

## **Bridging the Gap: Economic Development Opportunity Through Education for Adult Immigrants**

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### **Abstract**

This article argues that the concept of economic development should include investment in human capital. In the United States, the easiest way to accomplish this is through the culture of the administrative state, which for the purpose of this study, is defined as processes and structures the government uses to implement public policy. For educated adult immigrants, investment in human capital is most effective when it fosters the opportunity to use their education. Most of these investments occur successfully at the state level, as in NJ S2455, which provides occupational licenses for all residents of New Jersey regardless of residency status. To explain the importance of NJ S2455, this article first explores the political context around the issue of human capital development in immigrant communities. Then, employing a policy process model, the study analyzes the steps in the formulation of NJ S2455, its enactment into law, and the early consequences of the law's implementation in New Jersey's largest city.

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It is widely believed that in the next few decades, the United States will become a majority-minority country, meaning the way government approaches all policy issues will need to reflect the new, diverse makeup of the country. The need for adjustments in public policy is evidenced by recent headlines that highlight race and ethnicity as a cause for the disparate worlds of healthcare, education, and housing (Hoyert, 2023; McKinley, 2023; Breed, 2023). Arguably the most consequential policy area is economic development, defined as government investments that create wealth from which community benefits are realized (Sahota, 2020). The historical and pervasive structural inequality that has existed in the United States necessitates intentional policies aimed at rectifying some of the economic damages created by these structures. As the population changes demographically, economic development policy should adapt to provide resources that individual communities need to create wealth. Without these policy adaptations, minority communities are often left behind by structural disadvantages.

Changing how populations interact with structural functions that support the economy is most visible and effective through people-centered economic development, otherwise known as investments in human capital. Immigrant communities, in particular, are poised to benefit from human capital investments since very few programs support adult immigrants who are no longer in school. Throughout the country, there are various attitudes towards these communities that impact their access to resources. However, if the United States holds liberty as an intrinsic ideal, all people, regardless of immigration status, should be free to participate in the economic system openly and free from oppressive barriers. As opposed to welfare programs that some say call for dependence on a system, community investments provide the people living in the area the freedom to choose how they participate and to what degree. The goal, then, is to entice and encourage the public to make rational decisions that will bring personal fulfillment and societal change.

### **Economic Development and the Connection to Human Capital**

To understand why bills such as NJ S2455 are necessary forms of economic development, it is crucial to understand how macro-level and micro-level economic development affect individual communities. Macro-level economic development responds to consequential questions surrounding quality of life, specifically regarding prosperity whereas micro-level economic development refers to the visible programs local government creates to interact with the public. On the whole, economic development should encourage moves toward “wide-reaching visions of equity” that ultimately promote poverty reduction (Naqvi, 1993). This definition is predicated on a community-focused view of development that encourages holistic investment and communal growth. The best way to reduce poverty in this framework is to focus on investments in human capital which center around community revitalization. Increasing human capital equals wealth creation, which is categorically linked to investments in the quality of education, healthcare, and housing. While these investments may seem individualistic, their collective benefits can create whole community change by revitalizing the local economy. If everyone in a community has equitable access to wealth-creation opportunities, the probability of communal prosperity is significantly higher. The World Bank notes: “Human capital complements physical capital in the production process... between 10 and 30 percent of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) differences are attributable to cross-country differences in human capital” (World Bank Group, 2019). There is a substantive, quantifiable connection between the quality of the investment in human capital and a country’s GDP. The question then becomes, what specific investment will facilitate the development of specific communities? The assumption here is that different communities in the United States need different forms of investment. What may work in one community may not work for another because of the nuances in the issues they face.

Focusing on the immigrant community in the United States, human capital investment should be concentrated in education.

