



# BROOKLYN'S IN THE HOUSE

## NEWS FROM CONGRESSWOMAN YVETTE D. CLARKE

### 11<sup>th</sup> 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

# April 16, 2010

## Congresswoman Clarke Hosts Citizenship Forum



Rep. Clarke speaks at the Citizenship Forum joined by Ms. Andrea Quarantillo, Director of the USCIS New York Office on the left.

On Wednesday, April 7, 2010, I hosted a special Immigration Citizenship Forum at the Brooklyn Public Library. Local residents received an in-depth explanation on how the U.S. citizenship process works. I represent one of the most diverse districts in the nation, full of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants from all over the world. It is imperative that we help our residents navigate through the citizenship process. When ill-informed, this process can seem complex and intimidating, but as they say “knowledge is power.” Ms. Andrea Quarantillo, District Director of the USCIS New York Office and Brian Meier, Senior Public Affairs Officer for USCIS presented the

benefits, eligibility requirements, costs and paperwork required to become a United States Citizen. As a community, we must never forget that our American heritage has transformed our land into what former Mayor David Dinkins called a ‘gorgeous mosaic.’ Empowering our neighbors with the necessary information on the citizenship process will enable the diversity in our district to thrive for generations.

## Rep. Clarke Urges Census Participation

Census season is in full swing, and I continue to urge all of my constituents to complete and return their forms as soon as possible. The 2010 Census is a historic event that will help shape our nation’s future for the next 10 years. With accurate census data, we can create a portrait of our nation’s growing population and determine what services are needed in our communities. We cannot afford to lose these crucial federal funds and programs. In order to get our fair share of funding for our community, we must count everyone. Our schools, libraries, community centers and so many other important programs all rely on Census results.

If the Census Bureau does not receive your completed form, as a courtesy, a census taker may visit your home briefly to complete the form in person. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share your information with anyone, including other federal agencies or law enforcement agencies. All Census employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. One of the shortest forms in Census history, the 2010 Census asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete. In just 10 minutes, you can make a difference. It is the best way to help our community, our schools, and our children. Join me – stand up and be counted.



Dear Neighbor,

I wanted to inform you that there has been an important step forward in solidifying long term recovery tools for our brothers and sisters in Haiti. This week, Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) and Senator Patrick Leahy (D- VT) introduced S. 3202 in the Senate, which would establish a Haitian-American Enterprise Fund (HAEF). This is a companion bill to H.R. 4961, the Haitian Private Sector Encouragement Act of 2010, which I introduced last month.

I would like to thank the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Patrick Leahy, and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Richard Lugar for introducing S.3202. These distinguished statesmen fully understand the importance of Haiti’s long-term recovery needs, and I look forward to working with them.

The Haitian-American Enterprise Fund would be modeled after private equity and venture capital funds. It will invest in the Haitian private sector to ultimately lay a foundation for a wide-scale rebuilding campaign. With the introduction of this bill in the Senate, I am confident that this legislation can be passed by Congress and signed into law by the President, creating a new dawn for all Haitians.

Sincerely,

*Yvette D. Clarke*

## Rep. Clarke Celebrates Grand Opening of Carver Bank

On Monday, April 12, I attended the grand opening of Carver Bank's newest branch in Brooklyn. For more than 60 years, Carver Bancorp, Inc. has been an integral resource for African-American and minority economic empowerment throughout New York City. The opening of this branch illustrates that in the midst of an economic downturn, there are banks still committed to investing in the economic recovery of our communities.

While recent New York City Department of Labor statistics suggest that unemployment decreased between the months of January and February, there are still major signs that people are struggling to find work. Organizations like Carver Bank are central in the effort to combat this trend. Minority-owned businesses tend to hire minority workers at a higher rate than non-minority firms. They also have a greater tendency to operate and serve communities of color. I believe that the best way for our communities to truly begin to recover is by strengthening our small businesses, particularly our minority-owned small businesses.

Stronger small businesses will bring more economic activity and more jobs into our neighborhood. Higher employment rates will bring more economic security with increased savings and investment. Carver Bank has set a precedent for similar involvement in Brooklyn and this is why they continue to hold a significant place in our community.

## Brooklyn Honors Bedford Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corps

On Sunday, April 11, I had the opportunity to honor the Bedford Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corps (BSVAC) and recognize their contributions to the Haiti relief efforts.

Founded in 1988, the BSVAC is the nation's first minority-run volunteer ambulance corps. As they continue to serve the Brooklyn community, it is clear that they continue to embody the true definition of public service and possess the spirit, will, and determination of truly committed first responders.

While the BSVAC has always made a huge impact on this community, it was their swift response to helping our brothers and sisters in Haiti that left an indelible impression on this area. It was an honor to support their efforts and my office will continue to extend a hand of support as we work to help Haiti with its long term recovery efforts.

## Bolstering US and Caribbean Relations

On Saturday April 10, I attended the Jamaican Diaspora U.S. North East Prayer Breakfast to discuss United States foreign policy as it relates to the Caribbean, particularly Jamaica. We addressed concerns regarding immigration reform, deportation practices, and family reunification. This gathering highlighted the need for our nation to address comprehensive immigration reform. America is a nation of great humanity and it is time our immigration system reflects that principle. Currently, United States immigration practices do not adequately address the deportation and immigration issues facing the Caribbean community. I look forward to continuing what has proven to be a great working relationship with Jamaican and other Caribbean leaders abroad. The input of those most directly affected by these practices will be critical to the reform process. Fixing a broken immigration system ensures that families will be kept together, and that is my top priority.

## Legislative Spotlight

This week, my legislation H.R. 4842, Homeland Security Science and Technology Authorization Act of 2010, passed unanimously out of the House Homeland Security Committee by a vote of 26-0. H.R. 4842 authorizes important management functions and programs within the Department of Homeland Security's Science & Technology (S&T) Directorate.

The bill:

- Acknowledges the importance of science and technology research, development, testing, and evaluation in ensuring the safety and security of the American people and our nation;
- ensures that the Science and Technology Directorate has the right tools available to deliver products into the hands of our first responders, law enforcement officials, or critical infrastructure owners to help them achieve their mission and make America more secure; and
- authorizes critical management functions and programs within S&T, including the Securing the Cities program.

The Securing the Cities program provides for a unified strategy for defending against radiological and nuclear threats.

The Committee also passed my amendment, authorizing the National Urban Security Technology Laboratory (NUSTL), located in lower Manhattan. As a DHS S&T federal laboratory, NUSTL conducts research, development; testing and evaluation in order to better understand and mitigate current and future homeland security threats.

The NUSTL pilot deployment programs not only transition homeland security technologies from the developing and testing phases to operational field trials, but also provide a critical scientific interface with NYPD, FDNY, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut state police, and a myriad of other local end-users in the field.

The NUSTL is an important piece of the S&T Directorate's capabilities, and provides valuable support and interface with urban first responders, not just in New York, but across the country.