

Assemblyman

Keith L.T.

Wright

Reports to the People

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Greetings, Friends and Neighbors of the 70th AD

As your elected representative, it is my mission to pursue every opportunity to make Harlem the best that it can be. In that effort, I count on the support of hardworking people like you to stand with me in fighting for the issues that affect all of us: jobs, affordable housing, adequate healthcare, transportation, and educational opportunities. This year, I am pleased to report a number of noteworthy accomplishments that will go a long way toward improving the quality of life, not just here in Harlem but for all New Yorkers.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten: A Brighter Future for New York's Children

Investment in early childhood education has always been one of my priorities because as a parent myself, I know that the early years of a child's development are the defining years. Research has proven time and time again that if we equip our children with the tools they need to excel right from the very beginning, their learning potential becomes limitless. This past April, in observance of National Week of the Young Child, I held a community discussion event with Harlem Kids Travel, Inc. and Globalscope where we focused on the challenges facing Harlem's children and how we could work together to improve policies on early childhood development and education. As most of us know, for many middle and low-income families, the cost of full-day education for their toddlers is yet another struggle. Statistics show that students from lower income and minority households are at a higher risk for under-performing in the classroom. For those at the

lowest rungs of the income ladder, the time has long passed to take the necessary steps to level the educational playing field and give our children the boost they need.

Thanks to the dedication of tireless parents, advocates, and educators, earlier this year the Legislature and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo approved a historic measure to provide free, full-day universal pre-kindergarten for more than 50,000 pre-school aged children in New York City. The 2014-15 New York State budget included \$300 million in funding to support quality programs across all five boroughs. It was definitely one of my most proud moments as a legislator when I voted for the passage of universal pre-kindergarten. Thousands of parents in my district can finally be assured that their children will have access to critical early childhood education programs that will foster their preparedness for elementary and secondary education, and ultimately, their future success.



Assemblyman Herman "Denny" Farrell, Jr. and Assemblyman Wright present scholarships to Harlem's best and brightest students.

Assemblyman Wright and Darryl C. Towns, Commissioner of NYS Homes and Community Renewal, join senior citizens at the unveiling of the new and improved, all affordable, St. Philips on the Park located in West Harlem.



New York State Assembly Housing Chairman Keith L.T. Wright Votes to Protect Tenants Rights and Preserve Affordable Housing

With each passing day, we are confronted with the harsh realities of the housing crisis gripping the City of New York. Homeless shelters are struggling to meet their obligations because of increased demand and insufficient resources. The shocking truth is that a significant percentage of those who are being driven into shelters are individuals who are willing and able to work but are battling the realities of the current difficult economic climate. That is why, as Chair of the Housing Committee, I rally my colleagues in the State Assembly to support legislation that would protect the people who are most vulnerable. Last April, the Assembly Majority passed a package of legislation targeted at protecting tenants' rights. I sponsored several bills in the package, including measures that would: protect tenants with preferential rent agreements from exorbitant rent increases when a lease is renewed (A.5473); reduce the amount a landlord could increase rent on a vacated

apartment (A.5178), and prevent unnecessary rent increases by reducing a landlord's permitted major capital improvement increases by the total amount of tax abatement benefits received under the J-51 program (A.5827). This package also included other bills that would repeal certain laws relating to the deregulation of apartments and put an end to the collection of surcharges on rent once property owners have recovered their costs for improvements to residential buildings. In just a few short weeks, the state legislature will return to Albany to convene a new session where I will once again make sure that the call to renew rent regulation laws is heard. To strengthen these efforts, I have committed my full support to grassroots campaigns like the Alliance for Tenant Power, whose members have been hard at work in the community raising awareness about the importance of preserving rent regulation for future New Yorkers.



More than 200 tenants and community members in attendance for Assemblyman Wright's forum on HPD's tenant ownership program.

Assemblyman Wright Announces New HPD Rules for Tenant Succession Rights

I am pleased to share with you news of a tremendous victory in the ongoing struggle to preserve affordable housing. Just recently, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development adopted new rules governing tenant succession in buildings under its jurisdiction. Until now, there were no clear guidelines governing rights of succession for long-term occupants whose names do not appear on the lease for an apartment. This meant that when a lessee would permanently vacate a unit, or in the event of their death, the remaining occupant would have no clear path to prove their right to stay, as became the case for many residents who moved back into an aging parent or family member's home to help provide for their care. Earlier this year, I partnered with grassroots tenant advocacy group, P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem to hold a public hearing that was attended by more than one hundred and

fifty affected residents who came together to respond to HPD's proposed rule change. It was thanks to these efforts and those who came out to make sure their concerns were heard, that a procedure was devised to create transparent guidelines under which an individual's rights to succession could be established. Under the new rule, occupants who have resided with a family member for at least two years, or one year if the tenant is a senior citizen or a disabled person, will be able to submit proof in an application to HPD proving their right to remain in the apartment. As Chair of the Housing Committee in the New York State Assembly, it is among my top priorities to ensure that our state and local government works for constituents. I look forward to continued partnerships with dedicated organizations like P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem to bring about the changes we need in our communities.

