanic 3-year-olds were enrolled in early childhood programs, compared to 42% of whites and 44% of African Americans.



- Research shows that families with higher incomes are more likely to enroll their 3- and 4-year-olds in early childhood education than those with lower incomes.
- Overall, Hispanic students consistently fall behind the national average in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a national assessment that provides a comprehensive measure of students’ learning at critical junctures in their school experience.
- Disparities begin as early as kindergarten and remain through age 17. By age nine, Hispanics lag behind their peers in reading, mathematics and science proficiency.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Rivera, P.	A. 4031	Schools	This bill provides that the definition of “school grounds” shall include day care facilities for purposes of sale or possession of controlled substances.
Rivera, P.	A. 4033	Schools	This bill requires secondary schools to instruct concerning use of alcohol and drugs during pregnancy.
Rivera, P.	A. 4034	Education	This bill directs the education department to conduct an expanded study of English learning programs in elementary and secondary schools.
Ortiz	A. 9384	Youth/drugs	This legislation would ensure that the first mention of any psychotropic drug treatment for a child’s behavioral or learning problems come from a doctor.

Ortiz	A. 1962	Youth	This bill ensures that all elementary, intermediate, middle, junior high, and senior high schools throughout New York State have an effective guidance program in place by July 1, 2003 to meet the needs of their students.
Díaz	A. 4813	Teachers	This bill requires teachers and paraprofessionals employed in any school to have mandatory cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first-aid training.
Díaz	A. 4814	Chaplaincy	This bill creates a Non-Denominational School Chaplaincy Program for students.
Díaz	A. 4815	Youth/asthma	This bill requires schools to have adequate asthma emergency equipment and pharmaceuticals on the premises, such as oxygen pumps and back-up nebulizers.
Díaz	A. 4816	Youth/schools	This bill requires the development of a curriculum in character education centering on responsibility, respect, loyalty, citizenship, integrity, volunteerism and charity.
Díaz	A. 7701	Education	This bill directs the Regents and education department to establish a waiver from requirement of passing English, language arts and regents exams in order for a student of limited English proficiency to obtain a diploma.
Españolat	A. 5986	Bilingual/youth	This bill would establish the bilingual Teachers of Tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Children's Weapon Accident Prevention Act	A. 60004/new law	This bill would establish the crime of criminally negligent storage of a weapon, require retailers to post notices regarding safe storage requirements and create an education program to teach the public how to

store a weapon safely away from children. Under the bill, gun owners would be criminally liable for storing weapons safely away from children.

School Violence Cleanup	A. 9333/new law	This bill would make technical changes regarding school suspension, codes of conduct, school safety plans and uniform state violent incident reporting requirements. The bill would clarify the process of information sharing between the New York City school district and the state Department of Education.
Interagency Council For Services To The Deaf	A. 7536/ passed Assembly	This bill would create an interagency council to coordinate services to persons who are hearing impaired.
Disabled Students	A. 7926/new law	This bill would require every school district and BOCES to develop a plan to ensure that all instructional materials are available in a usable alternative format for every disabled student.

“Despite the increase in the number of new housing units, decent and affordable housing remains out of reach for too many Hispanic households...”

Housing

New York State has a constitutional mandate to provide housing for its citizens. As a basic need of its residents, housing development and preservation of existing housing stock is essential. In view of researchers’ claims that New York State is the most expensive state to live in in the nation and with clear documentation for the need of more affordable housing this is an issue that has huge implications for Hispanics.

The Task Force is concerned with this growing problem. Increasingly, there are more and more calls for New York State to fund the development of more affordable housing projects throughout the state. The utilization of vacant land, such as brownfields, has also become an essential issue in the development of affordable housing.

The Task Force supports programs ensure that an uninterrupted flow of state resources is allocated towards affordable housing development.

Housing in New York State is a significant concern for many Hispanics. The constant influx of immigrants to New York State increases the demand for housing. 12% of Hispanics occupy housing units in New York State. Because New York City has one of the nation’s tightest and most complicated housing markets, immigrants

disproportionately occupy the lowest-quality housing. Overall, foreign-born households are more likely to be renters and encounter affordability problems. Multivariate analyses reveal that foreign-born renters are more likely to live in overcrowded and unsound housing. Compared with native-born white renters, immigrants—especially Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Caribbeans, Africans, and Latin Americans—are more likely to live in badly maintained units. Because native-born blacks and Hispanics share this disadvantage, it strongly suggests that race and ethnicity are more significant than immigrant status per se in determining housing conditions.

Housing in New York City is unique, when compared to the nation as a whole, in that the substantial majority of its residents do not own the homes in which they live. The 1999 Housing and Vacancy Survey (HVS) reports that the percentage of rental units relative to all dwellings in New York City stood at 66% in 1999, down from 70% in 1996. While lower, this is still much higher than the national average of 33%.

In New York City, the number of new housing units in 2000 (12,905) increased by 44% from the number completed in 1999 (8,937). The largest growth in new units occurred in Manhattan, a 161% increase, while construction of new housing units declined throughout Staten Island, a decrease of 14% from 1999-2000. Units in Brooklyn increased by 45%. Units increased in the Bronx by almost 14%. The number of units completed in Queens declined by 5% from 1999-2000. Unfortunately, this came at a time when this borough experienced tremendous population growth and it is not uncommon to find severely overcrowded housing conditions. It has been documented that 2-3 families live in one-family dwellings. This creates tremendously dangerously public health and safety issues.

Despite the increase in the number of new housing units, decent and affordable housing remains out of reach for too many Hispanic households, who must devote precariously high percentages of their incomes to simply paying for rent. The national median housing wage (income before taxes), based on each county's housing wage for a two bedroom unit at the Fair Market Rent (FMR) weighted by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 1999 population estimates, is \$12.47 an hour, over twice the Federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour. This means that on average, there must be more than 2 full-time minimum wage workers in a household in order for the household to afford a 2 bedroom housing unit at the FMR (the amount that a renter would pay based on data from the decennial census, and the annual American Housing Survey). In New York State, the average wage needed for someone to be able to afford two bedrooms at the FMR rate is \$16.04 per hour. Many households cannot afford to pay the Fair Market Rent.

One consequence of the extreme shortage of low-cost apartments has been the growth of illegal conversions of existing units. While there are no comprehensive statistics on this phenomenon, there is plenty of evidence that apartments have been illegally divided up to house immigrant families and others in appalling conditions. The Coalition for Homelessness has documented its dealings with illegal single-room occupancy (SRO) units, the most common form of illegal conversions, including basement rooms and rooms in one-or two-family houses, mostly in the boroughs outside of Manhattan. There are also cubicles, distinguished from rooms in that they lack windows. Dormitories providing bed space and nothing more have also been set up in some sections of the city. While illegal housing has become the only option for as many

"Multivariate analyses reveal that foreign-born renters are more likely to live in overcrowded and unsound housing."

“The Self-Sufficiency Standard measures how much a wage-earner must earn per hour to pay for housing, food, child care and other basic necessities...”

as 100,000 New Yorkers, there have also been more than 200,000 doubled-up households during the 1990s. A Census Bureau survey reported 151,810 households, 7.8% of all renters in New York State.

The Self-Sufficiency Standard (an analytical tool used by researchers) measures how much a wage-earner must earn per hour to pay for housing, food, child care and other basic necessities, based on the ages, as well as the number of children in each household, and where the family lives. The self-Sufficiency Standard assumes that parents and children do not share the same bedroom and that there are not more than two children per bedroom. Therefore, the Standard assumes that single persons and couples without children have one-bed-room units; families with one or two children require two bedrooms, and families with three children, three bedrooms.

Because housing costs vary widely across boroughs in the City of New York, the proportion spent on housing varies greatly from borough to borough, ranging from 21% to 33% for families with just one infant or preschool-age child. Housing and child care are the greatest expenses for working families. The lowest cost borough in New York City is the Bronx. Brooklyn’s cost is slightly higher than the Bronx. The cost of living in Queens and Staten Island is similar and Lower Manhattan is by far the most expensive area to live in New York City.

	Hourly Income Needed For		
	One Adult	One Adult and One Child	One Adult and Two Children
<i>Bronx</i>	\$8.09	\$16.21	\$20.93
<i>Brooklyn</i>	\$8.65	\$16.79	\$21.11
<i>Upper Manhattan</i>	\$8.23	\$18.31	\$22.75
<i>Lower Manhattan</i>	\$13.59	\$28.35	\$35.15
<i>Queens</i>	\$9.15	\$17.74	\$22.18
<i>Staten Island</i>	\$8.92	\$17.59	\$22.13

The Self-Sufficiency Standard measures how much a family must earn to pay for housing, food, child care and other basic necessities, based on the ages, as well as the number of children in each household, and where the family lives.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Lopez	A. 1799	Energy conservation	This bill would give \$5 million to the New York City Housing Authority for the purpose of installing energy-saving devices in State-aided public housing projects.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Brownfield Remediation Act	A. 9265/passed Assembly	This bill would enact the Brownfield Remediation Act in order to create a comprehensive brownfield site cleanup program and provide financial incentives for its implementation. Under the bill, a series of measures would be available to foster the rehabilitation of brownfields, including cleanup liability exemptions, community

participation, public hearings and the availability of technical-assistance grants.