Typically considered tuition parity programs or English Language Learning classes, these solutions target specific demographics within the immigrant community while ignoring working age-adult immigrants that do not need tuition parity. In New Jersey specifically, a 2007 study from the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University found that immigrants in New Jersey tend to be educated and of working age (Gang and Piehl, 2008, 9). Without the context of the immigrant experience, it may be difficult to understand why this community needs human capital investment concentrated in education. However, context reveals that, on average, immigrant workers earn less than native-born workers because they are stereotyped as unskilled workers regardless of education (2008, 11). These stereotypes create unnecessary and harmful barriers to economic participation. Suppose lawmakers in Trenton create education policies for immigrant communities that only consider the basic problems of language and do not consider the realities of the people who reside in the state. In that case, those who need government assistance will be left behind by inefficient, antiquated laws. Educated adult immigrants need the opportunity to use their skills, regardless of residency status. In this sense, the definition of education is broadened from the traditional notion of schooling to include any formal or informal instruction that leads to increased knowledge that the general public may not have. Using this broadened definition, investment in education connects immigrants with opportunities to utilize their education. This mode of educational investment places the onus of ensuring initial job placement on educational institutions in the same way an apprenticeship program almost guarantees a well-paying job. The question then becomes, what happens when an over-educated sector of the workforce is relegated to low-wage jobs because of antiquated laws that harm the economic development of the immigrant community?

### **NJ S2455: Occupational Licenses for All**

New Jersey chose to answer this question by removing barriers to occupational licenses. In 2020, New Jersey became the first state on the east coast to remove the residency requirement to attain a professional/occupational license. NJ S2455 amends the Uniform Enforcement Act by removing the residency requirement to acquire a professional license for 175 professions, including plumbing, nursing, engineering, hairstyling, architecture, manicuring and many more. Immigrant workers must meet all other requirements set by the licensing board of their profession to obtain licensure. Approximately 97,000 undocumented residents in New Jersey have bachelor's, graduate, or doctorate degrees (Surin & Griffin Immigration Lawyers, 2020). The most visible subgroup of people affected by this legislation is DACA recipients who were brought to the United States as children and want to create careers for themselves in New Jersey. Many of these people are enrolled in colleges and universities, looking to enter high-demand fields such as education, healthcare, and STEM.

By removing residency requirements, NJ S2455 aims to create equitable opportunities for all people to participate in the economy by using the education they have already received. This bill is reactionary to the employment crisis caused by the covid-19 pandemic and to increasing pressure by immigrants' rights interest groups emphasizing social equity. The bill's primary sponsor, Assemblyman Raj Mukherji, highlighted how NJ S2455 contributes to New Jersey's continued commitment to social equity during the bill signing by stating, "We will enable qualified, trained, highly skilled, and hardworking Dreamers to fill critical worker shortages in our state while contributing to the economy and being treated with dignity" (Johnson, 2020). While this bill is not entirely proactive, it reacted quickly to the economic and employment issues after the pandemic by minimizing the risk of poverty for immigrants with the appropriate qualifications. Risk minimization, in this case, arises through participation in the economy by using an occupational license to seek employment. The risk of

poverty is then lessened because the community is no longer barred from using their education to attain a competitive wage.

Furthermore, more immigrants will be encouraged to attain a professional license now that a critical barrier has been lifted. Therefore, the government needs to intervene for social equity to be achieved since this is a legal issue with economic consequences. While other societal actors may want to contribute to immigrant justice, only state and federal governments have the power to enact measures to combat the issue, the federal government being the strongest of the two. Furthermore, this bill supports the notion of strong governance needed by the administrative state through strong executives, as demonstrated by Assemblyman Raj Mukherji's responsive leadership and Governor Phil Murphy's eagerness to create a fair New Jersey. They responded to the pandemic and the employment needs of immigrants championed by activist groups such as Make the Road New Jersey.

### **Policy Process Model**

Political scientists typically employ models and theories to dissect questions of why and how. In this study, the policy process model will provide a valuable framework for understanding the circumstances behind the bill's passage. This model is a six-step logical series of events that affect the development of a public policy. It is also referred to as a policy cycle highlighting the ever-changing nature of the laws governing society. The six steps of the model are agenda setting, policy formulation, policy legitimation, policy implementation, policy and program evaluation, and policy change. These steps are not firm checkpoints for a bill; rather, they serve as a guideline to understand why and how a bill becomes law (Kraft and Furlong, 2017). Depending on the legislation, steps may be skipped or combined, reflecting the nature of the policy being legislated. To understand the how and why of NJ S2455, analysis will focus on agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation.

