



# BROOKLYN'S IN THE HOUSE

## NEWS FROM CONGRESSWOMAN YVETTE D. CLARKE

### 11<sup>th</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

New York's 11<sup>th</sup> Congressional District representing Brownsville, Ocean Hill, East Flatbush, Flatbush, Crown Heights, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, Park Slope, Kensington, Windsor Terrance, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill and Brooklyn Heights

# July 30, 2010

## Judge Makes Ruling on Arizona Immigration Law

On Thursday, July 29, I joined my colleagues in expressing their approval of an Arizona District Court decision to implement an injunction on highly controversial portions of the Arizona law, SB 1070. This is a victory for immigrant residents in the state of Arizona, immigrant and civil rights groups, the Justice Department, and our nation as a whole. This decision illustrates that our antiquated immigration system must be addressed by the federal government. Judge Bolton's decision temporarily blocks a portion of SB 1070 that requires state police officers to determine the immigration status of an individual who is suspected to be an illegal immigrant. She also placed an injunction on a provision that would require foreign individuals to carry paperwork identifying their status. While this is a great step forward, the fight to truly address immigration reform is far from over. Congress must address Comprehensive Immigration Reform as soon as possible. Our national security is at stake;



Rep. Clarke Joins Other Members of Congress in Applauding an Arizona Judge for placing an injunction on portions of SB1070 on Capitol Hill.

our moral standing in the world depends on it; and the American people, many of whom are first and second generation immigrants, demand it.

## House Considers Offshore Drilling Legislation

On Friday, July 30, the U.S. House of Representatives considered H.R. 3534, The CLEAR Act, which will increase safety, help restore the Gulf Coast, crack down on ethical lapses, require businesses to be responsible for their actions, and close royalty loopholes to ensure the American people receive their fair share for drilling and other extraction of public resources.

In the wake of the BP disaster, Congress is acting on its commitment to protect America's families and businesses, rebuild the Gulf Coast, hold BP and oil companies accountable, and work to ensure that a spill of this kind never happens again.

The CLEAR Act helps to:

- Contain strong new safety measures, including independent certification of critical equipment;
- Hold BP and oil industry fully responsible for cleanup costs and recovery after spills – removing the \$75 million cap on economic damages to be paid by Big Oil to families and small businesses;
- Strengthen oversight of oil drilling by dismantling the current scandal ridden agency in charge;
- Restore the Gulf Coast and protect local residents; and
- Provide long overdue taxpayer protections, making oil companies pay their fair share for drilling on public lands.

The BP oil spill is considered one of the worst natural disasters in our lifetime. Know that I will continue to join my colleagues to pass legislation to help prevent something like this from happening again.

*\*This article was published prior to the final vote. Please see [thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov) for the final vote tally.*



Dear Neighbor,

I hope you enjoy reading my weekly newsletter.

From August 1, 2010 until September 14, 2010, the House of Representative will be on recess. That means there will be no votes on the House floor during this period of time. Due to our recess, the newsletter will not be published during this time. My office will resume publishing the newsletter on Friday, September 17, 2010.

During the District Work Period, you will see me quite frequently throughout the Brooklyn community. Like I always say, being a U.S. Representative is the ultimate commuter job and there is nothing like being at home.

I look forward to interacting more closely with you during recess. I also look forward to tackling some of your concerns when Congress returns in September.

Again thank you so much for reading my newsletter throughout the year. Look for the next publication of my newsletter on September 17, 2010 and I can't wait to see you in Brooklyn.

Sincerely,  
Yvette D. Clarke

## Rep. Clarke Participates in CBC Briefing on Haiti

On Tuesday, July 27, I joined the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) for a special Foreign Policy and International Relations hearing focusing on Haiti's recovery six months after the devastating earthquake hit that Caribbean nation. During this hearing we examined the many problems that impede the recovery efforts in Haiti. In my testimony, I expressed concerns about the conflicting information we receive from officials and what we receive from NGO's and the Haitian Diaspora about the progress of the reconstruction effort. My constituents and certain NGO's on the ground have informed me of the deteriorating shelter situation, the increase in the prevalence of gender based violence, and the need for IDP camps to implement better practices. However, I hear differing information from USAID/UN officials. In order to mitigate the rumor mill, I believe that there needs to be a standard mechanism that facilitates accurate flow of information. I also encouraged the Administration and UN officials to utilize new and creative ways to address the long term needs of Haiti as we continue on this complex and convoluted road to recovery. I will continue to work tirelessly to assist our Haitian brothers and sisters in this time of crisis.