Brownfields Assistance	A. 9203	This bill would authorize the UDC to provide economic support to community-based organizations in order to build community infrastructure on brownfield sites after they are cleaned up. The bill would help many communities revitalize and develop prime pieces of property for job creation and other economic development purposes.
Co-op/Condo Abatement	A. 6739/passed Assembly	This bill would allow New York City residential condominium owners and tenant-shareholders in cooperative buildings to be eligible for an abatement of property taxes levied for FY 2001 to 2003. The legislation also requires the city to present a plan to the Legislature by December 31, 2002 for addressing the problem of disparate tax treatment between class one residential properties and class two cooperative and condominium properties.
Housing Authority Exemptions	A. 6976/ new law	This law continues state and local tax exemptions to housing authorities across the state for another 60 years in order to ensure HUD funding eligibility. This measure is necessary in order to provide affordable housing to the state's low-income population.
Housing Agency	A. 8761/new law	This bill would increase the maximum borrowing allowed and aggregate bonding authority of the New York State Housing Finance Agency to \$5.63 billion. The increased bonding will provide HFA with additional funds to finance low-income housing developments.
Multi-Family Housing	A. 8762/new law	This law extended the effectiveness of the New York City Housing Development Corporation's

powers for the financing of multi-family housing until June 30, 2003. The bill aims to continue the state’s efforts to provide affordable housing for the state’s middle and low-income citizens.

SONYMA

A. 8763/new law

This law extended the authority of the State Office New York Mortgage Agency to purchase forward commitment mortgages and increase the maximum amount of new money tax-exempt bonds that SONYMA may issue until July 16, 2002. The bill would continue SONYMA’s ability to provide financing for the low and moderate-income housing market.

Mortgage Insurance
Fund Continued

A. 8764/new law

This law extended until July 16, 2003, the expiration of certain powers of the state of the SONYMA insurance fund. The legislation would continue to provide funding to secure low-interest loans made by the banking industry to under-served communities.

“Housing and childcare are the greatest expenses for working families.”

UDAAP

A. 3966/new law

This law extended New York City’s authorization to provide rehabilitation loans and restructure rents as prescribed by the Urban Development Action Area Program (UDAAP) until June 30, 2006. The bill continues the city’s authority to prevent residential buildings from being foreclosed on and keep them available to New Yorkers in need of affordable housing.

Aging

Ways to improve the quality of life for New York State’s senior citizens is a major concern for the New York State Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force. The Assembly Majority has worked for continued funding of critical services and improvement of myriad programs that are assisting the elderly in communities across our State. The Task Force supports the work of the New York State Assembly Committee on Aging’s work on improving the Family Caregivers Program, which provides aid to families caring for

older persons at home. Of importance to the Assembly Majority is the issue of how to deal with the projected demand for additional aid and services for the large number of New Yorkers that will be 65 and older by 2015.

For many low-income Hispanic seniors, Social Security payments represent 50 percent or more of their income and for others it represents all of their income. Their Social Security benefits are low, since the larger number of those seniors worked in lower-wage jobs. Due to a lifetime of limited access to quality health care (or any health care in many cases), Hispanic and other ethnic/racial minority seniors have relatively poorer health. Many Hispanic seniors are also facing an increase in homelessness and poverty.

Statistics indicate that between 1997 and 2030, the elderly Hispanic population in New York State will grow by 368 percent, meaning there will be a greater demand for services for a growing number of sick, poor elderly who are not fluent in English. 70% of seniors across the State having immediate need for home delivered meals are not receiving them; yet every \$1 spent on nutritional services saves \$3.25 in health care costs. Home meal delivery and care services, visiting nurses, physical and mental health programs, especially for Alzheimer's patients, will also be needed by an ever growing number of elderly persons who have nobody to care for them at home. These are pressing and worsening problems for New York State.

Hispanic senior citizen numbers are rapidly growing. These seniors are projected to be the largest segment of New York City's elderly population. A profile of the Hispanic elderly reveals that they are a group that has less education, earned less wages during their prime working years, has more chronic illnesses, and pays a greater percentage of their meager fixed incomes in housing and medicine. Also, a growing number are taking care of their grandchildren, substituting for expensive early childhood education programs and day care services.

A growing sub-section of the Hispanic elderly population are the immigrant elderly who migrated to the United States in their mid-life. This segment has even lower income, is not proficient in English, and possesses lower educational levels than their native contemporaries. These are additional problems that characterize a large segment of the Hispanic elderly.

"Statistics indicate that between 1997 and 2030, the elderly Hispanic population in New York State will grow by 368 percent..."

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Díaz	A. 4630	Tax	This bill offers a tax decrease to individuals who provide "elder care" for a tax payer's grandparent, uncle, or aunt who would otherwise require a nursing home.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
EPIC Eligibility Retention	A. 5149/ passed Assembly	This bill would allow seniors to retain their eligibility for the state's Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage Program (EPIC). The legislation allows EPIC-enrolled seniors whose incomes increased because of cost of living adjustments

		in their public or private pensions or Social Security benefits to retain their EPIC eligibility.
Senior RPT Exemption	A. 2692/new law	This law allows school districts the option to grant a senior citizen real property tax (RPT) exemption to otherwise ineligible seniors who reside with a child attending public school.
Disability Accommodation Bill	A. 4707/ passed Assembly	The bill would require public and government facilities to make reasonable modifications to accommodate the disabled. The bill is part of the Assembly's legislative agenda to meet the needs of the disabled.
Disability Driving	A. 5248/ passed Assembly	This bill would authorize the state Office of Equipment Purchase Temporary and Disability Assistance to establish programs to help reimburse those with disabilities who need adaptive equipment to drive. The bill provides for the purchase of driving equipment that includes wheelchair lifts, automatic door openers and adaptive and steering devices. The bill is part of the Assembly's legislative agenda to meet the needs of the disabled.
Nursing-Home Staffing	A. 4171/ passed Assembly	This bill would establish basic staffing requirements and create an "Advisory Council on Nursing Home Staffing" to evaluate the current nursing-home staffing crisis and to make recommendations to ensure appropriate staff levels.
Women Health Screening	A. 2006/ passed Assembly	This bill would require insurers to provide coverage for the screening and treatment of osteoporosis. The legislation would also remove deductibles or co-payments for mammography screenings and cervical cytology screenings and expand the coverage to include multi-state policies.

Children And Families

The setting of policy affecting children and families is a complicated and demanding responsibility for the New York State Assembly. The Assembly is constantly working on legislation affecting child welfare, including foster care and prevention services, child abuse and neglect, runaways, day care and adoption, juvenile justice, delinquency prevention programs, and other services and programs for children and their families. Setting priorities and distributing limited resources to address these issues is an ongoing process.

Children's earliest learning experiences shape them for life. Investments in these early years are investments for the future. None is more important than quality child care/early learning. The availability of affordable, high quality and developmentally sound childcare in a sufficient quantity is the essential ingredient that allows parents at work, in school or training to be assured of their child's safety. Quality childcare also enables children to develop and grow intellectually, socially and emotionally, while ensuring later school readiness.

New York has made significant strides over the past several years in addressing the issue of child care/early education. However, in New York State, 30,000 children are on waiting lists for childcare, many more remain in informal arrangements with no quality or safety control. Possible solutions to this problem include the unification of the previously diverse and uncoordinated childcare funding streams under the childcare block grant, additional childcare subsidies, and the creation and permanent funding of a Universal Pre-Kindergarten program. However, attempts to make Universal Pre-K the standard in all communities have fallen short due to inadequate funding.

Child poverty rates remain high and household member composition plays an important part in determining a child's socioeconomic status. Although the number of single-parent households declined slightly during the 1990s, more than 1/3 of the city's children continue to live in such a home. In 1993, 51% of children under 18 years of age lived in a household with both parents; by 1999, the proportion had increased to 54%. Correspondingly, the percentage of children living with a single mother decreased from 33% to 31% from 1993 to 1999 while the proportion living with a single father increased slightly from 2.9% to 3.3% during the same period.

Over the last decade, there have been increasing numbers of families in which both parents work and a growing number of single parents who work or are leaving welfare for work. The emphasis on welfare to work to support families has created significant new demand for affordable, safe and high-quality childcare. This growing number of working parents and their increased demand for childcare has fueled the debate over the availability of quality, educational programs and facilities for our youngest citizens. New research on early childhood development, and its demonstrated importance in the educational and social attainment of low income children is a driving force in the Task Force's work to gain funding for quality childcare and educational programs.

"Child poverty rates remain high and household member composition plays an important part in determining a child's socio-economic status."

