



Assemblyman

**Keith L.T.  
Wright**

**Reports to  
the People**

SPRING 2011

## State Assembly votes to preserve Rent Stabilization in New York City

In April, the New York State Assembly passed bill A. 2674, co-sponsored by Assemblyman Keith Wright, which would extend and strengthen rent regulation in New York City. The laws, set to expire June 15th, serve to protect over 2.5 million tenants who rely upon the rent-stabilization system which began in 1969. The bill would also repeal vacancy decontrol, which currently allows landlords to remove apartments from regulation once the rent has risen above \$2,000 a month. Additionally, the bill would increase the income levels for households who are protected under rent stabilization to allow for families who have successfully increased their income levels to remain in the apartments which allowed them to do so.

This bill also caps the amount that can be collected for major capital improvements to the actual cost of the improvement, rather than allowing the landlord to collect increased rents in perpetuity as is currently ongoing at many Harlem developments. In addition, this bill lowers the amount by which landlords can increase rents based on individual unit improvements from its current 1/40th of cost to a more reasonable 1/60th of cost. As of publication, the New York State Senate had not taken up this legislation and its majority leadership is pushing for a bill that serves to strip many of the protections currently enjoyed by residents.

“Harlem is ground zero in the fight for affordable

housing. If it isn't landlords trying to evict residents using immoral and unethical practices, its landlords driving up the rents by making huge major capital improvements that residents have to pay forever. This landmark bill not only extends the rent stabilization program, but also includes many of the changes needed to expand the availability of affordable housing in Harlem. I look forward to the day when my residents are able to stop worrying and start living thanks to the actions undertaken by the New York State Assembly,” said Assemblyman Keith Wright.



*Assemblyman Wright speaking in favor of Rent Regulation Reform in Albany.*

## State Assembly makes the tough choices and critical restorations to the New York State budget

In what was perhaps the most difficult State budget in many years, the New York State Assembly took steps to lessen the impact upon working and low-income New Yorkers. Faced with a \$10 billion deficit to overcome, the State Assembly made difficult and critical spending cuts and was able to balance the budget without raising taxes. \$272 million was restored in State Aid to Education, allowing our children to get the education necessary to be successful in the modern world. \$36 million was allocated for local discretionary

services, allowing Senior Centers to remain open and offering quality services to thousands of Harlem residents.

Due to the financial downturn and resultant shrinking of the tax base, the State has faced over \$39 billion in deficits over the past four years. Despite the odds, the New York State Assembly has remained the ‘People’s House’ and has kept vital funding for housing, social services and public transportation from being cut to the extent that

**Continued on page 2**



*Assemblyman Wright speaks to members of 32BJ SEIU at their Annual Albany Lobby Day.*

**Continued from page 1**

Governor Cuomo had initially proposed. Additionally, the State Assembly reformed the Medicaid program allowing quality healthcare to remain affordable and accessible to the majority of New York State residents.

“I am not proud of this budget, but when our neighborhoods are faced with the elimination of vital programs, I am proud that the New York State Assembly said ‘not now, not ever’ to the cuts that would hurt my residents most. In fact, it was the Assembly which restored countless millions to the budget for the services so needed by the citizens of Harlem, and despite the objections of the State Senate leadership, we were able to preserve the programs which enable my constituency to put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads and see their healthcare providers. While this is far from my idea of a perfect budget, it made difficult choices that will hopefully ensure the financial stability of New York State now and into the future,” said Assemblyman Keith Wright.

**Assemblyman Wright and community leaders host first annual anti-gang education clinic**

Assemblyman Keith Wright hosted the First Annual Harlem Anti-Gang Education Clinic along with an all-star roster of Harlem-based community leaders. He was joined by Ms. Tanya Apparicio- New York County District Attorney’s Office, Inspector Rodney Harrison- 28th Precinct NYPD, Reverend Vernon Williams- Harlem Clergy Community Leaders Coalition, Ms. Eiesha Sekou- Street Corner Resources, Mr. Kareem Muhammad- Circle of Brothers and Ms. Jackie Rowe Adams- Harlem Mothers S.A.V.E. The panelists fielded questions from the community, spoke on the effect that gangs have upon the neighborhoods and residents of Harlem and the methods and means to keep our children away from gangs and on the right track for success.

