

MIKE: AID FOR IMMIGRANTS VITAL

Daily News (New York)

May 1, 2008 Thursday, SPORTS FINAL EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 32

Length: 545 words

Byline: BY CHRISTINA BOYLE DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Series: DAILY NEWS CUNY CITIZENSHIP NOW Part 5

Body

MAYOR Bloomberg praised hardworking **immigrants** as the lifeblood of New York City during a visit to the Citizenship Now! hot-line yesterday.

Walking around the call center, where our teams of volunteers have been answering questions from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. since

Monday, the mayor said **immigrants** need more help getting on the path to becoming U.S. citizens.

"The future of our country depends on getting new citizens. They are the lifeblood of the United States," he said.

"Too many parts of our country have forgotten that."

Bloomberg faulted Washington politics and "the xenophobia coming out of both sides of the [state] Assembly and Congress."

He said immigration reform is one of the key issues missing from the current presidential debates, along with the environment, global warming and keeping guns out of the hands of criminals.

"We need to make sure this country opens up even more, and when people get here, we give them a track toward citizenship," Bloomberg said.

"I agree they need to learn the rules and our culture, but if they can comply with reasonable regulations, we want them."

The 48 phone lines - half dedicated to Spanish speakers - have been ringing nonstop since the Citizenship Now! call-in began Monday.

This is the sixth time the Daily News and CUNY have teamed up to bring free, in-

confidence immigration advice to New Yorkers. More than 8,500 people have been helped so far this week. The total number of callers helped since Citizenship Now! began has climbed to more than 48,000.

At least 300 experts, speaking many languages, are giving their time for free and can help unravel any immigration question.

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Citizenship Now! continues to shine a spotlight on the immigration issues faced by millions in America; Univision/Channel 41 and sister radio station WADO (1280 AM) are providing daily coverage of it in Spanish.

John Catsimatidis of Red Apple Group and Gristedes Foods, and a potential successor to Bloomberg, also visited the call-in and spoke about his own immigrant experiences arriving in the U.S. from Greece as a baby.

"I was 6 months old when I came to the United States, and I remember getting my citizenship papers. I was so proud," he said.

"The strength of our country comes from the immigrants and their willingness to work here," said Catsimatidis.

OUR SPANISH PARTNERS ARE UNIVISION 41 NUEVA YORK 1280 AM WADO

The persons who staff the Daily News-CUNY Citizenship Now! call-in phone lines are available to give information only. While they are experts in the immigration field, they are not attorneys for callers and cannot give you specific legal advice. The call-in is not intended as, and is not a substitute for, legal advice provided by an attorney retained to counsel and assist a client on a specific problem or situation. You should consult an attorney specializing in immigration law if you are in need of such services. The Daily News and CUNY make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, as to information given to callers by the Citizenship Now! experts, and under no circumstances will they be liable to any caller or other person for damages of any nature arising in any way from the use of such information.

Call 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. today and tomorrow

(212) 330-6505

FOR ENGLISH

(212) 330-6506

FOR SPANISH

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Document-Type: SERIES

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: CITIZENSHIP (91%); IMMIGRATION (90%); CITY GOVERNMENT (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (79%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2008 (79%); IMMIGRATION LAW (78%); POLITICAL DEBATES (74%); CALL CENTERS (73%); RACISM & XENOPHOBIA (73%); LAWYERS (73%); MULTILINGUALISM (72%); GLOBAL WARMING (54%)

Company: RED APPLE GROUP (53%)

Industry: BUSINESS TELEPHONE SERVICE (73%); CALL CENTERS (73%); LAWYERS (73%); GLOBAL WARMING (54%)

MIKE: AID FOR IMMIGRANTS VITAL

Person: MICHAEL BLOOMBERG (79%); JOHN CATSIMATIDIS (59%)

Geographic: NEW YORK, NY, USA (90%); NEW YORK, USA (92%); UNITED STATES (95%)

Load-Date: May 1, 2008

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