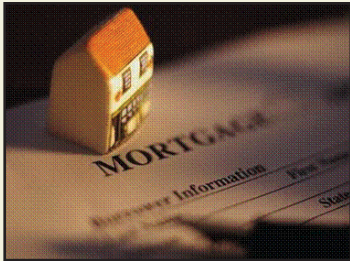


CONGRESSWOMAN NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR NEW YORK'S 12TH DISTRICT



Summer 2008

Rep. Velázquez Brings Expert Advice and Legal Help to New Yorkers on Housing and Mortgage Issues



Congresswoman Velázquez recently brought together housing and legal service counselors at a community information fair on the mortgage foreclosure crisis. The experts offered

workshops and one-on-one consultations on topics such as home loan refinancing. The forum, held in Bushwick, empowered families with resources that will help them weather trends in the real estate market.

"Many homeowners didn't get sound advice at the time of purchase and they still aren't receiving adequate services," said Congresswoman Velázquez, who is New York City's senior Member on the U.S. House Subcommittee on Housing and Community

Opportunity. "By lending a helping hand to homeowners in the hardest hit areas, we can save our communities one home at a time."

A measure sponsored by Congresswoman Velázquez was included in the housing package recently approved by the U.S. House of Representatives. It directs resources to legal counseling services for distressed homeowners and tenants in foreclosed properties.

Downtown Brooklyn Gets New Small Business Development Center

With the opening of a new Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the New York City College of Technology, entrepreneurs in Brooklyn will gain increased access to the resources and technical expertise needed to help start a business or grow their existing firms.

"New Yorkers have the drive to start their own business and the commitment needed to succeed. With the one-on-one assistance provided at a SBDC, our City's entrepreneurs can get their operations up and running smoothly," Congresswoman Velázquez said.

At the SBDC's ribbon cutting, Congresswoman Velázquez, who chairs the U.S. House Committee on Small Business, highlighted the importance of expanding entrepreneurial development services to foster small business growth and strengthen the economy.

"By opening this center in the heart of Brooklyn, we are helping to bring new jobs to the community and ensuring that local entrepreneurs have the resources they need to turn their great ideas into market-leading businesses," she said.

The new City Tech SBDC is located at 25 Chapel Street, 11th floor, in downtown Brooklyn. It will be open Monday - Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. To contact the SBDC Office at City Tech office, call (718) 797-0187.



Mentor Programs to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

During a visit to a Williamsburg high school, Congresswoman Velázquez met with students and teachers to discuss the impact that teen pregnancy has had on their lives and those of their friends. In New York City, nearly one in 10 girls age 15-19 became pregnant in 2005. The teens and Congresswoman Velázquez discussed the critical role of mentoring services in helping young women make the right decisions for their future.

"A well-designed mentoring program builds the confidence of our teenage girls and shows them that anything is possible. Mentors lead by example, listen and give

advice. Those are the sort of positive influences that lead to positive outcomes," Congresswoman Velázquez said.

At the event, the Congresswoman announced legislation (H.R. 5810) she has introduced to provide community agencies with the resources to create mentoring programs that pair-up recent college graduates with at-risk high school girls. Mentors would have the flexibility to discuss a wide range of prevention and safe sex strategies that fit the needs of their community.

Federal Grants Assist Local Organizations

Brooklyn Chinese American Association: \$476,611 for Head Start early education programs.

Public Health Solutions: \$1,142,065 for the creation of a STD/HIV Prevention Training Center.

Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union: \$393,998 for the opening of a new credit union branch in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood.

Museum at Eldridge Street: \$160,152 to provide workshops for school teachers on the development and interaction of Jewish, African American, Italian, Irish and Chinese communities in the Lower East Side of NYC.

Rep. Velázquez Calls on USAID to Send Rescue Teams for Victims of Chinese Earthquake



Congresswoman Velázquez joined students from the Green School at Town Square's Earth Day Celebration in Greenpoint.

On Monday, May 12, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake struck China's Sichuan Province. Congresswoman Velázquez shares the great concern of the 375,000 Chinese Americans living in New York City.

"The earthquake in China has gripped the attention of America and has shaken the souls of our Chinese-American neighbors as they struggle to comprehend the destruction to their native land," Congresswoman Velázquez said.

She urged the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to demonstrate its full understanding of the gravity of this situation by dis-

patching rescue teams to the area.

"While long term financial aid will be crucial to reconstruction, my immediate concern lies with victims who need rescue personnel. Lives hang in the balance. There is no time to waste," the Congresswoman said.

Following her letter, USAID announced that it would send search, rescue, and recovery equipment, as well as a team of specialists to train local rescue workers in China. This is in addition to the \$500,000 provided to the International Federation of Red Cross for emergency relief following the earthquake.

Home Healthcare Aides for Public Housing Seniors

There are more than 130,000 elderly New Yorkers living in public housing, and the number is expected to rise as the population ages.

During a visit to a Lower East Side residential development for seniors, Congresswoman Velázquez announced new legislation (H.R. 6033) to expand home healthcare services by providing younger public housing residents with the training they need to care for their neighbors.

"Today, a growing number of New Yorkers are entering their golden years. Many of them will require healthcare assistance to help them continue living full and productive



lives. My bill ensures they have that support," said Congresswoman Velázquez.

The Congresswoman was joined at the event by supporters of the initiative, including representatives from the nation's largest health care union,

public housing officials and community advocates.

The "Home Health Services Job Training and Caregiving Act of 2008" creates a three-year federal pilot training program for public housing residents specializing in health care services. The newly certified aides would be matched with elderly or disabled public housing residents who are Medicaid-eligible.

"When we train local residents to fill a gap in our healthcare system, not only do they learn a valuable trade but they also become an even more valuable resource to the community. It's a win-win situation," she said.

Federal Funds Secured for New El Puente Wellness Initiative

Congresswoman Velázquez presented El Puente founder Luis Garden Acosta with \$214,000 in federal funds to support a new health education initiative.

El Puente is working to create a Wellness Center for adolescents and their families, with special emphasis on services to Bushwick and Williamsburg residents.

"For our students to be top performers, we need to make sure every aspect of their mind, body and soul is healthy and active," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "I am committed to bringing federal support to programs that make

a difference in our community. With El Puente's long-standing history of high quality programs, Brooklyn youth will undoubtedly benefit from this initiative," she said.

For more than 25 years, El Puente has promoted leadership and human rights in the Brooklyn community through arts, education, scientific research, wellness and environmental action. The latest initiative is focused on combating diseases such as obesity, diabetes, STDs, HIV/AIDS and environmentally-connected illnesses like asthma.

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