### **Policy Process Model: Agenda Setting**

In his book *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies*, Professor John Kingdon of the University of Michigan presents a useful agenda setting model to explain how governmental agendas are set. He presents three factors that each influence agenda setting. The first is problems where he asks why some problems are more important than others (Kingdon 1984, 197). Kingdon posits that the means by which officials learn about conditions and the ways in which conditions become problems determine if they will be on a governmental agenda. Means, in this sense, refers to indicators, focusing events, and feedback that an official experiences or is given. Indicators are quantitative measures such as the unemployment rate or the cost of a program that would warrant action. For instance, a sudden and dramatic increase in the unemployment rate may push worker's rights policy to legislative agendas. Focusing events are instances that draw a lawmaker's attention. While typically associated with disasters and crises, this can also refer to a personal experience that triggers someone to run for office. Feedback is connected to the last stage of the policy process model, policy change. If a bill does not have the intended effect, vocal criticism may encourage a lawmaker to act.

Conditions are more complicated to define as problems because they are normalized as a part of everyday life. Kingdon submits that a condition becomes a problem when society believes something should be done to change them (1984, 198). This typically occurs when a condition goes against the values of a community or when a condition reveals a societal inequity. An example of a condition becoming a problem is poverty among senior citizens and disabled people. The Great Depression caused widespread poverty, with one in four Americans being unemployed. While the FDR Administration created new departments to combat unemployment, there were no policies to address the abject poverty of disabled people and senior citizens. In this example, the condition of poverty quickly arose to a problem government needed to solve, with Social Security being the proposed solution. If Social Security had not been implemented, the

United States would have been violating its value of liberty as the freedom to be free from poverty by neglecting key demographics. It is important to note that while Social Security created equity, it was only accessible to white Americans.

The second factor that can influence a legislative agenda is politics. Kingdon notes that those in the political stream “flow according to their own dynamics and their own rules” (1984, 198). The idea is that legislation is passed more often through bargaining than persuasion. Moreover, an issue may be on a legislator’s agenda because they are bargaining for votes. For instance, to garner votes for soy subsidies, a Representative from the Midwest may find themselves with anti-erosion measures on their agenda. While this might seem strange to the public, the American governing system was created so that legislators must build coalitions to pass legislation. However, Kingdon points out that the “nation mood and elections are more potent than” coalition building (199). Interest groups such as the NRA tend to have a disproportionate impact on policy because of their influence in the political stream, especially if this interest group can capitalize on an election cycle and national sentiment around a specific topic. This is where the intersection of power, money and politics can shape agendas.

The visible participants are the third factor that can influence the agenda setting process. Visible participants refer to the visible actors that can use their influence to push conditions to problems. These visible participants include the President, prominent cabinet members and members of Congress, Governors, and the media, whereas hidden participants include academics, staffers, and bureaucrats. While visible participants affect the agenda, hidden participants affect the policy alternatives (Kingdon, 1984). The State of the Union address is the best example of this dynamic at play. Once a year, the President is given the opportunity to lay out their goals for a legislative term. While once seen as a mundane task required by the Constitutions, modern Presidents use the State of the Union to build broad support for their agenda and highlight their accomplishments.



Although given by the President, this address is carefully written by speechwriters and other hidden participants that have worked behind the scenes to ensure the proposals outlined in the State of the Union will have broad party and interest group support.

