



## CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF THE 111TH CONGRESS



# Opportunities for All - Pathways Out of Poverty

Bi-Annual Report  
January—June 2009

**Includes:**

- **A Message from Chairwoman Barbara Lee (CA)**
- **The CBC's Opportunities for All - Pathways Out of Poverty Agenda**
- **42 Bills to Watch from the CBC During the 111th Congress**
- **January-June 2009 Activities Report**

*Change Course, Confront Crisis, Continue the Legacy*

## A Message from the Chairwoman



Hon. Barbara Lee, CA-09  
Chairwoman,  
Congressional Black Caucus

Dear Friends,

I bring you greetings on behalf of the 42 members of the Congressional Black Caucus of the 111th Congress. During the first six months of this two-year legislative session, our members have focused on tackling the many challenges facing our nation. While much of our work since January has focused on the immediate need to stimulate the recovery of America's economy and create jobs, we have paid considerable attention to the long-term, systemic inequities in our communities.

As our nation's economic uncertainty continues, millions of Americans already struggling to overcome systemic poverty are encountering greater hardships. Millions more are grasping to maintain their quality of life during this turmoil. This crisis is particularly acute among African Americans. More than 24% of African Americans live below the poverty line and African Americans are 55% more likely to be unemployed than other Americans.

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), in its continued role as the Conscience of Congress, has a moral obligation to address inequality and injustice as never before in history. We are aggressively advancing the role of government to empower and protect American families by collectively pursuing a legislative agenda that addresses the priorities of our constituents. We believe that we have a responsibility and obligation to eradicate poverty by utilizing the full constitutional power, statutory authority, and resources of our government to provide opportunities for all and to develop pathways out of poverty. Some of these opportunities and pathways include economic opportunities, job training, livable wages, education, mental health services, affordable housing, health care, child nutrition and a responsible foreign policy.

Included in this report you will find **Opportunities for All - Pathways Out of Poverty**, the shared agenda of the CBC for the 111th Congress. We have also included **42 Bills to Watch**, one bill from each member of our caucus. These bills promote building healthy families and healthy communities, recognizing the dignity of all human beings regardless of race or economic circumstances.

Finally, you will see a brief report of our activities to implement these priorities during the first six months of the 111th Congress. For more information about these activities and our members, please refer to the CBC's Media Kit and visit [www.TheCongressionalBlackCaucus.com](http://www.TheCongressionalBlackCaucus.com).

We look forward to working with you to achieve these goals. By working together, we can restore, reconnect and rebuild our communities.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Lee*

Chairwoman  
Congressional Black Caucus

# Opportunities for All - Pathways Out of Poverty

## I. Promote Educational Reinvestment in Low Income & Disadvantaged African American Communities

- ◆ Guarantee child care assistance to low-income families and promote early education for all.
- ◆ Improve student achievement and graduation rates for low income and minority children, with special emphasis on science and technology education and training opportunities.
- ◆ Expand college access for first generation and low income students by simplifying and expanding Pell Grant opportunities and increasing support for Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Historically Black Colleges and University's (HBCUs) and community colleges.
- ◆ Connect disadvantaged and disconnected youth to after-school and summer programs, job training and employment.
- ◆ Promote lifelong educational options.

## II. Increase Access to Economic Security

- ◆ Raise and index the minimum wage to inflation or a percentage of median income.
- ◆ Expand and make permanent the increases for the earned income tax credit (EITC) and child tax credit made available in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- ◆ Increase unemployment assistance.
- ◆ Increase support for education, job training, and small business opportunities for low income and minority communities in the emerging Green economy.

## III. Eliminate Health Disparities

- ◆ Provide universal coverage with improvements in Medicaid and Medicare.
- ◆ Increase resources for prevention with special focus on community based efforts.
- ◆ Provide and fully fund programs to increase underrepresented minorities at all levels of the health professions.
- ◆ Address and improve the social, economic and environmental determinants of health in our communities.
- ◆ Ensure that the impact of research and all health related provisions in minority communities is assessed through data collection, disaggregation and analysis.

