



BROOKLYN'S IN THE HOUSE

NEWS FROM CONGRESSWOMAN YVETTE D. CLARKE

11th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Representing: Brownsville, Ocean Hill, Crown Heights, East Flatbush, Boro Park, Kensington, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Gowanus, Prospect Heights, Lefferts Gardens, Grand Army Plaza, Windsor Terrace, Flatlands and Midwood

July 17, 2009

Rep. Clarke Stays Vigilant On Comprehensive Immigration Reform

This week, I joined with a diverse group of my congressional colleagues to apply pressure on the White House to repair the broken immigration system. My leadership role was to garner support among the Congressional Black Caucus, and to coordinate with the Hispanic, Asia Pacific Islander, and Progressive Caucuses, along with the New Democrat Coalition.

Each year, thousands of immigrants come to our country to work hard and contribute to our society. With them, they bring fresh ideas and new inspiration to the American spirit. America needs a comprehensive solution to our broken immigration system, but we must design a policy that is both fair to those wishing to make a life in this country and in line with the goals and ideals that Americans hold dear. In order to bring the estimated 12 million people out of the shadows, secure our borders, and protect the rights of all workers, we must work together to pass a reform bill that is efficient and effective, encourages hard work, and fosters economic prosperity.

Earlier this week, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced plans to revamp its program that authorizes local law enforcement to engage in immigration enforcement. While I have consistently demanded reform of this program, this announcement does not eliminate the need for comprehensive immigration reform.

“Green the Block” Campaign

On Tuesday July 21st, 2009 I am joining my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), in the inaugural “CBC Green Roundtable,” with a focus on creating a “Green Agenda” for African-American businesses. Many minority and women owned businesses from the 11th Congressional district will be in attendance, highlighting the work being done in our community.

I am working, in partnership, with the Hip Hop Caucus to bring together a broad coalition of civil rights organizations, social and economic justice organizations, environmental organizations, labor unions, and businesses to support and promote a new national campaign called Green the Block. The Green the Block campaign will serve as a link between young people in communities of color and green training and employment establish strong federal and international climate policy. I am also working with the Hip Hop Caucus to host a “**Green Vendors Expo**” to highlight the many green businesses, technologies and products in our communities. I invite all of my constituents to reach out to my office in order to participate in these exciting initiatives.



Dear Neighbor:

This week, the Education and Labor Committee “marked up” the healthcare reform bill being drafted in the House of Representatives.

The three-day endeavor yielded a number of key provisions that were essential for an effective nationwide healthcare system:

- universal coverage
- a public health plan option; and
- meaningful access to healthcare coverage for employees of small businesses

At mark up, Congresswoman Clarke supported Rep. Dennis Kucinich’s amendment, which would give individual state’s the right to choose a single payer system of healthcare.

Congresswoman Clarke also offered an amendment at markup, which included language to extend universal, comprehensive healthcare to the U.S. territories. The U.S. territories are not currently included in the healthcare reform bill.

Green Markets for Underserved Areas

Many low and moderate-income neighborhoods, currently underserved by full-service grocery stores, would greatly benefit from regular access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Consuming fresh food leads to increased health benefits and lowers chronic health problems that currently face our community, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease. Beginning in August, the Department of Health will provide an extra \$4 to Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) users for every \$5 spent. That means \$5 of EBT at any farmers' market will get you \$9 in tokens to spend on fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables. You can currently use EBT at all Farmers' Markets in the 11th Congressional district including Grand Army Plaza, Cortelyou, Windsor Terrace. In Ocean Hill Brownsville, a community garden allows local residents to grow their own produce.

I commend the Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC) on their "Food Stamp in Farmer's Market Project" and their continued efforts to increase EBT sales at greenmarkets. I will continue working to increase the accessibility of greenmarkets throughout the 11th Congressional District. To find a greenmarket currently located near you please visit <http://www.cenyc.org/greenmarket>

Rep. Clarke Recognizes NAACP Centennial

For 100 years, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has fought against racial discrimination and the inequalities faced within our social, educational, political, and economical realms. I am proud to witness the centennial anniversary of this vital organization within our nation. The NAACP has changed our history, ensuring equality and fair treatment for all people. I thank the members, both past and present, for their invaluable sacrifices. They believed in Dr. King's dream and helped make it a reality.

Today, our youth have strong and positive role models, who stand out as individuals that have overcome great challenges to attain success. The NAACP has brought our nation this far, however, more still needs to be done. I encourage our youth and adults to register to vote. I commend the NAACP and the many other organizations that have hosted voter registration drives to ensure the voices of all communities are heard in the US electoral process.

The NAACP has set the bar upon which we may continue to build a better future for the next generation. We must continue to work collaboratively to ensure that there is fair representation in every facet of the United States.

NY CSBG Funds Approved

This week, the Federal government approved the state of New York's plan for distributing much-needed Community Service Block Grants provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This approval represents another very important step in the right direction in assisting us out of the economic crisis we are experiencing in New York and throughout the nation. I look forward to seeing this critical funding applied to the communities and residents of the 11th Congressional district as a result of the \$50 million dollars targeted to the New York City region. It is my hope that through the distribution of these funds, and the resulting services being provided, we will strengthen our capacity to assist the unemployed in getting back into the job market.

Legislative Spotlight

In May, I became a cosponsor of H.R. 1215, The Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act. This critical piece of legislation requires all Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sets detention standards for immigration detention facilities. DHS is also required to develop regulations governing the care of illegal immigrants that have been detained by the agency.

The legislation would also:

- Facilitate speedy transfers of children to better equipped shelter facilities and increase training for immigration officers who work with unaccompanied youth;
- Make existing detention standards legally enforceable;
- Strengthen accountability and oversight of the immigration detention system;
- For those detainees who do not pose a flight risk, expand community-based "alternatives to detention" programs that have proven track-records.

Each night, approximately 30,000 immigrants sleep in detention centers across America. Among them are asylum seekers, torture survivors, children, pregnant women and the elderly. Those being detained often receive no legal assistance, limited medical care, and are unable to contact loved ones.

I cosponsored this critical legislation because we can no longer tolerate a detention system that fails to accord immigrants the dignity and respect they deserve.

The bill currently has 23 cosponsors and has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee and the House Homeland Security Committee, of which I am a member.