



ACLU of New York

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## 2023 – 2024 Legislative Memorandum

**Subject: Coverage For All - A.3020-A (Gonzalez-Rojas) / S.2237-A (Rivera)**

**Position: SUPPORT**

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In New York State, where nearly a quarter of residents were born outside the U.S., immigrants make invaluable contributions to our communities and local economy. Yet many immigrant New Yorkers are unjustly excluded from a variety of public benefits and programs solely because of their immigration status.

New York has made strides in recent years to become a more inclusive and welcoming state, expanding access to driver's licenses and college tuition assistance to people without proof of immigration status, and extending cash assistance to people excluded from federal pandemic relief programs. New York has for years, by way of state court decision,<sup>1</sup> provided state-funded health insurance to people residing under color of law (PRUCOL), going farther than many other states in offering benefits to people without formal federally recognized immigration status. Yet tens of thousands of immigrant New Yorkers remain uncovered due to exclusions for people without proof of status.

Coverage For All would bring needed relief to many such people by making the state's Essential Plan, which offers comprehensive health insurance to lower-income people who are not eligible for Medicaid, available without having to meet citizenship or proof-of-status requirements. This would allow the state to provide critical health care coverage to people who are otherwise eligible for the program but for their immigration status using available surplus funds.

All New Yorkers deserve access to quality health care, and nobody should be denied access to essential coverage because of where they came from. We urge the legislature to narrow the health care coverage gap by passing Coverage For All now.

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<sup>1</sup> *Aliessa ex rel. Fayad v. Novello*, 96 N.Y.2d 418, 425 (N.Y. 2001).