Although the poverty rate of female-headed households has fallen, relatively few of those families have achieved financial prosperity or security. More than three quarters of all single mothers in New York City have annual incomes below \$25,000 and only 8% have incomes above \$50,000.

A recent study revealed that a single parent with two children in New York City needs an annual income of more than \$44,000 to make it out of poverty. Moreover, poverty is generally a long-term condition; 57% of poor single mothers in 1992 were still poor in 1998. With the reauthorization of the Federal Welfare Reform Act, due this year, and possible increases in federal support of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), many low-income families will be anxious to see whether or not the federal government will increase or decrease the funding available to low-income communities. TANF provides assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting states billions in federal funds and wide flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs.

When federal welfare reform passed in 1996, funding was changed from a system where the federal government simply reimbursed states for part of their welfare expenditures, no matter how large or small the caseload. Now, states receive a block grant, a fixed amount of money each year. The dollar amounts were based on expenditures in 1995, when the caseloads were much higher than they are today.

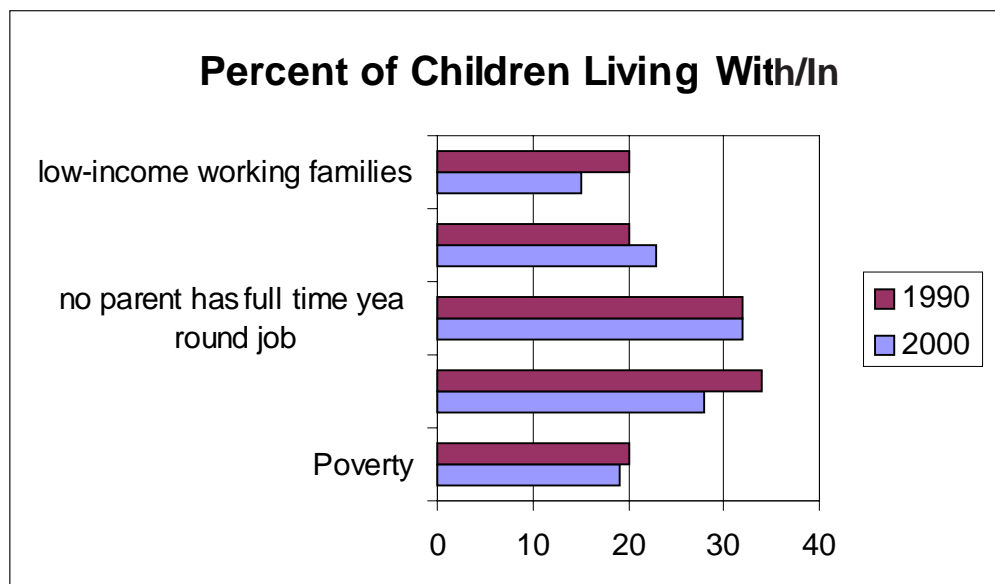
About half of all women who had left welfare after 1996 were working in 1999. Their average earned income was about \$10.00 per hour and about \$16,000 annually in 1998. Nearly 60% of those who were employed worked in professional or related services establishments, including doctors' offices and clinics, hospitals, law firms, or schools. In general, the household incomes of women who left welfare between 1996 and 1999 were not higher than those that remained on public assistance. About one-fifth of the households who had left welfare appear to have slipped through the safety net, their incomes were below welfare levels in 1998. With increased cost from housing, food, health care and other expenses, poverty will remain a fact of life for many of these households.

Sixty percent of Hispanic families have annual income less than twice the federal poverty level — \$35,300 for a family of four. Compared to non-Hispanic whites, Hispanic couples are younger, more likely to have young children at home, and more likely to have only one wage earner in the family. Nearly one million children live in poverty in New York State. Hispanic children are more likely to live below the poverty level. About 40% of Hispanic children under the age of 18 are living in poverty compared to 13% of non-Hispanic White children.

In New York City, one out of four city residents lived in poverty and four out of every ten of the city's children were poor. Children living in families with three or more of the following characteristics are considered at high risk for poverty:

- child lives in a family with income below the poverty line;
- child lives in a single parent family;
- child lives in a family where no parent had full-time year-round employment; or
- child lives with a household head who is a high school dropout.

“More than three quarters of all single mothers in New York City have annual incomes below \$25,000, and only 8% have incomes above \$50,000.”



“Sixty percent of Hispanic families have annual income less than twice the federal poverty level — \$35,300 for a family of four.”

- The poverty rate for New Yorkers 17 years of age and younger was 38%. This compares to a 20% rate for working age (18 through 64 years old) and an 18.5% rate for elderly (65 and older) New Yorkers.
- The poverty rate for African Americans was more than two times and for Hispanics nearly three times higher than for White residents. In 1997 the poverty rate for African Americans was 27%, Hispanics 38%, and Whites 13%.
- While the poverty rate for all New York City families was 22%, the rate for female-headed families with children was 54% in 1997.
- The median income for families with young children is \$35,200.
- 48.2% of young children live below 200% of the federal poverty level.
- 34% of children live in single-parent families in 2000.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
López	A. 1797	Child abuse	This bill preserves families and prevents their breakup by moving unnecessary cases from the Family Court.
López	A. 2828	Parents/children	This bill is to prevent the denial of an eligible parent enrolled in the educational degree program from being denied day care services for their children.
López	A. 6530	Youth/mentoring	This bill establishes a mentor program through the Office of Children and Family Services, to assist youth released from youth facilities in resuming productive lives, developing skills, and reducing recidivism.

Espaillet	A. 7103	Interpreters	This bill requires the court to appoint a court appointed interpreter to assist in a proceeding, to translate or interpret into the appropriate language any order of protection issued.
Espaillet	A. 7098	Liability/ power outage	This bill imposes strict liability for consumer damages from service interruptions caused by negligence of gas or electric corporations.
Ortiz	A. 5378	MHC	This bill is to make adjustments to the Minority Health Council such as increasing the membership.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Seamless Child Care Assistance	A. 8709/new law	This law provides child day care assistance to families who experience a short break in employment. Under the bill, childcare would continue without interruption for those eligible families who are committed to working towards self sufficiency, but experience a short break in their employment.
Immunization for Children	A. 8803/new law	This bill would extend the expiration of certain demonstration programs in connection with the immunization of children. The bill would require the state Health Department to continue to monitor regional immunization database programs in order to ensure that the state's children are fully immunized.
Summer Youth Employment	A. 8372/ passed Assembly	This bill would establish a summer employment program for young New Yorkers between the ages of 14 and 21, with an emphasis on 14- and 15-year-olds. The legislation requires the state labor commissioner to develop a statewide summer youth employment program.
Child Support	A. 7923/new law	This law extended for two years provisions relating to the enforcement of child and combined

child and spousal support orders by the state Department of Taxation and Finance. Since 1997, this initiative has boosted child-support collections by more than \$128 million.

Suspension Of
Driving Privileges

A. 7924/new law

This bill would extend for two years provisions relating to the enforcement of child support through suspension of driving privileges. As a result of this program, since July 1995, more than 300,000 deadbeat parents have made child support payments.

Booster Seats

A. 1262/
passed Assembly

This bill would require motorists to place children aged five and six in an appropriate child-restraint system, including booster seats. The bill addresses concerns that the current law's child-restraint provisions, which only apply to children under age of four, leave four and five-year-olds without proper protection. The measure aims to address problems associated with standard seat belts that do not fit young children properly and have led to serious and fatal injuries in crashes.

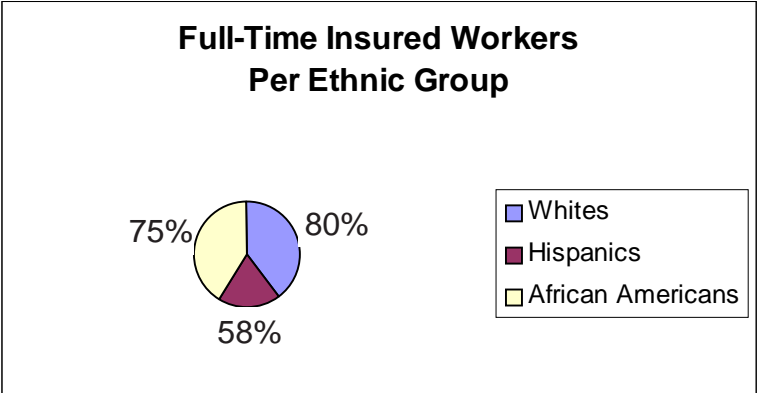
Health Insurance

Last year the New York State Assembly Majority reviewed and addressed proposals that focused on improving solvency protection, targeted specific consumer protection reforms, and responded to industry changes that occur when new products are introduced or new technologies revise the way in which companies conduct business.

