
A.6219B (González-Rojas)/S.6584C (Gianaris)

STAFF CONTACT : Mario Vazquez | Assistant Director, Government Affairs | 518.694.4461

BILL A.6219B (González-Rojas)/S.6584C (Gianaris)
SUBJECT The Creation of Middle Eastern and/or North African Demographic Category
DATE June 03, 2024
SUPPORT

The Business Council supports A.6219B (González-Rojas)/S.6584C (Gianaris) which would create a separate category for those who are Middle Eastern and/or North African (MENA).

Currently those from the MENA region are classified as “white” in government demographic data collection, however, a majority of the members of this community do not identify themselves as white. The reason behind this misclassification is a result of a 1944 legal ruling that designated those from the MENA region as “white by law”.

As a result of this misclassification, this has created a lack of representation within critical government census data, which is used to designate funding for school, government assistance programs, grants and much more. This lack of representation has led to socioeconomic and political erasure and exclusion of the MENA community.

This has not only blocked the MENA community from accessing critical government social programs, but it has also created a financial barrier. Since the state considers MENA New Yorkers to be white rather than part of a racial or ethnic minority group, this has blocked their ability to access certain grants and blocked their ability to attain certain government certification programs such as MWBE status and have been excluded from certain DEI initiatives. We continually seek to create a more diverse economy that is inclusive of all, however, we cannot accomplish this goal if we do not acknowledge the clear disparity and different needs of each community.

For these reasons The Business Council supports A.6219B (González-Rojas)/S.6584C (Gianaris).