



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

February 5th, 2010

Congresswoman Clarke Joins City Leaders to Denounce Anti-Semitism



Dear Neighbor,

Each year I have the privilege of nominating young men and women for admission to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point.

Although the deadline for three of these institutions has passed, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is accepting applications for the class of 2014 until March 1st, 2010. Application packets and interviews can be requested via my district office.

Applicants in our district will receive priority consideration throughout the application process. Eight slots remain for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy; please contact my district office as soon as possible.

For more information regarding requirements for service academy eligibility, visit my website at www.clarke.house.gov or call my office at 718.287.1142.

Sincerely,
Yvette D. Clarke



Rep. Clarke Joins City Councilmember Brad Lander and other elected officials in denouncing Anti-Semitic notes found in Park Slope

On Monday, February 1, 2010, I joined City Councilmember Brad Lander at a press conference speaking out against anti-Semitic notes found on Sixth Avenue in Park Slope that read "Kill Jews." These hateful messages are meant to bring fear and division among our community and are very unacceptable. I stand firm with the 11th Congressional District in decrying this heinous act of prejudice and bigotry. As we all know, the 11th Congressional District of New York is one of the most diverse districts in the nation. I will continue to proudly celebrate what former

New York City Mayor David Dinkins called a "gorgeous mosaic," the diversity of Brooklyn, New York. Regardless, these actions cannot be taken lightly, and those who committed these egregious crimes must be brought to justice. I am committed to working with the NYPD to ensure that all people and places of worship are safe. I will continue to utilize my position on the Homeland Security Committee, to fight for more funding for the Urban Areas Security Initiative grant program, and other initiatives that allow the Jewish community to fight against local threats in security. I am committed to working with my colleagues in Congress to ensure that the Jewish community in New York is adequately protected from these local acts of terrorism.

Rep. Clarke Addresses City School Closings

On January 26, the Panel for Educational Policy in New York City voted to phase out 19 out of the 20 schools recommended for closure due to poor performance. I am greatly disappointed to see that this decision was made despite the strong opposition voiced by the educators, parents, students, and community leaders.

Two of those schools, Paul Robeson High School and Middle School for Academic and Social Excellence were on that list. Community Education Council District 17 was especially hit because they represent both of these schools.

As a product of the New York City public school system, I know we can do better. We owe it to our children, the leaders of today and tomorrow. I applaud every educator, public official, parent, and student for engaging in this debate. I will continue to advocate for additional resources in our schools to ensure that school closures are no longer an option.

Congresswoman Clarke Celebrates Black History Month

This month, I proudly join Americans across the nation in observance of Black History Month. African-Americans have had a unique, compelling, and tumultuous history in our nation. This month, we celebrate the many contributions, accomplishments, and undeniable influence that African-Americans have made in the advancement and rich diversity of this nation. Black history is American history.

It is important to recognize those incredible individuals who have changed our nation. Whether it is honoring those who have passed on their lasting legacies to our nation or those who presently continue to break down racial barriers, they all have left their mark on history. We recognize great pioneers like the honorable Shirley Chisholm, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Benjamin Banneker, and Sojourner Truth, to modern day marvels like Oprah Winfrey, Dr. Ben Carson, or our very own President Barack Obama.

I encourage all Americans to take time, not only during this month, Black history month, but throughout the year, to reflect upon the many contributions Black Americans have made to our nation.

Rep. Clarke Applauds Obama Administration for Supporting Lending in Underserved Communities

On Wednesday, February 3rd, 2010, U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner announced the terms of an initiative which will provide low cost capital to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI's). This measure will allow CDFI banks, thrifts, and credit unions to apply for capital investments at a low dividend rate. I am pleased that the President and Treasury have recognized the need for this legislation.

CDFI's are essential to meeting the fiscal needs of many underserved communities. These investments are always helpful, but considering the current economic climate, this initiative is crucial. They will go a long way towards meeting the tremendous demand for capital in our communities hardest hit by the recession. As a member of the House Small Business Committee, I remain committed to improving the small business lending environment.

While this is an admirable first step in an undoubtedly long process, I will continue to advocate for similar measures. By strengthening CDFI's we can bolster economic growth in traditionally underserved and underfunded communities.

Legislative Spotlight

This week Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (NY) and Robert Menendez (NJ) and myself introduced H.R. 4616, the Haitian Emergency Life Protection Act of 2010 (The H.E.L.P. Act), in both chambers. I strongly believe this bill is a necessary proactive step to help those most affected by the devastation in Haiti.

As the Representative of the second largest concentration of first and second Haitian immigrants in the U.S., my office has been and continues to be inundated with families desperately trying to reunite with their loved ones directly affected by the devastation in Haiti. There are 55,000 Haitians with approved immigrant petitions to come to the U.S. and join their relatives. Due to visa backlogs, Haitians family members with approved I-130 petitions have been waiting for up to 11 years to enter the U.S.

The Haitian Emergency Life Protection Act of 2010 (The H.E.L.P. Act) will

- temporarily expand the V nonimmigrant visa category to include Haitians whose petition for a family-sponsored immigrant visa were approved on or before January 12, 2010, and
- increase State Department funds towards the processing of V visa applicants

Allowing Haitians to enter the U.S. will not move them ahead of other immigrants on the waiting list, rather, it would allow them to leave the devastation of Haiti and send remittances back to the country. This bill would permit these petitioners to come to the U.S. immediately to join their families and work here while awaiting their turn in line for a green card.

It is my hope that this bill will secure the health and humanity of tens of thousands of Haitians, bringing peace to Haitian families within our district. I am in the process of urging members of Congress to join me in this great opportunity to help Haiti and its people.

Current original cosponsors:

Representatives Ed Towns (NY), Eliot Engel (NY), Charles Rangel (NY), Barbara Lee (CA), Del. Donna Christensen (VI), Carolyn Kilpatrick (MI), Marcia Fudge (OH), Mike Honda (CA), John Lewis (GA).