Despite comprising an increasing share of the U.S. population and work force, a new report by the Commonwealth Fund reveals that Hispanics lag far behind non-Hispanics in health insurance coverage. Analysis of the dynamics of the types of jobs and industries in which Hispanics work, their status as immigrants, and factors related to family structure were found to contribute to limited opportunities for Hispanics to obtain health insurance. Immigrants are especially affected because of their low incomes. They contribute to our nation's economic success but face barriers to sharing economic rewards on an equal basis with other workers. Many inadequacies in the private employer health insurance system negatively affect Hispanics' and other immigrants' ability to obtain coverage.

"Hispanics lag far behind non-Hispanics in health insurance coverage."

In the labor force, Hispanics are at a double disadvantage: they are more likely to be employed in industries and occupations where employer coverage is less likely to be offered. Within these industries, Hispanics are less likely than non-Hispanics to be offered coverage. For example, within the construction industry, 64% of non-Hispanic whites are offered and eligible for coverage, compared to 46% of Hispanics. Yet when they are offered health benefits, Hispanics are just as likely as non-Hispanic whites to accept it. Lower income accounts for some, but not all of the disparity between Hispanic workers and other workers. Among families with annual incomes of less than \$15,000, 45% of Hispanics are uninsured, compared with 29% of whites and blacks. Among full-time Hispanic workers, 58% have coverage through their job, compared with 75% of blacks and 80% of whites.



Foreign-born Hispanics are twice as likely as U.S.-born Hispanics to be uninsured (49% vs. 24%). Even within the immigrant population, Hispanics have strikingly higher uninsured rates than non-Hispanics. The disparity is particularly evident for those who have been in the U.S. less than 5 years: 72% of new Hispanic immigrants lack health insurance, compared to 28% of new non-Hispanic immigrants. While rates of insurance coverage increase with length of residence in the U.S., one-third of Hispanic immigrants remain uninsured even after living in the U.S. for 15 years. This is more than double the rate for non-Hispanic immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for longer than 15 years.

“Foreign-born Hispanics are twice as likely as U.S.-born Hispanics to be uninsured...”

While more than one-third (35%) of all Hispanics lacks insurance, rates of working-age Hispanics without health insurance coverage vary widely according to national origin. Nearly two out of five Hispanics from Mexico (38%) and from Central and South America (39%) lack insurance. In contrast, the uninsured rates for Puerto Ricans and Cubans are lower, about one in five. Employer-sponsored coverage for Hispanics of any national origin is still well below that for non-Hispanic whites or blacks.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Rivera, P.	A. 10501	Co-payments	To lessen the necessary co-payments of maintenance drugs for those who suffer from chronic illnesses and those suffering from other conditions warranting specified greater prescription supplies, especially for those who are in the low-income and fixed-income brackets.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Health Insurance Hikes	A. 1084/passed Assembly	This bill would require the state Insurance Department (SID) to review health-insurance premium increases over five percent. The bill is in response to the alarming growth of rate increases that range from 10 to 40 percent. To ensure consumers are not strapped with unaffordable insurance premiums, the bill would require SID to conduct public hearings on rate-hike applications.

Health Issues

Providing health care services and maintaining a quality health care labor force is important for all New Yorkers. The Assembly Majority's passage of the Health Care Reform Act of 2000 (HCRA) provided \$1.8 billion in increased wages, job retention, recruitment and training for health care workers employed by hospitals, health-care clinics and nursing homes and for personal care providers. Under the new law, the needs of the disabled would be addressed through a Medicaid "buy-in" provision which would protect the disabled from having to choose between health care coverage or working. Medicaid breast and cervical cancer coverage will also be expanded, to ensure that more uninsured and under-insured women have access to affordable medical care. Streamlining of the enrollment process for Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus and Medicaid, so that more low-income New Yorkers will have access to health care, is seen as an important issue that will increase access for the uninsured.

Even with this significant effort to address the immediate need for more trained nurses and health care staff in New York hospitals, there is much more work to be done in order to make access to health care more available to many low-income New Yorkers. The vacancy rate for nursing assistants is 9.9 percent in New York City and 6 percent regionally. But the shortages are not so severe for licensed practical nurses — 1.5 percent in the city and 6.8 percent regionally, or housekeeping, which stands at roughly 4 percent.

There are many factors behind the nurse staffing crisis, not the least of which is that women who traditionally form the backbone of the profession have many more career opportunities than did their mothers or grandmothers. The working conditions are not always the best. Nurses frequently complain of heavy workloads, increased use of mandatory overtime, insufficient support staff, and inadequate wages.

The financial squeeze from managed care, Medicare and Medicaid cuts and rising costs has made it difficult for hospitals to offer more generous wages, benefits and better working conditions.

"Within the Hispanic community, an appalling 31 percent of children and 41 percent of adults are uninsured."

As a result, fewer nurses have been entering the profession to replace those who are retiring or leaving, and those who remain have more employment options outside of hospitals than they did in the past. That leaves a steadily aging RN work force. While over half of all RNs were reported to be under age 40 in 1980, fewer than one in three were younger than 40 in 2000, according to a report by the U.S. General Accounting Office. With a wave of retirements looming, many experts believe that the hospital work force shortages will only get worse. By 2020, as baby boomers reach their late 60s and 70s, the nursing work force is expected to fall to nearly 20 percent below projected need.

Hispanics and other communities of color still face disparities in health coverage and health status. The lack of health coverage can burden people with high medical bills or, worse, force them to put off needed medical care. Hispanics are disproportionately affected by these problems—making up 12 percent of the population, yet representing a large percentage of the nation's uninsured. Nearly two out of five Hispanics (37 percent) are uninsured. This is more than twice the national average of 18 percent. *Within the Hispanic community, an appalling 31 percent of children and 41 percent of adults are uninsured.*

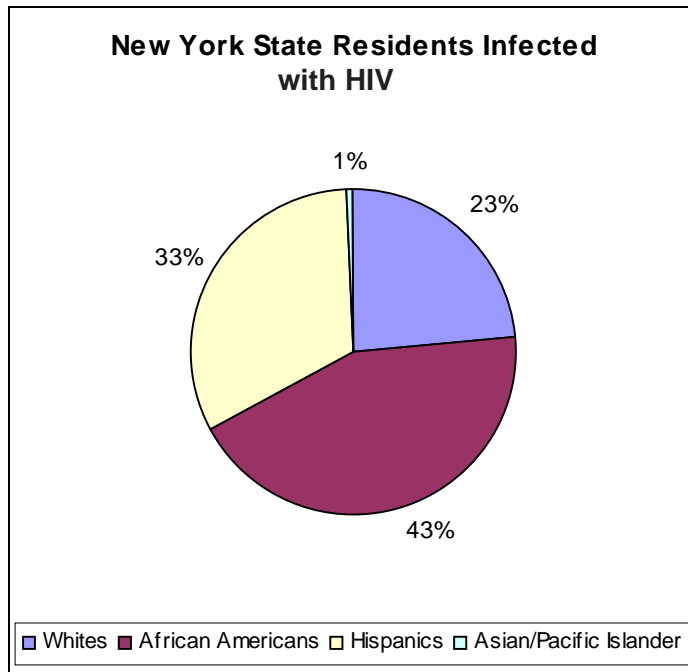
New York's two health insurance programs for children, Medicaid and Child Health Plus, are now united under one name, Child Health Plus. The Task Force supports Child Health Plus, a comprehensive health insurance program that covers most of children's health care and dental needs. It offers coverage to all children under 18. Although there are 735,000 New York City children currently enrolled in the insurance plan, an additional 370,000 kids remain uninsured. Many parents are equating the program with welfare and do not believe their children are entitled to coverage. More needs to be done to inform and enroll all who are eligible.

AIDS

The growing number of Hispanics contracting the HIV/AIDS virus is rapidly increasing. Over half of the Hispanics in New York report having a close friend or family member with HIV/AIDS. New York City reports more Hispanics living AIDS cases than Houston, Los Angeles, Miami and San Juan combined. The sharing of HIV contaminated syringes has been the leading cause for the spread of the virus among Hispanic communities causing 70% of AIDS cases.

The number of Hispanic women with HIV/AIDS has dramatically increased from 15% in 1988 to 30% in 2001. Heterosexual transmission is the leading cause of infection among Hispanic women. There has also been an increasing number of HIV cases reported among Hispanic youth. Hispanic youth comprise 40% of the Hispanic population.

- Total AIDS cases in New York State from the start of the epidemic: 142,376
- The number of new cases by race include: Whites, 13,081; African American, 24,146; Hispanic, 18,111; Asian/Pacific Islander, 376; Native American, 41
- Number of new cases for males: 41,632; number of new cases for females: 14,449



“New York City reports more Hispanics living AIDS cases than Houston, Los Angeles, Miami and San Juan combined.”

