Before deportation, undocumented people have the right to an immigration court hearing. Because it is a civil matter rather than criminal, a lawyer is not provided. Most immigrants, often with English as a second language, are left to face complex proceedings on their own. New York City began a pilot immigration public defender system in 2013. This April, New York state allocated $10 million to create the Liberty Defense Project fund, making it the first in the nation to ensure legal representation for immigrants. Here’s why that’s an easy start to fixing a broken system.

**1**
Undocumented people usually don’t have a lawyer.

- 63% don’t have legal representation in their deportation cases
- 86% don’t have legal representation if they’re already in detention


**2**
Immigrants with lawyers fare better.

Of the 52% who won relief from deportation:

- 50% had counsel
- 2% had no counsel

**3**
But there is uneven access to representation.

- 21% MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS
- 78% CHINESE IMMIGRANTS

Highest representation rate and lowest detention rate

**4**
Lawyers are costly, and there aren’t enough volunteers.

- 2% of immigrants receive pro bono counsel

SOURCE: AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL REPORT, EAGLY AND SHAFER, 2016
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