



Assemblyman
**Keith L.T.
 Wright**

Reports to the People



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Season's Greetings, Friends and Neighbors!

In just a few short weeks, I will join my colleagues in the Legislature preparing for the upcoming legislative session. We have much work to do but it is my hope that 2014 will bring new opportunities and goodwill for all New Yorkers.

It is my goal to build on past accomplishments that will have a meaningful and lasting impact both here in Harlem, and beyond. Whether it's affordable housing or racial profiling, I will continue to advocate for common-sense policies that effect real change. Under new leadership that was required by a bill I wrote, which recently became law, the New York City Housing Authority will be led by a revamped governing board and I am hopeful that NYCHA will embrace this opportunity to fulfill its mission to serve the 400,000 residents who entrust them to provide healthy, safe, and affordable housing for their families. Even though the Great Recession has technically ended, the struggle for affordable housing and living wages continues. Last session I successfully led the fight in the Assembly to raise the minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour. On December 31st, it will increase to \$8.00 per hour, which is the first step in a series of increases that will bring thousands of hard-working men and women all over New York just a few steps further from the grips of poverty. It is my goal that with the support of the dedicated residents of the 70th Assembly District, local leaders and advocacy groups, we will be successful in achieving these goals.

Throughout the years, I have remained committed to being an outspoken advocate for those in need, and my office stands ready to help in any way that we can. As we make our preparations to embrace 2014 with renewed dedication to improving the lives of our families and neighbors and our beloved Harlem Community, I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support throughout 2013 and to offer my best wishes for your Holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.



Audience at Chairman Wright's public hearing on the Area Median Income calculation.

Assemblyman Wright holds public hearing to examine Area Median Income calculation and access to affordable housing

The harsh reality of income inequality continues to plague households all over New York State. Here in the City of New York, that disparity is all too apparent considering that the mean household income of the lowest fifth was just under \$9,000 per year while the mean income of the highest fifth was over \$220,000. Despite this, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) continues to prescribe a single calculation for the area median income across the City of New York. The Area Median Income is the single most important factor affecting access to affordable housing as this is the number upon which the scale of "affordability" is based. Simply put, this means that pooling the lowest earners with the highest earners into a single calculation creates an ineffective benchmark of affordability. In 2013, the NYC Area Median Income for a family of four is \$85,900. This is more than four times the annual earnings of a full-time minimum wage earner, and more than three times the average annual earnings here in our Harlem community.

While I know that there are several factors contributing to the affordable housing crisis, I believe that the current AMI calculation is a major factor. It will be impossible to find new housing solutions that meet the need of the population if we do not have an accurate understanding of who that population is. On November 18, 2013, I held a public hearing in Harlem to engage in a dialogue with representatives from HUD, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) and the New York City Housing Authority about the use of AMI in determining eligibility for affordable housing units and to explore the feasibility of other alternatives. The hearing was attended by more than one hundred and forty residents of the Harlem community and I was joined by several of my colleagues from the Assembly Standing Committee on Housing. As evidenced by the significant turnout of residents and community organizations, this is a matter of critical importance to our communities and one which I will continue to explore during the 2014 legislative session.



Assemblyman Wright congratulates scholarship recipients at the 2013 African American Day Parade Breakfast.



Assemblyman Wright joined by Assemblyman Herman "Denny" Farrell, Jr. at Harlem's 12th Annual African American Day Parade Breakfast.



Assemblyman Wright greets guests at Harlem Tavern.

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WINTER 2013



Chairman Wright conducts a public hearing for the Assembly Housing Committee.