Using Kingdon's three factors of problems, politics, and visible participants to analyze how NJ S2455 reached the legislative agendas in Trenton reveals a surprisingly straightforward path. The problem was brought to the agenda through the covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying state-wide employment crisis. The pandemic caused and highlighted significant employment gaps in education, nursing, and social work as shortages and mass retirements plagued all three industries (New American Economy, 2020). As an issue of singular importance in 2020, legislators were looking for creative solutions to solve the employment gaps caused by the pandemic. At the same time, before the bill's passage, about 500,000 immigrants living in New Jersey had under-utilized degrees, with thousands more enrolled in high-demand college programs such as nursing and teaching (Flood, Sarah et al., 2020). Immigrants with under-utilized degrees are typically relegated to working low-paying jobs because of barriers to entry in their field. For instance, 48 percent of those who work in Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance are immigrants (2020, 3). During the pandemic, many of these people lost their jobs due to lockdowns. While only some immigrants have an under-utilized education, those who do demonstrate the concurrent realities of a widening employment gap and the archaic laws that prevented them from being a solution to close said gap. Therefore, instead of increasing the economic harm caused by losing income, lawmakers in Trenton had the opportunity to solve the dual crises by removing barriers to entry.

Politics and visible participants as factors in getting NJ S2455 on legislative agendas were secondary to the problem of the pandemic. It is worth noting that removing the residency requirement to attain an occupation license only became a viable solution to the problem posed by the pandemic because of an Executive Order signed by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy in April 2020. New Jersey became the first state

in the country nation to provide temporary emergency licenses to foreign-born physicians (Governor Phil Murphy [@GovMurphy], 2020). Without the pandemic, neither policy proposal would have seemed like a realistic solution, even though the Murphy Administration has had a long track record of protecting immigrants' rights. Many activists pointed to the Immigrant Trust Directive by the Attorney General in 2018, which established New Jersey as a sanctuary state as a catalyst for more progressive immigrants' rights policies (Immigrants' Rights, 2020). While the problem factor was the most important in agenda setting, the politics and visible participants set the groundwork for its reception as a policy alternative.

### **Policy Process Model: Policy Formulation**

Once the policy is on the agenda, it then moves to the formulation stage, where it is adapted to have the most successful chance of becoming law. John Kingdon once again provides useful frameworks for understanding how a policy becomes codified for this stage of the policy process model. Returning to the idea of hidden participants, he argues that specialists and interest groups drive the selection of solutions (Kingdon, 1984, 200). Before the public widely accepts a policy proposal, academics, congressional staffers, and interest groups workshop different options until there is a broad consensus. The idea of removing barriers to occupational licenses has its roots in discussions surrounding formal education as a criterion for occupational licensure (Hunter, 1988). Later scholarship takes this foundation and layers in credential recognition for immigrants with the necessary education (Gomez et al., 2015). By the time the proposal caught the attention of Trenton lawmakers, activists, and academics from organizations such as Make a Road New Jersey and New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice had been championing NJ S2455 for two years. When the proposal was up for discussion in front of the NJ Senate Commerce Committee, academics from New Jersey institutions such as St. Peter's University and Rutgers University testified to the

proposal's ability to alleviate the labor shortages in the healthcare and education fields.

The second aspect of successful policy formulation is the concept of coupling and windows. Kingdon asserts that the proper coupling of the political climate, a compelling problem, and an available alternative can provide a successful policy formulation (1984, 203). As mentioned with agenda setting, NJ S2455, occupational licenses for all had all three. The previous legislative victories of the immigrant-friendly Murphy Administration, coupled with the employment shortage and the proposal of occupational licenses for all as a solution, combined the necessary actors to pass the legislation. However, more than coupling is needed. A policy could have all parts working together, but the proposal will fail if there is no window. A window gives advocates the opportunity to push their solution forward or bring the necessary attention to the problem (Kingdon 1984). Although windows can open predictably, they typically open unpredictably through problems or the political stream. Once open, the opportunity to couple a solution with the window is short, sometimes lasting days.

Regarding NJ S2455, the coupling moved quickly, with the legislation being introduced in May, almost two months after the pandemic's start (NJ Legislature Session 2020-2021, 2020). While it may seem that two months is a long window, it is important to remember the early political state of the pandemic. Many people, including lawmakers, expected the virus to leave in two weeks, at most a month. This caused a delayed response to problems the lockdown surfaced. Furthermore, once government officials accepted covid-19 was in fact a pandemic, the move to virtual legislative sessions required time and patience. Once the window opened in April, legislators capitalized on the opportunity to solve the dual crises of massive employment gaps in healthcare and education and limited economic opportunities for immigrants by proposing and passing NJ S2455. The entire formulation process lasted from May to September, a timeline that would have been impossible if not for the pandemic.

