

Report from Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

OCTOBER 1999

Dear Friend,

As the ranking member of the Census Subcommittee, I've been leading the fight to make the 2000 Census as accurate as possible. The 1990 census missed 8.4 million people, double-counted 4.4 million people and counted 13 million people in the wrong place—an error rate of more than 10%!

And in New York City, the error rate was twice the national average—245,000 people were missed—meaning New York City lost its fair share of federal funds. Over \$185 billion a year is distributed by census formula.

There are some in Congress who, for political reasons, don't want to count all Americans as accurately as possible, and oppose the use of modern statistical methods.

Despite their opposition, advocates of a fair and accurate census celebrated a partial victory in May when the President signed into law the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill, which repealed a provision of law which threatened to halt funding for the 2000 Census.

While the bill's passage signaled a victory for New York City and all urban areas, the next big hurdle will come when Congress considers funding for the Census during the regular appropriation process.

Census Bureau professionals, who have tracked census results for more than 40 years, have concluded that using modern statistical techniques would help correct the census for undercounts. The National Academy of Sciences supports the use of such methods. Without them, Census 2000 will have large gaps in accuracy, undercounting large numbers of the urban, minorities, renters, children, and poor.

The 2000 census should be as accurate as humanly possible. We deserve no less.



CBM Signature

Maloney wins fight to fund United Nations Population Fund

In July, family planning advocates scored a major victory by winning passage in the House of the bipartisan Campbell/Maloney amendment to restore funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

"Advocates of family planning and health services to newborns and their mothers have won an important victory," Rep. Maloney said, "with the help of over 100 other members and the support of more than 40 worldwide population, environmental, and reproductive health organizations."

Last year, all U.S. funding for the work of the UNFPA was eliminated by Congress, and as a result

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Rep. Maloney with Sen. Jim Jeffords (R-Vermont) and Waris Dirie as they express support for UNFPA funding on Capitol Hill.

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an estimated 870,000 women were deprived of modern health care and contraception. Each year, more than 585,000 women die from complications due to pregnancy and childbirth worldwide.

“Last year, when the UNPFA funding was cut, I introduced HR 895, and began the struggle to restore U.S. funding,” said Maloney. “This year, several New Yorkers including Leigh Miller, Robin Chandler Duke, Peter Purdy, Mary Lindsay, and Paul Micou, helped launch the U.S. Committee for the UNFPA, which helped build support across the country.”

Patricia Waak, Special Advisor to the Population & Habitat Program of the National Audubon Society, hailed Maloney’s role. “She listened to women from countries around the world. She did her homework within the U.N.—then she rallied her Congressional colleagues to a stunning victory.”

House works to close NYC fire safety loophole with Maloney bill

Federal law mandates that all new federally funded housing have fire sprinklers. Unfortunately, in 1993, New York City received an exemption from this safety law, as long as buildings meet an “equivalent level of

safety.” But as the terrifying recent fires in the city illustrate, there is no substitute for fire sprinklers.

Although the N.Y. City Council passed a law earlier this year requiring fire sprinklers in all multi-family housing, developers could still seek a federal waiver from installing sprinklers. Rep. Maloney introduced legislation (HR 1126) to close this loophole. “There is no reason for nursing homes and other federally funded facilities not to have fire sprinklers,” she said.

The bill was successfully added as an amendment to a larger fire safety bill (HR 1550) and passed the House of Representatives in May. Approval by the Senate is expected shortly.

Fighting for a Second Avenue subway

Anyone commuting on the East Side of Manhattan knows how crowded the Lexington Avenue line already is. The need for a Second Avenue Subway is apparent now, and the East Side transit infrastructure will become even

more burdened when the LIRR connection to Grand Central is completed.

Work was actually begun on a Second Avenue subway tunnel in the late 1960s—from 120 to 125th

Streets. But as NYC fiscal crises kept occurring, other priorities pre-empted further construction.

But progress is being made. Rep. Maloney has testified in Congress, held public forums on this issue, and worked to help coordinate the federal, state, and local authorities.

She successfully lobbied for a \$5 million authorization in the Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA-21) in the last Congress, and is working to get the money actually appropriated during the current funding cycle. The funds will pay for engineering planning—proving once and for all the need for a Second Avenue Subway.



Rep. Maloney with Joan Samuelson of the Parkinson’s Action Network at the first meeting of the Congressional Working Group on Parkinson’s Disease.

Maloney organizes Congressional Working Group on Parkinson’s Disease

One American is diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease every nine minutes, and about one million Americans are currently afflicted with this disease—including Michael J. Fox and Muhammad Ali.

In February, Rep. Maloney founded the bipartisan Congressional Working Group on Parkinson’s Disease. The group will work to increase awareness among Members of Congress and their staffs on issues related to Parkinson’s Disease, including improving the state of research.

Parkinson’s Disease is a chronic, progressive neurodegenerative disorder. This disease currently results in medical and lost productivity costs of an estimated \$25 billion per year.

Yet leading scientists describe Parkinson’s as the most curable neurological disorder. Many expect breakthrough therapy and/or a cure within a decade.

The Working Group on Parkinson’s will work to continue biomedical research in the area of stem cell research—now under attack by some in Congress—to help hasten that breakthrough.

If you’d like to keep up with the progress of the group, visit my website at www.house.gov/maloney.