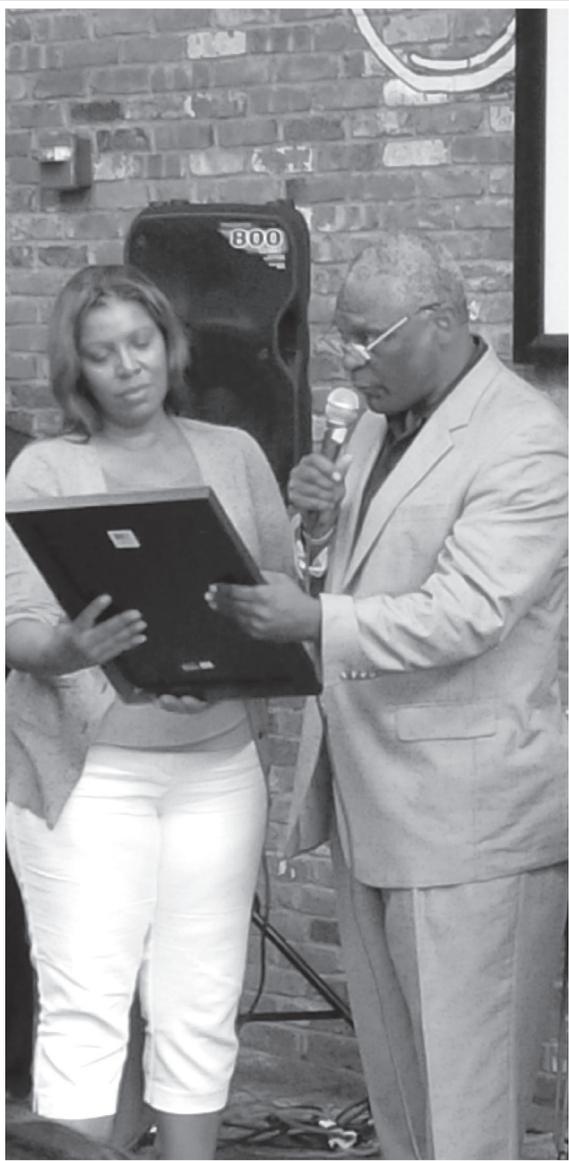
Now Is the Time for Law Enforcement Reform

In recent years, there have been frequent reports about the record number of civilian complaints filed against members of the New York City Police Department for misconduct, excessive use of force, and civil rights violations. Tactics like racial profiling and the controversial use of stop and frisk have further eroded public trust in law enforcement, especially in communities of color where young black and Hispanic men have been unfairly targeted for random searches. Just over a year ago, after a federal judge ruled that these practices were unconstitutional, meaningful efforts were made to strengthen community policing and under new leadership, the NYPD showed promise of reform. These efforts suffered major setbacks this summer after the tragic death of Eric Garner, from the illegal use of a choke-hold, and on a national level, the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed teen, reopened old wounds. During the 2014 session, a bill that I have sponsored and championed for many years that would prohibit the use of racial profiling (A.2941) once again passed the State Assembly before facing strong opposition in the State Senate. This bill would get at the root of discrimination in law enforcement that continues to eat away at the quality of life in our communities.

An often-overlooked consequence of civilian complaints against officers is the hundreds of millions of dollars that

these filings cost the City and the NYPD each year. According to the comptroller of the City of New York, the NYPD has one of the highest payouts of settlements and judgments of all city agencies. In 2013, the Department had more than \$137 million in settlements and litigation expenses. I believe that the vast majority of men and women who choose to serve in the NYPD do so from a genuine desire to make a difference in their communities. However, it will take time, innovation, and commitment to repair the fractured relationship that exists between residents and law enforcement. That is why I have sponsored a bill in the State Assembly that would create a four-year pilot program requiring members of the NYPD to wear body cameras. This proposal would have a number of benefits for residents and the Department. It would provide clear and evident proof of what takes place during interactions between officers and civilians, proof that will serve to vindicate the rights of those who are wrongfully accused, whether they are civilian or police. This could also drastically reduce the number of complaints that end up at the settlement table. Under my bill, the pilot program would prioritize those precincts with the most complaints so that policy makers can have a meaningful look at whether or not long-term implementation of body camera is the solution that our communities need.

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Public Advocate Leticia James is presented with an award for her commitment to the citizens of New York City.



Assemblyman Wright honors Shola Olatoye, Chair of NYCHA, at the 2014 African American Day Parade Breakfast.



Gregory Mills, community activist and curator of the Harlem State Office Building's Art Gallery is honored for his service to the Harlem community.

As part of my commitment to advocating for the civil rights of every citizen, I have sponsored a number of bills during my tenure that would reform the way our criminal justice system works. Below are just a few of these proposals that I will continue to push for in the upcoming legislative session:

A.2717: Would authorize a person to petition for expungement of records, or arrest, investigation, detention, and computer databases in certain instances.

A.2803: Would expand the powers and duties of the NYS attorney general to include the investigation and prosecution of police misconduct.

A.2935: Would clarify NYS law to better protect the public against possible abuse of “no-knock” search warrants, which police officers may execute without announcing their identity or intentions in certain circumstances.

A.2941: Would prohibit law enforcement officers in NYS from using racial profiling.

A.2946: Would repair the severed relationship between police and community by creating specialized police high schools/programs that will locally recruit, train and educate future police officers.

A.2963: Would make changes to the controversial “48 hour rule” which provides that New York City police officers under investigation as suspects (not witnesses) for an incident are not required to speak to ranking members of the department about the case for two business days (48 hours) following the time they become a suspect so that they are not granted extraordinary rights above those provided to civilians.

A.5240: Would require police officers who have discharged their weapon while on duty to be tested for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol.

A.10184: Would create a four-year pilot program requiring members of the NYPD to wear body cameras.



Assemblyman Wright alongside Centro Juvenil Little League.

New York State Assembly • Albany, New York 12248



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Thank You

As always, I want to take this opportunity to thank the residents of the 70th AD who have supported me throughout the years and who have given me the privilege once again to be your voice in the State Assembly. I remain as committed as ever to preserving our vibrant community and advocating for the reforms and investments that will ensure its economic viability and cultural significance for future generations.

Sincerely,

Keith L.T. Wright
Member of Assembly