Unlike most other policies targeting immigration issues, interestingly, this bill did not face vocal opposition from Republicans. While the bill was in the committee stage, the only people who spoke supported the measure. Opposition came when the bill was up for a vote in the Assembly and the Senate, with both votes passing along party lines. After the bill was passed, Republican Assemblyman Harold Wirths argued that there are “rules and laws” in the United States and that they should be respected (Johnson, 2020). There is truth to his statement that the rule of law should be respected and upheld. Philosopher Aristotle contends that when laws are good, they should be supreme. However, an unjust law that does not provide equity for society indicates the lawmaking body is confused about its goals (Aristotle, 1888). Laws should be dynamic, changing to reflect the needs of the population. When a law no longer creates equity, the lawmaking body has a duty to reevaluate the validity of the law. People tend to immigrate to the United States to experience freedom from oppression and the freedom to choose. This style of freedom is inherently American and has been championed for decades abroad. If upholding liberty and freedom is the ultimate goal for American lawmaking, then the laws and processes that restrict these ideals should be amended to construct an equitable system with liberty and freedom as end goals. Granting immigrants access to receive occupational licenses regardless of their immigration status is a step toward this equitable system.

### **Policy Process Model: Policy Implementation**

The successful passage of NJ S2455 in September 2020 moved the policy into its current stage of the policy process model, policy implementation. Policy implementation begs the question of how a policy will work practically. The answer lies in the culture administrative state, otherwise known as the structures and processes government implements to achieve its policy goals. In theory, the administrative state emphasizes social equity and risk minimization through the principle of large government (Pecorella, 2023). In other

words, the culture of the administrative state operates under the concept of a necessary evil. While it may not always be popular, the government is always necessary to soften the waves of a purely libertarian capitalist system. Almost all aspects of policy implementation happen through the administrative state, albeit at times ineffectively. To combat the negative connotation of government not being able to accomplish its goals, Professors Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian of the University of California, Davis provide five useful conditions to determine whether a policy will achieve its objective.

The first condition requires that the program be “based on a sound theory relating changes in group behavior to the achievement of the desired end-state or objectives” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979). The goal of this condition is to ensure that the group being targeted by a policy will exhibit behavior that renders the policy useful. Without the right behavior, the policy is considered obsolete. In terms of providing occupational licenses for immigrants, attaining the proper behavior necessitates visible structures within the government that people can access easily to provide them with the necessary resources. New Jersey is taking steps to create these structures, but as of 2023, the state has fallen behind as compared to other states with large immigrant populations, namely California and New York. In 2019, Governor Murphy established the Office of New Americans (ONA) through Executive Order 74, which directs the Department of Human Services and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to work collaboratively in establishing the office. The mission of ONA is to empower immigrants and refugees throughout the state by providing them with the necessary resources to thrive (Office of New Americans, 2020). While this is a step in the right direction, ONA is not currently constructed in a way where immigrants can easily see the resources available to them. This has caused a situation where the resources exist, but the public is unaware. Therefore, unless an immigrant is involved with activist organizations or is enrolled in a higher-education institution, they do not know they are being targeted

by the policy. In Newark specifically, there is no city-led initiative to reach immigrants, which reinforces the state-wide problem of available resources with no one knowing they exist. For this policy to be effective, ONA needs to be more visible to the public and its outward-facing structures, i.e., website, need to be formatted with the user in mind.