“Parents need to be brought abreast as to what’s going on in our community. More outreach is necessary so that our families are better equipped to fight the battle against gangs and gun violence in the Harlem community. I pray that more politicians, members of the clergy and community leaders host more of these events for the betterment of our neighborhoods,” said Reverend Vernon Williams of the Harlem Clergy Community Leaders Coalition.

“Harlem has been suffering the ill effects of gangs for too many years. The time has come for us to stand together, get educated and truly fight back against this deadly and dangerous presence in our communities. Far too many children, parents, friends and neighbors have lost their lives to the senseless violence and drugs that accompany gang activity throughout New York City. I am proud to have such a diverse and dedicated group of community advocates, members of the justice community and elected officials join us in the fight to say NOT ANYMORE to gangs in our neighborhoods!” said Assemblyman Keith Wright of Harlem.



*Assemblyman Wright and staff of the Washington Heights and Inwood Development Corporation alongside Taxi Drivers at a workshop to give insurance loans to livery cab drivers in West Harlem .*



*Assemblyman Wright introduces students from PS 175 in the State Assembly Chamber on their visit to Albany.*

## Harlem community honors the late Judge and Assemblyman Kenneth Phipps

Assemblyman Keith Wright of Harlem in conjunction with Harlem Police Athletic League renamed the game room of the Harlem PAL Center after the legendary Judge and Assemblyman Kenneth M. Phipps. They were joined by other elected officials, community leaders and members of the late Judge Phipps' family as they unveiled the new Judge Kenneth Phipps Game Room.

The Honorable Judge Kenneth M. Phipps, as a member of the New York State Assembly, represented the 14th Assembly District, which at that time included the majority of Harlem. He was elected in 1954 to fill a vacancy in the seat and served until 1958, when he was appointed as a magistrate by Mayor Wagner. Judge Phipps was a member of the New York State Bar after graduating from Lincoln University with a Bachelors Degree and St. John's University with a Law Degree. The Judge was also a graduate of George Washington High School and both P.S. 89 and P.S. 139. He was a decorated veteran who saw combat with the United States Air Force in the Southwest Pacific during World War II. Judge Phipps passed away in 1968 after suffering a heart attack.

"Many people in Harlem may remember that the old Harlem PAL Center on 5th Avenue was named for Judge Kenneth Phipps and I have found it a fitting tribute to this great man that we rename at least a part of the new PAL Center in respect of his legacy and commitment

to the children of Harlem. I remember Judge Phipps well and am proud to serve the same district that he so selflessly represented many decades ago. We in Harlem should keep this dedicated public servant in our minds as we move our community forward and remember all that he did for the neighborhood which he so cherished," said Assemblyman Keith Wright of Harlem.

"It is a real honor to have this room renamed after my father, Kenneth Phipps. If my mother were still alive she would be so proud to join us today as we honor a man who was so dedicated to the people of this community. My father was a first generation United States citizen and truly understood the need for making personal connections to members of his community. He believed that all residents of Harlem should have a safe place for recreation and fervently supported the Harlem PAL in their efforts to keep kids safe and engaged in their communities," said Ms. Shisha Amabel, the only daughter of Judge Kenneth Phipps.

"Judge Kenneth Phipps was a remarkable and courageous public servant. This is a proud moment when we can give recognition to him in a concrete way, so all his memorable judicial accomplishments will continue to be cherished in his beloved Harlem," said The Honorable Robert M. Morgenthau, former District Attorney of New York County and dear friend of the late Judge Phipps.