Asthma

A report just issued by the Center for Children’s Health and the Environment at Mount Sinai School of Medicine has concluded that the poor and minorities in New York City are 21 times more likely to be hospitalized for asthma than the affluent. For example, lower East Harlem, where the average household income was \$18,732, had the most serious problem, with a rate of hospitalization of 222.28 per 10,000 people per year. In a neighborhood like the Rockaways, where the average household income was \$103,125, the rate was zero, which means that not a single person had to be treated in a hospital for asthma in the last year. The report cited evidence showing that asthma hospitalization rates are 7.5 times higher for minorities than for whites. Poor housing is a critical factor causing the high rates of asthma in certain areas. This is because buildings in low-income areas may have an increased exposure to air pollutants due to excess water created by water leaks and poor ventilation. This will increase exposure to indoor allergens, such as toxigenic molds. Experts, in general, have identified pesticides, dirt, dust mites, and cockroaches as major causes of respiratory problems. There is significant evidence that minority and low-income people live in the most polluted areas in urban centers. They are exposed to the highest levels of non-organic toxic pollutants, such as lead, ozone, carbon monoxide, and other particulates. Other studies have demonstrated a correlation between low air quality and respiratory diseases. With the levels of pollution rising in our cities, and with a growing concentration of people in highly populated neighborhoods, asthma cases are projected to increase and heavily impact Hispanic communities.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Powell	A. 8473	Interpreters	This bill requires hospitals to provide language interpreters.
Ortiz	A. 2549	HIV/AIDS	This bill requires that public health campaigns, which are directed at risk populations, be prepared in the

“...studies have demonstrated a correlation between low air quality and respiratory diseases.”

Rivera, P.	A. 7703	AIDS
Rivera, P.	A. 9908	Unborn victims
Rivera, P.	A. 7706	Health/minorities

language of the population and in a culturally appropriate manner.

This bill directs the Commissioner of Health to create a cultural education demonstration program for AIDS health care providers.

This bill provides that either a person or an unborn child in any stage of gestation may be the victim of an assault.

This bill requires the Public Service Commission to consider the environmental impact on minority communities and economically distressed areas of proposed electric generation plants.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>
Indigent Care Pool	A. 7360/passed Assembly

Description
This bill would create an indigent care pool to pay for uncompensated care for substance abuse treatment given by non-profit health-care providers to indigents. The measure would allow not-for-profit diagnostic treatment centers to be compensated for these services.

Art. 10 Energy Generation Facility	A. 8952/new law
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This law provides the state Power Plant Siting Board with an accelerated repowering approval process for the repowering of an existing facility or the phase out of an old facility for a new, cleaner one. The measure would reduce the approval time from one year to six months. Under the legislation, plant emissions would have to be reduced by at least 75-percent to qualify for the accelerated approval process.

Curbing Air Pollution	A. 5577/passed Assembly
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This bill would direct the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to establish emission standards for mercury, nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide. These standards will help reduce dangerous contaminant

emissions and protect the environment and public health.

Arsenic in
Drinking Water

A. 8951/passed Assembly

This bill would require that the state Sanitary Code set a maximum allowable level for arsenic in drinking water at 10 parts per billion. Arsenic is a known human carcinogen that is also responsible for blood disorders such as diabetes. The bill would reduce the risk of these disorders and cancer by reducing the allowable amount of arsenic in drinking water by 80 percent.

Cancer
Mapping Bill

A. 404A/passed Assembly

This bill would require that the DEC and the Department of Health combine data to develop a comprehensive map of the state that details incidences of cancer and the proximity of these sites to facilities that may involve materials responsible for producing these incidences.

Cumulative
Environmental
Impact Statement

A. 1328/passed Assembly

This bill would require state environmental impact statements (EIS) to document the cumulative impact of a proposed facility's emissions. The legislation would mandate that the EIS not only include the proposed project's emissions, but also combine the emissions of the new and existing projects within a community. The bill aims to provide a more accurate account of emission levels that would be disbursed into a community in order to determine the cumulative impact of a facility on the local environment.

"By 2020, as baby boomers reach their late 60s and 70s, the nursing work force is expected to fall to nearly 20 percent below projected need."

Environmental
Justice

A. 471/passed Assembly

The bill would establish guidelines for the siting of facilities with environmental impacts in minority and economically distressed communities. The legislation, which the Assembly has passed since 1994,

would require DEC to develop an equitable and fair siting process to ensure that a disproportionate number of facilities is not located in these neighborhoods.

Crime Victims Board A. 5567/passed Assembly

This bill would require that a health-care professional who is experienced in treating and counseling crime victims be included as a member of the state Crime Victims Board (CVB). The measure aims to ensure that members of the CVB have the expertise necessary to evaluate properly the medical care crime victims may need in order to recover from their injuries.

Infant Shaking Prevention A. 2208/new law

This law requires that mothers of infants be provided with information explaining the dangers of “Shaken Baby Syndrome” and how to prevent it.

Under the bill, hospitals across the state would be required to provide maternity patients with information, prepared by the state Health Department, that explains the irreversible harm and injury baby shaking can cause and what steps can be taken to protect babies from this violent assault. Hospitals that repeatedly fail to make this information available to mothers will be fined up to \$500.

Breast and
Cervical Cancer
Treatment

A. 5547/passed Assembly

This bill would extend Medicaid coverage for breast and cervical cancer treatment for women under 65 who have been screened under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention program and do not have health insurance coverage. The bill also would extend coverage to women 65 and over and who are eligible for Medicare. Under the measure the coverage is limited to the period during which care is necessary.

Breast Cancer Grants A. 4063/passed Assembly

This bill would authorize the Health Department to award grants for community-based breast cancer detection, counseling, outreach and education programs. The bill also would require community-based organizations accepting these grants to have breast cancer survivors in decision-making positions.

Breast Cancer Prevention A. 2004/passed Assembly

The bill would require insurers to provide coverage for annual mammography screenings for all women more than 40 years old. The measure would provide significant protections against breast cancer since several studies have shown that mamographies performed on women less than 50 years of age reduce cancer deaths by 30 percent.

Mental Health

The United States clearly understands the importance of overall health and well-being to the strength of a nation and its people. What we are coming to realize is that mental health is absolutely essential to achieving prosperity. According to the landmark “Global Burden of Disease” study, commissioned by the World Health Organization and the World Bank, 4 of the 10 leading causes of disability for persons age 5 and older are mental disorders. Among developed nations, including the United States, major depression is the leading cause of disability. Also near the top of these rankings are manic-depressive illness, schizophrenia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Mental disorders also are tragic contributors to mortality, with suicide perennially representing one of the leading preventable causes of death in the United States and worldwide.

The mental health-related problems and concerns facing the Hispanic population, as well as other racial/ethnic/cultural minorities residing in New York State, have been long-standing. The concerns generally center on accessibility to quality services, the affordability of those services, and the cultural adequacy of the services made available and that of the providers of those services. These concerns have long challenged the public mental health system and have recently been the target of policy and service development and improvement initiatives within the public mental health sector at the national and state levels.

There currently exist unacceptable and inexcusable disparities in the health and mental health status and accessibility to services for Hispanics. With more Hispanics throughout the state, and despite the growth of the Hispanic population in rural communities, public sector responses to the mental health service needs of this

“...4 of the 10 leading causes of disability for persons age 5 and older are mental disorders.”

“There currently exist unacceptable and inexcusable disparities in the health and mental health status and accessibility to services for Hispanics.”

population have been slow to come and not commensurate with the growth, verified needs, and critical circumstances of the population. Included in the latter are the harsh realities of chronic poverty, the lack of adequate and stable medical care, cultural isolation, and, quite frequently, language barriers that make available services effectively inaccessible. Additional factors include:

- an inadequate distribution of mental health professionals and program support staff with adequate and relevant training focused on effective treatment strategies and programming to meet the mental health service needs of Hispanics in rural communities;
- the lack of empirical and evidence-based data formally documenting the health/mental health status, needs and access problems for Hispanics residing in rural communities;
- the unavailability or inaccessibility of primary and specialized services that are of high quality, comprehensive, community-based, culturally competent and linguistically accessible, and integrated with primary prevention efforts and the broader system of services;
- inadequate or no transportation to access programs and services available in the immediate regions;
- a shortage of competent bilingual mental health information and service/care providers; and
- complacent and culturally insensitive systems of service/care that do not understand, accommodate, nor utilize the alternative models of culturally-based illness and treatment that exist in, and are critical to, effective mental health interventions and treatment with Hispanic communities.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Community Reinvestment	A. 7362/ passed Assembly	This bill would provide for the continuation of the Community Reinvestment Act, which provides financial support for mental-health community-based services. This bill establishes a funding stream to guarantee a minimum 2.5 percent COLA for direct care workers for each of the next three years. The bill also creates the “Community Mental Hygiene Services Fund,” composed of the proceeds from the sale of Office of Mental Health (OMH) properties and debt-service savings.
Discharge Planning Process	A. 3094/ passed Assembly	This bill would extend the OMH inpatient discharge planning process to community and residential programs. Under the bill, OMH community and residential patients would undergo the same level of discharge planning that inpatients

receive in order to ensure a quick recovery and minimize the need for re-hospitalization.