The second condition proposed is the statute should contain unambiguous policy directives and structure the implementation process so as to maximize the likelihood that target groups will perform as desired (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979). This condition links to the policy formulation stage of the policy process model. When a policy is constructed, there needs to be careful attention to the language so that the policy can be achieved. Sabatier and Mazmanian argue that if the objectives are clearly laid out in the formulation stage, the implementation stage will have clear guidelines and benchmarks to follow (1979, 487). To this end, NJ S2455 is successful since its simple language acts as an amendment to Title 45, the Uniform Enforcement Act. The other aspects of the bill, such as the steps to apply for an occupational license, remain the same. Compared to other states, New Jersey ranks 14th in burden to attain an occupational license. Data compiled by the Institute for Justice combined the average time lost to education and the cost of each license to determine the level of burden. The average cost of a license in New Jersey is \$279, which is on par with the rest of the country (Knepper et al., 2022). This burden has not been a major barrier to implementation as over 700,000 people in the state hold professional licenses (Division of Consumer Affairs, 2022). Although the cost of attaining a license is high, people are willing to bear the burden because it gives them a standardized certification that provides them with a level of professionalism and security. With the addition of NJ S2455, the goal is to expand access to professional licenses in hopes of providing people with access to higher-paying jobs and the security it brings.

The third condition expects the leaders of the implementing agencies to possess managerial and political skills and commitment to

statutory goals (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979). Since NJ S2455 is not the first immigrant rights bill to pass through the legislature, it is reasonable to assume that the bureaucrats charged with the execution of the bill are supportive of the measure. Managerial and political skill, on the other hand, is questionable since ONA is a new office in the Murphy Administration. The Office has done research to understand the fears of the immigrant community and the barriers surrounding their access to services to best serve the community. They found immigrant communities are more likely to participate in and trust programs when immigrant voices inform the process and delivery. Furthermore, the research found that community-based hubs that engage directly with immigrants are key to promoting opportunity, equity and social mobility (Office of New Americans, 2020). While the Office is leading with research, it will be interesting to see how the research informs their decision-making. The challenge will be combining informed decision-making with political skills to continue building on the progress already made.

The fourth condition stipulates the program is actively supported by organized constituency groups and by a few key legislators or the chief executive, in the implementation process, with the courts being neutral or supportive (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979). This condition ensures a policy will have the funding and support necessary to be sustainable. Seemingly simple, Sabatier and Mazmanian note that this may be one of the hardest conditions to meet because it requires continuous attention from over-spread advocacy groups and the general public, which is notorious for its short attention span (1979, 497). Since NJ S2455 is targeted at a specific community, the attention span of the general public should not be an issue. However, if the immigrant community moves their attention away from economic development opportunities towards other issues, such as the judicial system, it may be difficult to sustain support. This is why the creation of the ONA is central to the preservation of immigrants' rights. The Office signifies the importance and gravity of immigration issues for the Murphy Administration, which may negate the sways of

the community. It also gives the many immigrant advocacy groups a place to supply recommendations that apply to a variety of programs and policies. In the aforementioned research done by the ONA, advocacy groups such as Make a Road NJ played a major role in providing the Office with recommendations such as promoting public/private partnerships to implement policies effectively (Office of New Americans, 2020). Moving forward, the hope is that these partnerships create accountability and longevity.

The fifth and final condition is that the priority of “statutory objectives is not significantly undermined over time by the emergence of conflicting public policies or by changes in relevant socioeconomic conditions that undermine the statute’s ‘technical’ theory or political support” (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979). This condition works to ensure that programs and policies do not lose their virility because of the emergence of new problems and the programs to address them. Theoretically, the creation of an office dedicated to immigrants’ rights should mitigate NJ S2455 being undermined by other objectives. Practically, if conditions one through four are fulfilled, condition five should not be a concern. However, as has been discussed, there are steps that need to be taken for conditions one through four to be realized. The ONA is a young office that has yet to demonstrate its efficacy in achieving its statutory goals. While immigrants’ rights are a priority for the Murphy Administration, the consistent problems facing the community require a multi-faceted approach. Therefore, occupational licenses for immigrants may be overshadowed by emerging policies and programs put forth by ONA if the office is not fully committed to this form of investment in human capital.

