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### **Common Council Welcomes Asylum-Seekers, Requests 30-Day Employment Authorization from Federal Government**

**ALBANY, NY** –The Albany Common Council on June 5 formally welcomed the 40 asylum-seekers who arrived in the city in May. Stressing the importance of immigrants and refugees in Albany’s historic, cultural and economic development, councilmembers used the occasion to advocate for a 30-day employment authorization from the federal government. If ordered, the 30-day timeframe would override the current 180-day waiting period, accelerating the asylum-seekers’ ability to provide for themselves and their families.

“Albany is a refugee center, so we have resettlement from people all over the world. They are in every part of our city, and they are part of our community. So we are very fortunate to have a very diverse fabric in the City of Albany, and ... a much richer community as a result of this,” **Majority Leader Ginnie Farrell** said.

“Immigrants represent the best of what this country has to offer,” **Councilmember Owusu Anane** said. “These individuals want to work, and they want to contribute to our community. We might come in different ships, but we are on the same boat.”

“What we are asking for is to allow these individuals—who are coming in through the process, through the legal process—not to be forced to work in the shadows,” **Councilmember Alfredo**

**Balarin** said. “We’re asking that we change it from 180 days to 30 days so that these individuals can get dignified work.”

The Common Council joins Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Governor Kathy Hochul, Congressman Paul Tonko, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand in their calls for the Biden administration to take executive action on the 180-day waiting period.

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