Discharge into
the Community

A. 3095/
passed Assembly

This bill would extend existing hospital discharge planning and monitoring requirements for patients to OMH facilities. Under the bill, OMH hospitals would have to comply with current discharge standards in order to ensure that discharged patients have the community-based support services necessary to enhance their long-term recovery.

Education and Training

A. 2908/
passed Assembly

This bill would require the OMH to provide education and training to physicians and law enforcement officers in order to help them safely assist mentally ill individuals. The bill aims to prevent injuries when medical and public-safety personnel provide treatment to mental-health patients who are dangerous.

Commission on Quality
of Care

A. 1196/
passed Assembly

This bill would extend the authority of the state Commission on Quality of Care. This legislation aims to clarify the Commission's jurisdiction to assure that patients served in the community are able to have the conditions of their care and treatment reviewed by a program or facility funded by the OMH or the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD).

Children's Bill of Rights

A. 3162/
passed Assembly

This bill would establish a Children's Bill of Rights in order to ensure that children in state residential care facilities receive appropriate care and treatment. This bill would require OMH, OMRDD, the state Education Department, and the state Office of Children and Family Services to develop rules and regulations that protect the rights of children.

Libraries And Education Technology

New York State has over 7,000 libraries, which serve our citizens by providing support for students, teachers, researchers, readers, job seekers, entrepreneurs, and many others who need assistance. The Assembly Majority supports legislation that will strengthen library funding and enable broader access to library facilities for all New Yorkers. The Assembly Majority has also worked to improve communities' access to information technology to help bridge the digital divide.

Libraries are expanding the variety of materials available to their patrons, and serving greater numbers of people from diverse backgrounds in their communities. According to a Hispanic think tank, ASPIRA Association, Inc., data shows that schools, libraries, and other public access points to the Internet continue to serve those groups that do not have access at home. For example, certain groups are far more likely to use public libraries to access the Internet, such as the unemployed, blacks, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Americans at every income level are connecting at far higher rates from their homes, particularly at the middle income levels. Internet access among households earning \$35,000 to \$49,000 rose from 29.0% in December 1998 to 46.1% in August 2000. Access to the Internet is also expanding across every education level, particularly for those with some high school or college education. Households headed by someone with "some college experience" showed the greatest expansion in Internet penetration of all education levels, rising from 30.2% in December 1998 to 49.0% in August 2000.

While more resources need to be made available to blacks and Hispanics in order to increase their access to information technology, these groups have shown impressive gains in Internet access. Black households are now more than twice as likely to have home access than they were 20 months ago, rising from 11.2% to 23.5%. Hispanic households have also experienced a tremendous growth rate during this period, rising from 12.6% to 23.6%.

Nonetheless, a digital divide remains or has expanded slightly in some cases, even while Internet access and computer ownership are rising rapidly for almost all groups. For example, the August 2000 data show that noticeable divides still exist between those with different levels of income and education, different racial and ethnic groups, old and young, single and dual-parent families, and those with and without disabilities. Persons with a disability are only half as likely to have access to the Internet as those without a disability: 21.6% compared to 42.1%. And while just under 25% of those without a disability have never used a personal computer, close to 60% of those with a disability fall into that category.

Large gaps also remain regarding Internet penetration rates among households of different races and ethnic origins. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have maintained the highest level of home Internet access at 56.8%. Blacks and Hispanics, at the other end

of the spectrum, continue to experience the lowest household Internet penetration rates at 23.5% and 23.6%, respectively. Large gaps for blacks and Hispanics remain when measured against the national average Internet penetration rate.

The Internet divide between Hispanic households and the national average rate was 17.9 percentage points in August 2000 (a 23.6% penetration rate for Hispanic households, compared to 41.5% for households nationally). That gap is 4.3 percentage points wider than the 13.6 percentage point gap that existed in December 1998.

- About a third of the U.S. population uses the Internet at home, only 16.1% of Hispanics and 18.9% of African Americans use the Internet at home.
- Similarly, the 17.3 percentage point difference between the share of Hispanic households with a computer (33.7%) and the national average (51%) did not register a statistically significant change from the December 1998 computer divide.
- Individuals 50 years of age and older are among the least likely to be Internet users. The Internet use rate for this group was only 29.6% in 2000.
- Two-parent households are nearly twice as likely to have Internet access as single-parent households (60.6% for dual-parent, compared to 35.7% for male-headed households and 30.0% for female-headed households).
- In central cities, only 22.8% of female-headed households have Internet access.

“Blacks and Hispanics, at the other end of the spectrum, continue to experience the lowest household Internet penetration rates at 23.5% and 23.6%...”

Small Business

Last year the Assembly made sure the 2000-01 state budget made key investments to help small businesses prosper, create and retain jobs, and to increase economic opportunities for communities in need. Some of these investments include Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP) centers, that provide comprehensive assistance in starting a business and helping new businesses succeed; the Empire State Technology Employment Incentive Program — a new program addressing the shortage of engineers, researchers, scientists, and other highly-trained technical employees; the Urban and Community Development Program — provides state technical assistance and capital for the start-up of “micro-enterprise” businesses and provides funds for development in economically distressed communities; Minority and Women-Owned Businesses — makes capital available for local loan funds to start-up minority and women-owned businesses and provides funds for business development in economically distressed areas.

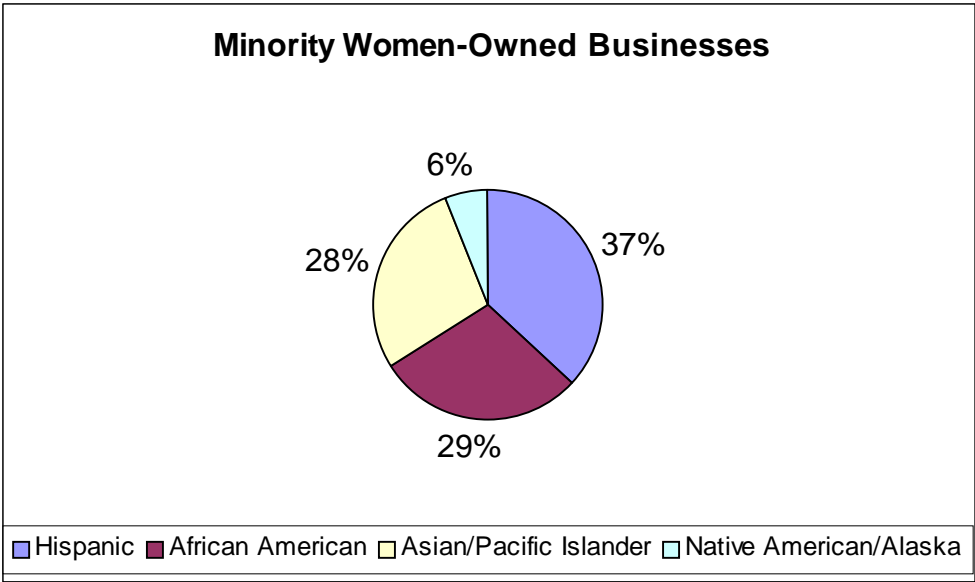
The Assembly Majority has long championed policies and programs that provide financial and technical assistance to this vital sector of the State’s economy. According to the Small Business Administration, it is small businesses that continue to drive the economy. Small businesses make up over 98% of all New York businesses and employ over 44% of the State’s work force. They create nearly 8 out of 10 new jobs in the State. Small businesses face many challenges to their success in the marketplace: access to capital; adaptation to new technologies; recruitment and training of workers; and affordable space.

Over the past decade, new Federal and State environmental laws and regulations have made it necessary for many small businesses to invest in pollution control

equipment at a time when access to capital is often difficult. To ease the financial burden on smaller companies while protecting the public health and safety, the Assembly passed a bill to help small businesses obtain loans from private lenders (A.549) to purchase pollution control equipment. Another bill approved by the Assembly (A.550) would encourage private lenders to make pollution prevention or compliance loans to small businesses, backed by a loan loss reserve fund.

Businesses owned by minority women are growing in number at rates exceeding all women-owned firms and the national average, according to a new report from the Center for Women’s Business Research. The Center projects that as of 2002, there are an estimated 1.2 million businesses owned by women of color in the U.S., employing more than 822,000 people and generating \$100.6 billion in sales. Between 1997 and 2002, the Center estimates that the number of privately-held, majority-owned minority women-owned firms will have grown by 31.5%, compared to 14.3% among all women-owned firms, 29.7% among all minority-owned firms, and 6.8% among all U.S. firms.

The number of minority women-owned firms increased 31.5% between 1997 and 2002, more than twice as fast as all women-owned firms, and more than four times the national average. As of 2002, the Center estimates that there are 470,344 Hispanic women-owned firms, 365,110 African American women-owned firms, 358,503 firms owned by women of Asian or Pacific Islander heritage, and 77,483 firms owned by women of Native American or Alaska Native heritage. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of these firms grew by 39.3%, 16.7%, 44.6%, and 44.6%, respectively.