## IV. Provide Just Housing Options

- ◆ Support comprehensive public housing reform and expansion of the Section 8 housing choice voucher program.
- ◆ Protect renters, especially those affected by housing foreclosures.
- ◆ Prevent foreclosures by increasing the number of loan modifications.
- ◆ Stop predatory lending, foreclosure rescue fraud and general housing discrimination practices.
- ◆ Provide adequate housing options for vulnerable communities, including children, veterans and homeless persons.

## V. Strengthen Civil Rights & Judicial Reform

- ◆ Provide redemptive opportunities for people with criminal records and strengthen opportunities for stable employment and reintegration into their communities.
- ◆ Eliminate sentencing disparities.
- ◆ Stop the cradle to prison pipeline.

## VI. Address Global Poverty

- ◆ Continue to support the Millennium Development Goals to end poverty;
  - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
  - Achieve universal primary education;
  - Promote gender equality and empowerment of women;
  - Reduce child mortality and improve maternal health;
  - Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
  - Ensure environmental sustainability; and
  - Develop partnership for development by furthering open and non-discriminatory trading and financial system; deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt; make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.
- ◆ Expand trade and development assistance.

## 42 Bills to Watch During the 111th Congress



Members gather before the swearing-in ceremony of the CBC's executive officers for the 111th Congress.

The Congressional Black Caucus has historically acted as the “Conscience of the Congress” to ensure that all Americans are equally protected and empowered by the government.

Our **Opportunities for All** agenda is much more than equal protection under the law. It is equal protection in every area—addressing issues ranging from eradication of hunger, health disparities, environment injustices, and predatory lending to expanding economic opportunities, developing responsible foreign policies and granting voting rights to the residents of Washington D.C.

**Opportunities for All** pushes for equal empowerment, including equal access to quality education, public facilities and infrastructure, credit and public contracts, jobs and job training, affordable housing, and equal pay for equal work. To supplement the priorities set forth by President Barack Obama and Congressional Leadership, members of the CBC have introduced the following legislation to address these needs. Here are the CBC's **42 Bills to Watch** this Congress:

**H.R. 676 United State National Health Care Act** introduced 1/26/09 by Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (MI)

**H.R. 1963 Veterans Transition Assistance Program** introduced 4/2/09 by Rep. Charles B. Rangel (NY)

**H.R. 795 Dorothy I. Height and Whitney M. Young, Jr. Social Work Reinvestment Act** introduced 2/3/09 by Rep. Edolphus Towns (NY)

**H.R. 1596 Segal AmeriCorps Education Award Tax Relief Act of 2009** introduced 3/18/09 by Rep. John Lewis (GA)

**African Higher Education Expansion and Improvement Act** to be introduced by Rep. Donald M. Payne (NY)

**H.R. 157 District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2009** introduced 1/6/09 by Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC)

**H.R. 1492 Stop AIDS in Prison Act** introduced 3/11/09 by Rep. Maxine Waters (CA)

**Healthy Activity and Lifelong Energy Act of 2009** to be introduced by Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA)

**H.R. 1789 Freight Rail Expansion Incentives** introduced 3/30/09 by Rep. Corrine Brown (FL)

**H.R. 1296 Access for All America Act** introduced 3/4/09 by Rep. James E. Clyburn (SC)

**H.R. 144 Haitian Protection Act of 2009** introduced 1/6/09 by Rep. Alcee L. Hastings (FL)

**H.R. 1479 Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Modernization Act of 2009** introduced 3/12/09 by Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX)

**H.R. 2299 Minority Business Enhancement Act of 2009** introduced 1/19/09 by Rep. Bobby L. Rush (IL)

**H.R. 1064/S. 435 the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support and Education (PROMISE) Act** introduced 2/13/09 by Rep. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA)

**H.R. 1728 Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act** introduced 3/26/09 by Rep. Melvin L. Watt (NC)

**Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Act of 2009** to be introduced by Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (MS)

**H.R. 2451 Student Bill of Rights** introduced 5/15/09 by Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA)

**H.R. 265 Drug Sentencing Reform and Cocaine Kingpin Trafficking Act of 2009** introduced 1/7/09 by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (TX)

**The Liberia SEEDS (Stabilization, Economic Empowerment, Development and Security) Act** to be introduced by Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (IL)

**H.R. 1741 Witness Security and Protection Grant Program Act of 2009** introduced 3/26/09 by Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (MD)

**Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2009** to be introduced by Del. Donna M. Christensen (VI)

**Julia Carson Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009** to be introduced by Rep. Danny K. Davis (IL)

**H.R. 1982 the Veteran's Entitlement to Service (VETS) Act of 2009** introduced 4/21/09 by Rep. Carolyn C. Kilpatrick (MI)

**H. Res 346 Addressing the Prostate Cancer Epidemic in African American Men** introduced 4/21/09 by Rep. Gregory W. Meeks (NY)

**H.R. 1551 the Responsible Education About Life (REAL) Act** introduced 3/17/09 by Rep. Barbara Lee (CA)

**H.R. 685 the United States Civil Rights Trail System Act of 2009** introduced 1/26/09 by Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay, Jr. (MO)

**Federal Recognition of the Freedman Citizens of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma** to be introduced by Rep. Diane E. Watson (CA)

**H.R. 1677 the Empowerment Zone, Renewal Community and Enterprise Community Enhancement Act of 2009** introduced 3/24/09 by Rep. Artur Davis (AL)

**H.R. Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act of 2009** introduced 1/7/09 by Rep. Kendrick B. Meek (FL)

**H.R. 2554 National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers Reform Act** introduced 5/21/09 by Rep. David Scott (GA)

**Federal Electronic Equipment Donation Act** to be introduced by Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC)

**H.R. 1849 World War I Memorial and Centennial Act of 2009** introduced 4/1/09 by Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, II (MO)



CBC members meet with the Dr. Dorothy I. Height and the Black Women's Roundtable.

**H.R. 476 Housing Fairness Act of 2009** introduced 1/13/09 by Rep. Al Green (TX)

**Student Breakfast and Education Improvement Act** to be introduced by Rep. Gwen Moore (WI)

**H.R. 1270 the Affordable Housing and Community Development Act of 2009** introduced 3/3/09 by Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (NY)

**H.R. 1782 Fairness for Homeowners Act of 2009** introduced 3/30/09 by Rep. Keith Ellison (MN)

**H.R. 1020 Arbitration Fairness Act of 2009** introduced 2/12/09 by Rep. Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. (GA)

**H.R. 2355 Making Opportunities Via Efficient and More Effective National Transportation (MOVEMENT) Act** introduced 5/12/09 by Rep. Laura Richardson (CA)

**H.R. 2648 Muhammad Ali Congressional Gold Medal Resolution** introduced 6/2/09 by Rep. Andre Carson (IN)

**H.R. 2570 Working for Adequate Gains for Employment in Services (WAGES) Act** introduced 5/21/09 by Rep. Donna F. Edwards (MD)

**H.R. 2108 Predatory Lending Practice Reduction Act of 2009** introduced 4/28/09 by Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (OH)

**Veterans Health Care Act** to be introduced by Sen. Roland Burris (IL)

*Bills are listed in order of CBC member seniority and reflect updates as of June 1, 2009.*

*For more information on these and other bills, please visit:*

# First Quarter Activities (January-June 2009)

## Events & Activities Hosted by the CBC:



House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn (SC) with Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

### January

- 01/06/09 CBC Officer Swearing In Ceremony
- 01/09/09 CBC Member Planning Retreat

### February

- 02/11/09 CBC Black History Month Celebration Part I: A Tribute to Black Members of Congress During the Reconstruction Period
- 02/12/09 News Conference on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- 02/12/09 CBC Black History Month Celebration Part II: Panel and viewing of a Film Tribute to Robert Smalls
- 02/23/09 Special Order Hour (topic: Heraldng Unsung Heroes during Black History Month)\*

### March

- 03/03/09 Shirley Chisholm Portrait Unveiling
- 03/09/09 Special Order Hour (topic: Federal Budget Priorities)\*
- 03/16/09 Special Order Hour (topic: Housing/Foreclosure Crisis)\*
- 03/19/09 Black Press Week Luncheon
- 03/23/09 Special Order Hour (topic: Haiti/Liberia/Darfur)\*
- 03/30/09 CBC Economic Security Taskforce TARP/TALF Access Summit & News Conference

- 03/30/09 Special Order Hour (topic: John Hope Franklin)\*

### April

- 04/02/09 CBC Outreach Taskforce Call with Faith Leaders
- 04/27/09 Special Order (topic: Energy)