Maloney fights for parity on mental health coverage

When Congress passed the Mental Health Parity Act in 1996, it was designed to halt one form of mental health insurance discrimination on the part of health care insurers.

It required health insurers to treat mental illness in a comparable way to physical illness—if a health insurance policy offers \$1 million of lifetime coverage for cancer or heart disease, it must also offer \$1 million of lifetime coverage for mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

But some insurance companies have found a way to circumvent the spirit of the law. It has simply changed its now-illegal “dollar limits” to “visit limits”—30 visits per year and 60 per lifetime.

Rep. Maloney has introduced legislation (HR 2445) to close this loophole and preserve the spirit of the Mental Health Parity Act.

Maloney elected Co-Chair of Congressional Women's Caucus

Reps. Carolyn Maloney and Sue Kelly (R-NY) were elected Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues for the 106th Congress. The Caucus works to ensure that the needs of women are fully considered in Congressional decisionmaking.

As Caucus Co-Chair, Maloney spearheaded letters to the House Appropriations Chairmen asking for full funding for issues important to women, including domestic violence shelters, the WIC child nutrition program, child care, education, mental health, school safety, Title IX, and a wide assortment of women's health issues.

“I'm very proud to have several of my bills included in the Caucus agenda,” Maloney said. “Kiddie Mac’ (HR 1112), a bill that would greatly increase the availability and accessibility of quality child care in America, is scheduled for a Congressional hearing in the Fall. My ‘Right to Breastfeed Act’ (HR 1848), allowing breastfeeding on all federal property, has been included in bills moving through Congress, and is expected to be enacted soon. ‘The Cancer Screening Coverage Act’ (HR 1285) would require health insurers to pay for routine cancer screenings for people at high risk. And my bill to protect the medical privacy of military spouses and dependents (HR 1847) is included in the Defense Authorization bill.”

For more information about the Caucus' history, members, and legislative agenda, please visit my website at: www.house.gov/maloney/wcaucus.htm

NYC business owner helps Rep. Maloney reform 64-year-old Federal law

The experience of one New Yorker has led to reform of 64-year-old legislation to protect government contractors.

Fred Levinson, President of Levinson and Santoro Electric Corporation, was contracted in 1993 to do an \$11.8 million job on a federal prison in New York City.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons then terminated the prime contract for the project, leaving Mr. Levinson unable to collect the full amount he was owed for the work that he had completed.

Mr. Levinson took his problem to Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and she called a hearing on the problem before the House Committee on Government Reform, where Levinson testified on the need to modernize federal law.

She then introduced the “Construction Industry Payment Protection Act of 1999,” (HR 1219) which would increase the size of payment bonds posted by prime contractors who accept government contracts to the full dollar amount of the contract.

“The law covering this aspect of federal contracting—the Miller Act of 1935—desperately needed reform,” she said. “By increasing the bond beyond the original \$2.5 million specified in 1935, we will go a long way toward providing full protection for construction companies and their workers.

The bill, supported by more than 20 construction industry groups including the American Subcontractors Association, the Surety Association of America, and the Associated General Contractors of America, was passed unanimously by the Government Reform Committee last May and passed the full House August 2. It is expected to be signed by President Clinton soon.



Fred Levinson testifying before the House Committee on Government Reform last September.

✉ If you have a problem with the federal government or know of a way to increase government efficiency, please don't hesitate—contact my office!

1651 Third Avenue, Suite 311
New York, NY 10128
212 860-0606

28-11 Astoria Blvd.
Astoria, NY 11102
718 932 1804

rep.carolyn.maloney@mail.house.gov
<http://www.house.gov/maloney>

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Rep. Maloney continues push for campaign finance reform

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney has long been a leader in efforts to clean up the influence of money in politics.

She is a leading cosponsor of the bipartisan McCain-Feingold/Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform bill (HR 417), which passed the House overwhelmingly in September. Shays-Meehan will ban “soft money”—e.g., unlimited campaign contributions from individuals, corporations and labor unions—and improve campaign finance laws in many other important ways.

Maloney’s own proposal, the “Independent Commission on Campaign Finance Reform Act,” was incorporated into Shays-Meehan and passed the House as well. This legislation would take the politics out of campaign finance reform by creating an independent commission to recommend further ways to clean up our campaign finance system.

Following the House vote in September, Maloney called on the Senate to move quickly to pass the bipartisan legislation.

“American voters want elections, not auctions,” she said. “The Senate needs to ban soft money and clean up our campaign finance system immediately, so that we can fix our campaign finance system before the 2000 election.”

Maloney had joined with over 200 colleagues in signing a discharge petition to force this year’s Shays-Meehan bill out of committee and be voted on by the full House.



NAZI WAR CRIME ACT SIGNED Rep. Maloney at the signing of the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act (HR 4007), which she authored. Also watching President Clinton sign the law were (left to right) Sen. Mike DeWine (Ohio), Sen. Patrick Leahy, and Rep. Steve Horn (California).

Maloney working to raise the minimum wage

Congresswoman Maloney is a cosponsor of a bill to increase the federal minimum wage by \$1 an hour, to \$6.15, over the course of the next two years.

“It should be a basic tenet of economic policy in the United States that people working full-time should not have to live in poverty,” Maloney said. “This increase is a step in that direction.”

“A worker working full-time and earning the minimum wage earns only \$10,700 a year—\$2,900 below the poverty line for a family of three, yet the purchasing power of minimum wage workers is still 19% below 1979 levels,” she said.