Businesses owned by minority women represent nearly one-third of all of the businesses owned by persons of color, according to the report. In comparison, all majority-owned, privately held women-owned firms comprise 28% of all U.S. businesses. Businesses owned by minority women now represent 20% of all women-owned firms. More than one-half of minority women-owned firms (58%) are in the service sector, which also had the greatest growth (33% between 1997 and 2002). Other industries with the greatest growth were transportation, communications, public utilities (21%) and agriculture (7%). New York State is one out of ten states with the greatest number of

minority-owned business in 2002. New York is tied with New Mexico with 32% of minority women owning women-owned businesses.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Espallat	A. 7102	Taxicab safety	This bill provides a mechanism to allow and encourage for-hire vehicle owners to install protective partitions in their cabs between the front and back seats in order to protect drivers from violent assaults and to save their lives.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Low-Interest Loans To Small Businesses Start-Ups	A. 3550-C/ passed Assembly	This bill would allow credit unions to participate in the Excelsior Linked Deposit Program that provides low-interest loans to small and start-up businesses. (A.3550-C; Passed Assembly / S.4945-A; Finance)

Labor

The Assembly Majority has remained poised in its commitment to work for the necessary statutory protections for low wage workers, working parents, immigrant workers, and workers who need the protection of law to attain simple worker safety protocols at their work sites. The Assembly Majority is continuously seeking enforcement of existing labor laws designed to improve conditions for working men and women, such as the prevailing wage laws and child labor laws, so that unscrupulous employers cannot easily evade important and progressive standards set in place by New York State.

The Assembly's Majority continues to work on legislation aimed at improving worker safety by addressing a number of important issues. Proposed legislation would more extensively better the working conditions in the apparel industry, improve working conditions for farm workers, enhance enforcement of prevailing wage laws, and increase the maximum benefit available under state disability programs.

The Task Force has supported the State funding of important labor programs. Some of these programs include occupational safety and health services to help families deal with personal problems, particularly substance abuse, indebtedness and family illness, clinic treatment of traumatic occupational injuries, and extending limited for low-wage workers. Other Assembly supported and funded programs include worker education initiatives which consist of programs that help study work force issues and workers' education continue to be supported. Job training funds have also been provided to expand funding which assists veterans in job training. These are commendable efforts by the Assembly Majority but they are tempered by the harsh realities of the working poor.

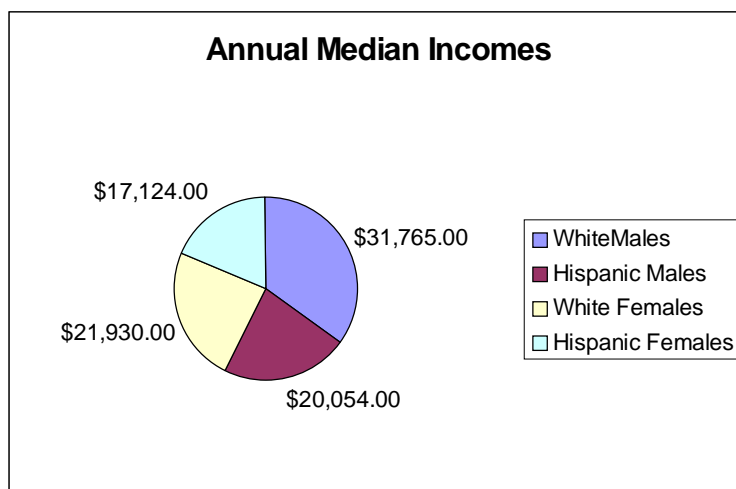
"As of 2002, the Center estimates that there are 470,344 Hispanic women-owned firms..."

“...Hispanics are 20% more likely to die from injuries suffered on the job than African Americans or whites.”

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics recently concluded that Hispanics are 20% more likely to die from injuries suffered on the job than African Americans or whites. Several possible reasons have been cited for the increased number of Hispanic injuries and deaths. They include: dangerous occupations, including construction; lack of English language proficiency; lower reporting to employers of lack of sufficient safety equipment available to Hispanic workers; and lack of adequate employee training in the use of hazardous materials and/or equipment.

Hispanics are more likely to earn less than non-Hispanic whites even among year-round, full-time workers. In 2000, males' real wages declined and women's real wages stagnated. According to statistics released by the U.S. Census Bureau on September 25, 2001, women who worked full-time, year-round earned just 73 percent of what men earned who also worked full-time, year-round. The wage gap is most severe for women of color.

- In 2000, the median full-time earnings for Hispanic women were \$20,527, only 52% of the median earnings of white men (\$37,339).
- In one year, the average Hispanic woman working full-time earns \$17,837 less than the average white man does. Over a 30-year career, that adds up to \$510,000!
- The median income of a female Hispanic householder (\$20,765) is only 46% of the incomes of single white male householders (\$44,988).
- Hispanic women with a high school diploma earn \$22,469. That is 33% less than white men with the same level of education.



It has now been documented that Hispanic women earn 52 cents for every dollar a white male makes in a similar job. White women earn 78 cents and African American women earn 69 cents for the same work. This is an issue that has huge social and economic costs for Hispanic women and families.

Efforts have been made to address this issue and the Task Force supports efforts to amend state labor laws, as it relates to achieving pay equity for all wage earners. The effort is to correct, and as rapidly as practicable, to eliminate discriminatory wage practices based on sex, race, and/or national origin. With many Hispanic women being the primary wage earner for their families, they are being forced to work two different jobs to secure enough income to support their families. This is a problem that has significant long-term and short-term implications for New York Hispanics.

It is evident that in order to increase job opportunity for residents of New York City a college degree is a necessity. College graduates have the lowest unemployment rate from all of the above characteristics of New York City residents. Regarding race, African Americans have the highest unemployment rate at 15.6%. Whites rank the lowest with an unemployment rate of 5.5%. Residents between the ages of 35-54 have the highest employment rate at 71.1%. Residents between the ages of 16-19 have the highest overall unemployment rates. Taking into account that a significant number of Hispanics are under the age of 18, their inability to find age-appropriate employment creates financial hardships for them and their families.

Comparable Worth			
Men		Women	
White	38,869.00	White	\$28,080
Black	30,409.00	Black	\$25,117
Asian & Pacific Islander	40,946.00	Asian & Pacific Islander	\$31,156
Hispanic	24,638.00	Hispanic	\$20,527

"It has now been documented that Hispanic women earn 52 cents for every dollar a white male makes in a similar job."

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Díaz	A. 4699	Welfare reform/workers	The purpose of this legislation is for Work Experience Programs participants to be treated the same as other employees in terms of wages, benefits and the labor law.
Espaillet	A. 7091	Workers/health	This bill establishes funding for medical and wage benefits to livery car drivers for their work-related injuries and diseases.
Díaz	A. 4752	Immigrant workers	This legislation would create a legal basis to prohibit an employer from discharging an older immigrant worker under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 without just cause.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Pay Discrimination Prevention	A. 7012/passed Assembly	This bill would prohibit public employers from compensating employees of different sexes differently for work that is of comparable worth. Under the bill, employers would measure the worth of various jobs by measuring the skill, effort and responsibility normally required in the performance of work and the

“In one year, the average Hispanic woman working full-time earns \$17,837 less than the average white man does. Over a 30-year career, that adds up to \$510,000!”

Pay Equity

A. 290/passed Assembly

conditions under which the work is normally performed.

This bill would amend Article One of the state Constitution to require equal pay for equal work of comparable skill under similar working conditions. The bill aims to correct wage disparity and provide pay equity for all people who perform work of comparable skill, effort and responsibility. The measure addresses the current men to women pay disparity, a condition that discriminates against New York State women who receive only seventy-three cents for every dollar earned by men. The bill is part of the Assembly pay equity legislative initiative.

Minimum Wage Increase

A. 5132/passed Assembly

This bill would increase the state’s hourly minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.75 as of January 1, 2002. The legislation aims to ensure that the wages of working families keep pace with rising inflation costs and boost the earning ability of the many individuals who depend on minimum-wage jobs.

Health Care Whistleblower Protection

A. 3259/passed Assembly

The bill would provide protections to workers of health care facilities who report violations of the law to the news media. Under the bill, employers would be barred from firing an employee who provides information to the media about the practices and policies of a health care facility that create a risk to the public’s health or safety.