### May

- 05/18/09 Special Order Hour (topic: Health Care)
- 05/19/09 News Conference regarding CBC Fast for Darfur

*\* Special Order Hour's are held on the Floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and covered live on the C-SPAN Channel.*

## CBC Making Headlines in the News

- 01/05/09 Congressional Black Caucus Swears-In New Chair, Officers
- 01/08/09 Congressional Black Caucus Supports Seating of Burris
- 01/09/09 CBC Releases Statement on Recent Unemployment Numbers
- 01/12/09 Congressional Black Caucus Applauds Senate Decision to Seat Burris
- 02/03/09 CBC Chairwoman Barbara Lee Releases Statement Celebrating Black History Month
- 02/03/09 Chairwoman Barbara Lee Statement on Commerce Secretary Nominee Gregg
- 02/04/09 CBC Members Lee, Rangel and Christensen Applaud SCHIP Signing
- 02/06/09 Chairwoman Lee Statement on Census Bureau
- 02/11/09 CBC Releases Letter on Priorities in Stimulus Package
- 02/11/09 CBC Honors Reconstruction Era Black Members of Congress

- 02/12/09 CBC Statement on 100th Anniversary of the NAACP
- 02/12/09 Congressional Black Caucus to Hold News Conference on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- 02/23/09 Chairwoman Barbara Lee Statement on White House Fiscal Summit
- 02/24/09 CBC Applauds Senate Vote to Grant Voting Rights to District of Columbia
- 03/03/09 CBC Program Honoring Shirley Chisholm
- 03/04/09 Statement from CBC Chairwoman Barbara Lee on the Use of Negative Racial Stereotypes in the Media
- 03/06/09 Statement from CBC Chairwoman Barbara Lee on Recent Unemployment Numbers
- 03/10/09 Lee Statement on Status of DC House Voting Rights Act
- 03/18/09 Lee Statement on Darfur Calling for Prompt Appointment of Special Envoy

- 03/23/09 Lees Applauds Obama Decision on Liberians Living in U.S.
- 03/25/09 Lee Statement on Passing of Dr. John Hope Franklin
- 03/30/09 CBC Members Hold TARP & TALF Access Summit for Minority Vendors
- 04/02/09 Building Upon the President's Blueprint for Success, The Congressional Black Caucus Offers Budget Substitute
- 04/18/09 CBC Statement on U.S. Boycott of Durban Review Conference
- 04/22/09 CBC Releases Letter on Energy Priorities
- 04/28/09 Caucuses Unite Behind Public Health Insurance Plan Option
- 05/19/09 CBC Launches Capitol Hill Darfur Fast for Life Campaign
- 05/26/09 Statement on President Obama's Choice of Sotomayor for Supreme Court
- 05/26/09 CBC Chairwoman Barbara Lee Applauds Nomination of Bolden to Lead NASA

## CBC Taskforce Movement

The nine taskforces of the CBC are the working groups for CBC issue priorities. Here are highlights of their work this quarter:

### Budget, Appropriations, and Taxation Taskforce

Chair: Rep. Bobby Scott (VA); The primary focus of this taskforce has been the coordination of the CBC alternative budget and advocacy on behalf of CBC priorities in the FY 2010 budget.

### Community Reinvestment Taskforce

Co-Chairs: Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX) & Rep. Danny K. Davis (IL); The taskforce coordinated CBC priorities in education and transportation and has hosted meetings with both Sec. Ray LaHood (Transportation) and Sec. Arne Duncan (Education). The Taskforce has also hosted education briefings with the National Alliance of Black Educators and the STEM Education Caucus.

### Defense, Veterans & Homeland Security Taskforce

Co-Chairs: Rep. Charles B. Rangel (NY), Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (MS) & Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA); The taskforce is finalizing their work plan for the session.

### Economic Security Taskforce

Co-Chairs: Rep. Maxine Waters (CA), Rep. Gregory Meeks (NY) & Rep. Keith Ellison (MN); The taskforce hosted a CBC TARP/TALF Summit to open the doors to access and opportunity for minority and women owned business. Over 350 individuals from minority and women owned businesses participated in the summit, resulting in the expansion of numerous opportunities Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE's).