## New York State proclaims May 3rd as Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donation Day

Assemblyman Keith Wright of Harlem along with Preserve Our Legacy, Inc. hosted the first annual Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donor Advocacy Day in Albany, New York. Dozens of donors, patients, and supporters made the trek to Albany to raise awareness about the lack of sufficient bone marrow and umbilical cord blood donors within ethnic communities in New York State. These individuals met with legislators in support of Assemblyman Wright's bill A.4294 or Jaden's Law, which would add bone marrow and umbilical cord blood to the New York State Donor Registry and allow New Yorkers to indicate their choice to donate on their driver's licenses akin to other organ donations.

African-Americans have only a 59% chance of finding a suitable donor for possible transplant, while Caucasians have an 85% chance. Some of this is due to the genetic diversity of the African continent, but more importantly, some of the disparity is due to the fact that African-Americans comprise only 8% of the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry. "When 76 diseases can be treated with such treatments, it is downright shameful that our communities are not doing more to combat the inequity. This is why I, along with dozens of my Assembly colleagues, sponsored a resolution naming May 3rd,

**Continued on page 4**



*Members of the Harlem community and Assemblyman Wright celebrate passage of the Bone Marrow Day resolution outside the Assembly Chamber in Albany.*

## Hispanic Clergy luncheon a great success!

In May, Assemblyman Wright held a luncheon for members of the Hispanic religious community at the Rio II Gallery. Pastor Fernando Noyola of the Church of Christian Fellowship Love was a great help in organizing this fantastic event and worked with Corey Ortega to make it the successful venture that it was. Pastor Noyola reached out to the Global Association of The United Hispanic Pastors, which includes 25 other churches throughout the 70th Assembly District and many other churches showed their support for their community by sending representatives.

Assemblyman Wright spoke of the need for cooperation between Church and State and addressed President Obama's goals for Faith Based Organizations who wish to work with the government. He acknowledged that many times these churches are the closest link to the people within the community and that they can be both assets and enablers for their parishioners. They are the first line of defense and by working alongside the elected officials within our communities, the possibilities of accomplishment are endless.

Assemblyman Wright spoke of the need for local churches to start 501(c)3's, or non-profit organizations, so that they can get City, State and Federal funding for programs directly aimed at helping the people who need it most. He also offered the ser-

vices of his office in helping these faith based organizations organize their 501(c)3's and begin the work that it takes to get these programs off of the ground. "I hope that by bringing religious groups out of the churches and onto the streets, that we can promote civic engagement like never before and I welcome any and all groups who seek to make the Harlem community a better place to live," said Assemblyman Wright.



*Assemblyman Wright gives advice to members of the Harlem clergy at his First Annual Hispanic Clergy Breakfast.*



*Assemblyman Wright launches a fadeaway jumper during the Assembly/Senate basketball game versus the Lexington School for the Deaf.*

### Continued from page 3

2011 as Bone Marrow and Umbilical Cord Blood Donor Registration Day in the State of New York, to raise awareness of the problem, and why I will continue to urge my colleagues to support this lifesaving legislation," said Assemblyman Keith Wright.

"We are honored that this day and Jaden's Law will save lives by increasing the number of ethnic PBSC, bone marrow and umbilical cord blood donors. Once passed, our mission at Preserve Our Legacy will have served its purpose and Jaden's death was not in vain," said Shana Melius of Preserve Our Legacy, Inc.

Mr. Seun Adebisi, a prospective Winter Olympian from Nigeria who has battled leukemia also came to Albany to advocate for increased bone marrow donation in ethnic communities. Mr. Adebisi was featured in a recent documentary entitled "More To Live For" which was screened for legislators, advocates and staff in the Legislative Office Building. "I am deeply grateful for the life saving work of Preserve Our Legacy. They supported me as a cancer patient and I am honored to represent them as a future Olympian," said Seun Adebisi.

For more information about Jaden's Law, please visit: <http://bit.ly/eqweB7>.

## Assemblyman Keith L.T. Wright

**ALBANY OFFICE:** Room 522, Legislative Office Building • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-4793

**DISTRICT OFFICE:** Harlem State Office Building, 163 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 911

New York, NY 10027 • 212-866-5809

**EMAIL:** [wrightk@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:wrightk@assembly.state.ny.us)