## Clarke Fights to Improve Child Nutrition

Recently, the House Education and Labor Committee passed H.R. 5504, the Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act, also known as the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. This legislation expands access and improves the nutritional quality of meals in schools and child care settings. I am particularly pleased with the inclusion of language enabling the automatic enrollment of Medicaid eligible children into free meals programs, the new paperless lunchroom options, and funding to increase participation in the school breakfast program. Investing in these programs provides an opportunity to nutritiously feed school children, while at the same time cultivating new markets for farmers.

I also applaud the inclusion of language requiring schools to provide food service workers access to a qualified food safety training program. Food service workers, though often overlooked, are valuable members of a school's nutritional team and as such, it is important that they receive the appropriate training. This training will enable them to professionally and safely provide children with the nutritional meals mandated by this legislation.

In New York City, almost one-half (47 percent) of households with children experienced difficulty affording food in 2009. Additionally, one in five kindergarten children in New York City is obese. This is an alarming figure. Strong action is needed now. That is why I will continue to work with grassroots organizations, such as the New York City Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization, and my colleagues to get this bill signed into law.

## Congress Passes Fair Sentencing Act

I am greatly pleased that the U.S. House of Representatives passed S. 1789, Fair Sentencing Act. This bipartisan bill reduces the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine and significantly increases criminal penalties for serious drug offenders.

Crack and powder cocaine have a devastating effect on families and our society. This disparity has disproportionately affected our district and the Greater New York Area, particularly the African American and Latino community. Tough anti-cocaine legislation is needed, but the law must also be fair. Under current federal law, possessing five grams of crack cocaine is subject to the same mandatory minimum sentence as selling 500 grams of powder cocaine. This creates a 100:1 crack-powder sentencing disparity.

African-Americans and Latinos in Brooklyn and across the country make up a minority of crack users but account for about 80 percent of those convicted under the mandatory sentencing statute. This racially discriminatory application of the law and the impact of this policy are not consistent with our nation's commitment to equal justice under the law. The mandatory sentence has pushed drug policy in the wrong direction, imprisoning addicts who should have been sent to treatment programs.

A broad bipartisan group of criminal justice experts, law enforcement organizations, and policymakers has concluded the current 100:1 disparity cannot be justified. Organizations endorsing reform include: the NAACP; Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; American Bar Association; American Civil Liberties Union; the National District Attorneys Association, among other groups. I am proud to stand along with these groups on the side of my constituents and the many New Yorkers that have been unfairly impacted by the mandatory sentence disparity.

## Legislative Spotlight

On Tuesday, July 27, I voted against H.R. 4899, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010, which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, 308 to 114.

H.R. 4899 includes additional funding for the war in Afghanistan, which I have opposed since its inception. Unfortunately, the Senate has decided to short change our school children, teachers and youth while continuing to pay for the fruitless war in Afghanistan. Senators stripped critical House-passed funding provisions from the legislation that would have provided for teacher jobs, summer youth employment, and college Pell grants.

The Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010 also does not include critical funding to maintain first responder, police or firefighter positions despite the fundamental needs for those jobs in Brooklyn and every community in America.

The Senate version of the War Supplemental bill stripped the following House passed investments:

- \$10 billion for teacher jobs;
- \$1 billion for summer youth employment;
- \$5 billion for Pell grants; and
- \$701 million for border security.

While this legislation provides 2.9 billion of aid to Haiti, the funding for this legislation should be much more robust. Since the devastating earthquake that ravaged Haiti over six months ago, I have advocated for critical programs to bring forth a stabilized and prosperous Haiti, including:

- \$1 million to establish a Haitian-American Enterprise Fund to support small and mid-sized Haitian businesses and infrastructure development;
- increased funding for the proposed Haitian Diaspora Young Professionals Fellowship Program to ensure that more Haitians living in the United States and across the globe can participate in the development of their homeland;
- robust funding for the reunification of Haitian families and children services; and
- funding to protect women against gender based violence in tent cities and promote gender equality in Haiti.

Please note that with no opportunity to amend the Senate legislation, I had no choice but to vote against this bill.