### **Implementation in Newark, NJ**

The city of Newark is the best example through which to understand how proper implementation will affect microeconomic development. The largest city in the state, Newark, was founded in 1666 by Puritans who wanted to avoid losing their political power, making it the third oldest city in the country. From its founding until the early 19th



century, Newark, along with the rest of North Jersey, was almost exclusively agricultural. This changed when the city experienced a major industrial boom in the early 1800s with the prevalence of leather factories, breweries, and the creation of the Morris Canal (POV, 2005). The Morris Canal was chartered in 1824 to bring coal from the mines in Pennsylvania to the eastern seaboard. Newark was a central stopping for the coal, which provided the city with the resources to create a much-needed public transportation system to transform Newark into a flourishing urban city (Canal Society of New Jersey, 2007). By 1890, the population of the city had grown to over 190,000, up from about 6,000 at the start of the 19th century. The growth in population was a direct result of the growth in industry as the financial, insurance, education and medical sectors grew throughout the city (A History of the City of Newark, New Jersey, 1913). However, the growth did not last as many companies with headquarters in Newark began to leave for emerging markets in other parts of the country.

Newark suffered more setbacks as the century continued, with the combination of economic problems and social tensions testing the city's resilience. Beginning with the Great Depression, the city could not financially recover as white flight, redlining, and failed urban renewal projects plagued the city (POV, 2005). This created what Professor Alan Mallach calls a "demographic city" (2015, 445). A demographic city is one where people only live as opposed to an economic city where people only go to work (Mallach, 2015). In Newark, this means there is a pervasive lack of access to employment for the residents. Only 18 percent of the city's residents hold jobs within the city, and these jobs tend to be part-time, low paying with poor working conditions, with the median wage of residents being under 40,000. The nature of the demographic city is racialized when adding in Newark's majority-minority reality, but 60 percent of those employed in the city are white. While educational attainment is relatively equal among residents, there is a lack of access to career pathways to "middle-skill jobs" (Baer, 2017). Middle-skill jobs refer to jobs that do not require a college degree but do require some training

beyond high school. As of 2017, Newark residents are most underrepresented in the Educational Services field and the Transportation and Warehousing field (2017). One of the best ways to provide career pathways is through occupational licensing. New Jersey currently offers licenses for over 175 occupations, including Heating/Ventilating/Air Conditioning/Refrigeration Contractors, Social Workers, and Elevator, Escalator & Moving-Walkway Services, all of which would contribute to closing the gap in representation for employment of Newark workers (Division of Consumer Affairs, 2022). For a targeted approach to investing in human capital, programs need to be tailored to specific communities to ensure their effectiveness.

According to the most recent Census, foreign-born people account for 34 percent of Newark's population. However, this does not mean the population is being properly engaged by the local government. While the city received perfect scores in job opportunities and economic prosperity, the New American Economy gave Newark a three out of five on the city's engagement and support of immigrants. A perfect score would require the city to establish a visible local office for immigrant services (New American Economy, 2021). The ONA will be critical to establishing immigrant services in the city since it was created specifically to address and implement immigrant programs and policies. Those attending colleges and universities in the city will have some level of institutional support, as highlighted in NJ Senate testimony (Senate Commerce Committee, 2020), but this does not guarantee bureaucratic support from the city government. An office dedicated to Newark will provide the city with the necessary resources to implement NJ S2455 and other programs. As noted with Sabatier and Mazmanian's third condition, public administrators working within ONA will need to possess managerial and political skills to effectively reach the immigrant population of Newark. Ideally, the Office will employ residents who know the population to ensure that the services reach the community properly. This will work to ensure

immigrants have access to occupational licenses and other programs that provide investments in the community.

The work of bridging the gap between economic development and educational attainment for immigrant communities has only begun. If New Jersey wishes to be a leader in immigrants' rights, legislators are duty-bound to continue their investments in human capital. Even though removing the residency requirement to attain an occupational license was a necessary first step, the next steps should include scholarships to reduce the burden of the application fees for licenses and increased promotion of apprenticeships with an emphasis on multilingual programs. Newark, in particular, has the opportunity to be a leader in the state in terms of economic development opportunities if local and state governments work together to address the economic disparity within the city. As a sanctuary state, immigrants will continue coming to New Jersey. The goal, then, should be to ensure that structures within the administrative state are able to sustain the influx of migrants as they make the state their home.

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