Comparable Worth Pay Protection

A. 7432/passed Assembly

The bill would protect individuals from being paid less than their fellow employees who are performing comparable work. The legislation aims to reverse work place conditions that pay workers less than other employees even though their job performance, skills

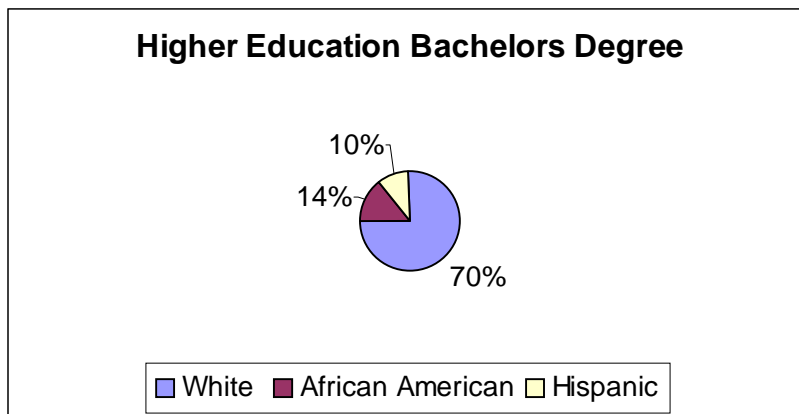
and qualifications are similar. The bill is part of the Assembly's pay equity legislative initiative.

Higher Education

The number of Hispanics on campuses of colleges and universities continues to grow. Between 1976 and 1996, the number of Hispanics enrolled in undergraduate education increased 202%, compared with only 13% for whites and 44% for African Americans. In one year alone (1995-1996), Hispanics' enrollment increased 5%, the largest one-year increase of any ethnic group.

The average combined SAT scores for Hispanic high school seniors were 890 and for white students, 1,050. The college-going rates of public high school graduates are 61% for Hispanics, 66% for blacks, and 82% for whites. The percentages of bachelor's degree awarded over the last 10 years show the following: Hispanics 10%, African Americans 14%, and whites 70%. The numbers with master's degrees break down as follows: Hispanics 5%, African Americans 8% and whites 67%. The numbers for Doctoral degrees are Hispanics 3%, African American 4%, and whites 57%.

"In the past 20 years, Hispanic women have surpassed Hispanic men in graduate enrollment."



- The majority of Hispanic undergraduates are enrolled in two-year institutions, 53%. In comparison, the majority of white and African American undergraduates are enrolled in four-year institutions, 56% and 51% respectively.
- Hispanics tend to borrow less to pay for their education. As first-year students, close to 50% of Hispanics received grants while less than 30% received loans to pay for their education.
- The top three disciplines for bachelor's degrees awarded to Hispanic students are business, social sciences, and education. The top three disciplines for associate's degrees awarded to Hispanics are liberal arts, business, and health professions.
- While Hispanics have increased their enrollment in graduate education, they are still less represented than other groups.
- In the past 20 years, Hispanic women have surpassed Hispanic men in graduate enrollment.
- Although their enrollment rates are small, Hispanics in graduate education are more likely to enroll full-time than either African American or white students.
- Hispanics studying for master's degrees receive less aid and work more than African Americans or whites.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
Espallat	A. 7088	Alcohol prevention	This bill sets forth an annually awarded loan forgiveness program for qualified alcohol, alcohol abuse or substance abuse treatment and prevention professionals.
Rivera, P.	A. 9556	Immigrants	This bill requires City University of New York to charge resident tuition to undocumented residents of New York State. The bill excludes from the resident tuition rate those that have a student visa or have overstayed their student visa.

“The New York public school systems teach almost 200,000 students whose first language is not English.”

Immigrants

Many new strides have been made to assist immigrants in New York State. The Assembly Majority supports legislation that will improve the living and working conditions for our state’s new residents. Of major concern are the needs of immigrant children. The New York public school systems teach almost 200,000 students whose first language is not English. Continued bilingual education and ESL programs are needed to assist students with the language barriers that they face, and help them transition into mainstream classes on their road to academic success. Unfortunately, there has been an increased dropout rate for English Language Learners (ELL). Research reveals that Regents exams have unfair impacts on English Language Learners. Passing the English Regents exam is extremely difficult for foreign-born students after being in this country for a short amount of time.

Immigrants also continue to encounter barriers to their ability to access health care services. Courts have declared that the federal government is not required to pay for Medicaid-sponsored prenatal care for illegal immigrants. According to the State Department of Health, an estimated 13,000 immigrant women will no longer be eligible for prenatal health care. The Task Force supports A. 8953 that was passed in the Assembly on June 25, 2001. This bill will ensure that women will receive prenatal health care regardless of their status in this state.

Immigrants also encounter health care providers who cannot speak their language. Many immigrants are uninsured and have low paying jobs that do not provide insurance. Immigrants lack access to safety net services that the state provides to other residents. Similar to anyone else, immigrants work under and deal with uncontrollable circumstances such as being laid off or becoming ill. Under these circumstances they need government assistance and it is only fair that they receive safety net services.

The workplace for immigrants has always been a dangerous one and even more recently. New York State has the highest rate of immigrants killed and injured in the workplace. Immigrant deaths fail to be investigated and families are not provided timely compensation. Immigrants labor in the lowest paying jobs with barely any training.

The precarious well-being and living conditions of immigrants as documented throughout this report have been aggravated by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Many immigrants have been displaced, losing both their homes and a place to work. While organized relief efforts have raised hundreds of millions of dollars and service delivery systems have been put in place for victims, few immigrants have taken full advantage of the financial and social services available.

The New York Assembly Task Force on New Americans has compiled a report on the specific work of the New York State Assembly with respect to immigrant issues. Their work is supported by members of the New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force.

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Description</u>
López	A. 1875	Immigrants	This legislation would extend the right to vote in federal, State, and local elections conducted in New York State to immigrants lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States.
Españolat	A. 7094	Discrimination	This bill creates a legal basis for the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of national origin or citizenship status.
Españolat	A. 7082	Courts	This bill requires a court to advise defendants of the deportation consequences of a guilty plea.
Españolat	A. 7105	Compensation	This bill increases compensation of municipal employees who use foreign languages.
Rivera, P.	A. 7702	Immigrants	This bill requires the notice of risk of deportation of non-citizens, prior to accepting plea of misdemeanor or violation.
Rivera, P.	A. 4026	Health/immigrants	This bill would provide medical assistance eligibility to immigrants residing in the U.S. since 1972, but unable to prove citizenship or permanent resident status.
Rivera, P.	A. 4027	Health	This bill establishes a Family Health Plus sponsor buy-in demonstration program for qualified immigrants in 6 social services districts.

“Almost half of all New Yorkers over the age of five speak a language other than English at home, according to the Census, and more than 20% of New Yorkers do not speak English well, if at all.”

Rivera, P.	A. 4035	Health	This bill directs the Department of Health to contract with community organizations for distribution of information on health care services and benefits available to immigrants.
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Rivera, P.	A. 10573	Banks/immigrants	This bill provides that New York State banking organizations will accept the Matricula Consular identification card issued by the Consulate General of the United Mexican States as a valid form of identification for all banking transactions.
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<u>Name</u>	<u>Bill No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
Immigrant Health Care	A. 7774/ passed Assembly	This bill would provide federal Medicaid and New York State Family Health Plus coverage to 167,000 legal immigrant New Yorkers. The legislation would provide \$3.8 million in funding for Medicaid coverage for eligible immigrants under the Assembly 2001-2002 budget resolution.
Food Assistance Program	A. 8706/new law	This law extends the state Food Assistance Program (FAP) for two years and provide FAP benefits to immigrants who are also victims of domestic violence.

Acknowledgments

The New York State Assembly Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force would like to acknowledge the following government agencies, offices and nonprofit organizations for their important work in collecting and documenting a myriad of social and economic data on Hispanics in New York State: Their work and resources helped to make this report a reality.

Annie E. Casey Foundation
ASPIRA Association, Inc.
Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc.
Child Care, Inc.
Children's Defense Fund, Inc.
Children's Health Fund, Inc.
Citizens Housing and Planning Council
Community Service Society of New York, Inc.
Division of Housing and Community Renewal, New York State
Educational Priorities Panel, Inc.
Families USA
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies
Gay Men's Health Crisis
Gotham Gazette
Healthcare Association of New York State
Hispanic Federation
Homeless Coalition of New York City
Institute for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly
Latino Commission on Aids
National Center for Children and Poverty
National Center for Education Statistics
National Committee on Pay Equity
National Low Income Housing Coalition
Neighborhood Preservation Coalition of New York State
New York State Immigration Coalition
New York State Assembly Committee on Aging
New York State Assembly Committee on Children and Families
New York State Assembly Committee on Education
New York State Assembly Committee on Health
New York State Assembly Committee on Higher Education
New York State Assembly Committee on Housing
New York State Assembly Committee on Insurance
New York State Assembly Committee on Labor
New York State Assembly Committee on Libraries and Technology
New York State Assembly Committee on Small Business
New York State Assembly Program and Counsel Staff
New York State Education Department
Office of Management and Budget Watch
Office on New York state Comptroller
Statewide Emergency Network for Social and Economic Security (SENSES)
The Coalition of Voluntary Mental Health Services
The Common Wealth Fund

The Rent Guidelines Board
United States Census Bureau
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United Way of New York City
White House Initiative
Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement