



The New York State Assembly
Office of Assembly Member
Keith L.T. Wright, 70th AD

October 2014 Community Update

Now is the time: Answering the call for prison reform

Greetings friends and neighbors,

It is always with a heavy heart that I receive correspondence from my constituents whose loved ones are incarcerated in one of the State's correctional facilities. From Queens to Buffalo and the northernmost borders of the state, I receive letters from inmates who are suffering under abhorrent conditions that for many of us are just stories in newspapers and on the evening news. Regardless of your views on crime and punishment, in New York State, the Legislature and the Judiciary have established a correctional system whose intended purpose is rehabilitation. However, the highly publicized brutalization and inhumane treatment of inmates, abuse of solitary confinement practices and other human rights violations at facilities across the state have proven that the system is failing. These men and women, a significant number of which are teenagers, young adults and people with mental illness, are not only being deprived of their basic human rights but are also faced with constant threats to their well-being, oftentimes at the hands of those responsible for ensuring their safety. It is impossible to believe that once released, these individuals will have a real chance at successfully re-entering society. Over the last decade, the reports of inmate abuse have reached critical mass and earlier this week calls for reform have come down from the highest levels of government. While I am greatly encouraged by the New York City Department of Corrections' recent decision to end the use of solitary confinement for teenaged inmates at Rikers Island we have many more hurdles to cross. I believe that this is our opportunity to enact meaningful and progressive reforms that will bring us back to our goal of rehabilitating offenders and ensuring that despite their crimes, every life that is entrusted to New York State's correctional system is a life that is valued.

As you may know, in addition to serving as Chair of the Housing Committee in the State Assembly, I also serve as a member of the Standing Committee on Correction. During each legislative session, my colleagues and I must deliberate the merits of bills that aim to improve the State's correctional practices and facilities. Criminal justice reform is one of my priority concerns, especially ending the treatment of sixteen and seventeen year olds as adults in our justice system. I remain hopeful and committed to doing my part to raise awareness and support efforts to protect the lives of inmates across the state.

Community Happenings

The **Senior Fresh Food Program** has arrived in our area! Seniors will be able to order a mixed bag of **fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables for just \$8**. The program is pay-as-you go, cash only, with orders available for delivery one week after ordering.

Orders will be received the **Central Harlem Senior Citizens' Center**, located at
34 West 134th Street

For more information on how to sign-up call
(212) 926-4871

Team Wright at Work

Mr. Jones, a retired veteran, had tried unsuccessfully for over a decade to obtain a New York State Non-Drivers Identification card. Not having this ID was impacting his ability to obtain affordable housing as well as access other important services. As a result of post 9/11 regulation changes at the Department of Motor Vehicles, Mr. Jones was unable to meet the requirements for non-driver ID issuance because of a name change that had taken place when he was a young child. Cathleen McCadden, Senior Coordinator, was able to work with the DMV and use the documentation Mr. Jones did have in his possession to get Mr. Jones his new Non-Drivers ID card.

Business Spotlight

Are you or someone you know interested in a career offering a good salary, great benefits and ample opportunities for advancement? The New York City Department of Sanitation is recruiting new candidates and for the first time in seven years, will be offering the Sanitation Worker written exam in February of 2015.

The only educational requirement for the position is a high school degree or equivalent. Please be sure to share this important opportunity with anyone who is looking for a quality employment opportunity.

The filing period will be open on October 1, 2014 and close on October 31, 2014. Visit www.nyc.gov/examsforjobs to apply

Notice of Public Hearing

On **Thursday, October 16, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.** the Human Resources Administration (HRA) will hold a public hearing to offer stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the Administration's new Employment Plan. The plan outlines HRA's goals for helping clients to develop and improve job skills, obtain employment and build sustainable careers that provide a path out of poverty. The hearing will take place on the 12th floor of 180 Water Street.

HRA will be accepting written comments related to the plan at constituentaffairs@hra.gov.

In order to receive consideration, **comments must be received no later than November 7, 2014**. If you need assistance obtaining a copy the proposed employment plan, which is available on HRA's website, please contact my office and we will be happy to assist you.

In case you missed it, check out these great photos from the 14th Annual African American Day Parade Breakfast that took place just last week at the Harlem Tavern



Assemblyman Wright presents HSOB Art Gallery curator Gregory Mills with and honorary proclamation for his service to the Harlem community



Governor Andrew Cuomo and Rep. Charles Rangel join Assemblyman Wright at the 2014 Annual Parade Breakfast

For more information or if you have any problems we can help solve, please do not hesitate to contact our office directly. We are always here to help.

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