### Energy & Environment Taskforce

Co-Chairs: Rep. G.K. Butterfield (NC), Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, II (MO) & Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX); The taskforce established CBC priorities on energy and climate change legislation; issued a letter on those priorities to the House Energy and Commerce Committee and House Leadership and coordinated a CBC meeting with Administrator Lisa Jackson of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

### Foreign Policy & International Relations Taskforce

Chair: Rep. Donald M. Payne (NJ); The taskforce has advocated on behalf of issues relating to Haiti, Liberia, Darfur, and U.S. participation in the Durban Review Conference.

### Health & Wellness Taskforce

Co-Chairs: Del. Donna M. Christensen (VI) & Rep. Danny K. Davis (IL); This taskforce has established CBC health priorities, hosted the Spring Health Braintrust and is working with the Congressional TriCaucus on a health disparities bill. The

Taskforce spearheaded the CBC's participation in the first ever "Quad Caucus" bill sponsored by the TriCaucus and Progressive Caucus on health reform principles.

### Judicial & Civil Rights Taskforce

Co-Chairs: Rep. Melvin Watt (NC), Rep. Bobby Scott (VA) & Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX); The taskforce coordinated CBC judicial and civil rights priorities for the session that were presented to Attorney General Eric Holder; coordinated CBC member support of the Supreme Court case addressing Voting Rights Act protections; participated in a 2010 Census summit with African American leaders (with NCBCP); supported hate crimes legislation; and worked with Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC) to support voting rights for the District of Columbia.

### Outreach Taskforce

Chair: Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (MD); The taskforce hosted a conference call with faith leaders, which included over 450 participants around the nation and the White House Office on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

### Other CBC efforts:

- **CBC Economic Recovery Committee**; Rep. Cleaver (MO) led the Caucus in coordinating and communicating the CBC's priorities in the economic recovery package. The taskforce also hosted a meeting with civil rights leaders to discuss the recovery package.
- The CBC advocated the importance of the Census in the Administration's nomination of **Commerce Secretary**.
- The CBC advocated in favor of the confirmation of **Senator Roland Burris (IL)** based on constitutional law and legal precedent.
- The CBC continued advocacy on behalf of **Black farmers** to quicken actions of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Justice in a long unresolved discrimination case.
- Rep. Richardson (CA) developed and leads the **CBC Nominations Committee** which recommends candidates for various federal positions and continues to work with the White House Personnel Office to place African American candidates throughout the Executive and Judicial Branches.
- The CBC nominated Rep. Gwen Moore (WI) to serve as a liaison to the **Democratic Caucus Middle Class Taskforce**, coordinated by the Caucus Chairman Rep. John B. Larson.
- The CBC nominated Rep. Donna Edwards (MD) to serve as a liaison to the **Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC)**.



## About the Congressional Black Caucus

Hon. Barbara Lee (CA), Chairwoman

Hon. Emanuel Cleaver, II (MO)  
First Vice-Chair

Hon. Donna M. Christensen (VI)  
Second Vice-Chair

Hon. G.K. Butterfield (NC)  
Secretary

Hon. Yvette D. Clarke (NY)  
Whip

### *Statement of Purpose of the Congressional Black Caucus, 1971*

*Since 1971, the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (at times referred to herein as the "CBC" or "Caucus") have joined together to strengthen their efforts to empower America's neglected citizens—including but not limited to Americans of color—by more effectively addressing our legislative concerns. The Congressional Black Caucus is committed to utilizing the full constitutional power, statutory authority, and financial resources of the Government of the United States of America to ensure, insofar as possible, that everyone in the United States has an opportunity to live out the American Dream. The legislative agenda of universal empowerment that the Members of the Caucus shall collectively pursue shall include, but are not limited to: the creation of universal access to a world class education from birth through post secondary level; the creation of universal access to quality, affordable health care and the elimination of racially based health disparities; the creation of universal access to modern technology, capital, and full, fairly-compensated employment; the creation and or expansion of UA foreign policy initiatives that will contribute to the survival, health, education, and general welfare of all peoples of the world in a manner consistent with universal human dignity, tolerance, and respect, and such other legislative action as a majority of the entire CBC membership from time to time may support.*

#### CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF THE 111TH CONGRESS

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