



BROOKLYN'S IN THE HOUSE

NEWS FROM CONGRESSWOMAN YVETTE D. CLARKE

11th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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

October 30, 2009

Rep. Clarke Chairs Homeland Security Hearing On H1N1 Preparedness

On Tuesday, Oct 27, 2009, I chaired the Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, Science and Technology hearing entitled, “*Real-Time Assessment of the Federal Response to Pandemic Influenza.*” The Homeland Security Committee has long been concerned with the state of our preparedness to deal with pandemics. Our Subcommittee turned its attention to the Federal response to the re-emerging threat of pandemic influenza.



Rep. Bennie Thompson, Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee (on the left of Rep. Clarke) and Ranking member of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Rep. Dan Lungren join Rep. Yvette Clarke as they

Over the weekend, President Obama declared a National Emergency due to the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic. This action underscored the gravity of the situation. Although we went into this pandemic better prepared than we had been in the past, we were not fully prepared to meet the pandemic when it started this year. We have made it through the first phase of the pandemic and are now entering the second. The Department of Homeland Security and the Department of the Department of Health and are leading our Federal response efforts.

It is clear that DHS Secretary Napolitano and HHS Secretary Sebelius have set the tone for responding to this pandemic with their strong leadership and commitment to the Nation. However, we still have work to do.

We now have the obligation to strengthen at least some of the weaknesses in our national response. The Legislative and Executive Branches must work together to improve our response efforts and save as many lives as we can during this pandemic.

You can stay informed about this issue by visiting my website for information and resources on this topic.



Dear Neighbor:

This week, the Affordable Healthcare for America Act was introduced in the House of Representatives.

I believe this bill will provide quality affordable health care for all Americans. The legislation:

- requires health plans to allow young people to remain on their parents' insurance policy up to their 27th birthday;
- exempts 86% of businesses from requirement--those with payrolls below \$500,000;
- provides only graduated penalty for firms with payrolls between \$500,000 and \$750,000; and
- reduces the “donut hole” by \$500 and institutes a 50% discount for brand-name drugs in the “donut hole,” effective 2010.

While we continue to comb through the nearly 2000 page bill, it is an important first step.

I am working with my colleagues to address a number of outstanding concerns and to ensure that this bill is as strong as possible. **I invite my constituents to take a look at the bill at:**

http://docs.house.gov/rules/health/111_ahcaa.pdf

Sincerely,
Yvette D. Clarke

Rep. Clarke Delivers Address to Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) Conference

On October 24, 2009, The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) held its largest and most successful annual conference for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE). The conference, entitled “Growing Your Business in the 21st Century: DASNY of the Future” drew more than 900 registrants.



Left: Alfonso L. Carney, Jr., DASNY Chairman and Right: Paul T. Williams, Jr., DASNY Executive Director Joined Rep. Clarke at MWBE Conference

DASNY Director, Paul Williams, brought together some of the greatest intellectual capital, legal, construction and business minds in the nation.

I was honored to be the keynote luncheon speaker for the conference. During my speech, I indicated that as the only member of the Congressional Black Caucus on the House Committee on Small Business and with decades of experience fighting for MWBE's, I am the community's champion on Capitol Hill. I also had the opportunity to discuss my recently introduced legislation to help MWBE's in the construction industry get access to bonding.

HR 3771 is titled: “The Veteran, Minority and Women-Owned Construction Business Mentorship and Grant Assistance Act of 2009.” This legislation will establish grant programs for minority, veteran, and women-owned small business construction companies to help create the internal business systems that are essential for success.

This legislation would create opportunities in the highly competitive construction sector, at a time when there has been a stark decline in construction activity due to the housing downturn. The legislation is really about building capacity for small firms so that they can better compete for the many stimulus opportunities that are still being developed.

Rep. Clarke Celebrates St. Lucia Creole Festival Day

On Saturday, Oct. 24, 2009, I attended the St. Lucia Creole Festival Day, where I had the honor of presenting an official congressional record citation to the St. Lucia Cultural Organization. I was honored to recognize the rich culture of St. Lucia that has contributed greatly to the diversity of Brooklyn.

I also had a chance to speak with my constituents about the health care reform bill and the need for comprehensive immigration reform. I congratulated the organization's current President, Heneith Samuel, for his outstanding leadership in keeping the St. Lucian community connected. I was delighted to be a part of the program and I look forward to attending the festival next year.

The 11th Congressional District of New York, containing one of the most diverse Caribbean constituencies in the U.S.

Legislative Spotlight

Last week, the House Financial Services Committee approved legislation that would create a Consumer Financial Protection Agency (CFPA) to financial products being offered to consumers. This legislation is aimed at addressing many of the concerns that consumers had regarding risky investments, subprime mortgages, structured investment vehicles (SIVs), and the many other financial tools that are now known to have been at the center of what caused our current economic turmoil.

This bill, HR 3126, will now be a part of the package of reforms that the Obama Administration and Congress have been pursuing to overhaul the nation's regulation of financial firms and markets. The CFPA legislation would:

- grant the new agency broad rulemaking authority, examination and enforcement authority to address unfair, deceptive and abusive acts and practices related to financial products;
- promote transparency, simplicity, fairness, accountability, and access in the market for consumer financial products or services;
- create an office of financial literacy at the CFPA charged with educating consumers about the variety of products available; and
- prevent a person from committing or engaging in an unfair, deceptive, or abusive act or practice under federal law in connection with any transaction with a consumer for a product or service.

The entire package of regulatory reforms is likely to be considered by Congress before the close of the year.