



Assemblyman

Keith L.T. Wright

Reports to the People

DECEMBER 2015

INVEST IN PEOPLE: Deterring Youth Violence

In October, the core of our City was shaken once again as we mourned the loss of NYPD Officer Randolph Holder. His life—one far too short—reflected the hope, perseverance and courage that defines New York and empowers our communities every day. Officer Holder was a Guyanese immigrant whose father, grandfather and great uncle served as members of their country's police force. He tenaciously pursued a life of public service and wore his badge with pride. He committed his life to making Harlem and the entire city a safer place for our families and neighbors. Officer Holder's legacy will be one of depth and greatness, and I wish his family peace as they endure the loss of a hero.

Gang and gun violence that take root in our communities threaten our police force, our youth, our families and the legacy and progress of a nation built on democratic principles. We can and must do more to engage young people and protect City residents. Legislatively, I will continue to fight for resources essential to eradicating the violence that leads to such tragedy. I call on my colleagues in state government to stand with me to fight for additional funding targeted towards youth to be administered by NYCHA's Office of Resident Economic Empowerment & Sustainability. The creation of private partnerships through Next Generation NYCHA can and must provide relief for the current generation of youth residents.

While searching for solutions, many are quick to point fingers. Leaders are fighting about where to allocate money in an effort to fix the epidemic that's plagued our neighborhoods. *We've yet to make a true commitment to changing the cycle of crime and poverty that lures youth to violence. It's time to tap into our biggest return on investment: human capital. By funding programs that provide our young people with much-needed opportunity and education, the only thing we risk is improving the social, economic and emotional outcome of all New Yorkers.*

With a heavy heart, we endure and demand solutions.

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DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD: A Dangerous Threat to Us All

In 2015, we should not need to defend the rights of women and their ability to access affordable, reliable and safe health care services. Unfortunately, extremists in Congress have declared war on Planned Parenthood, initiating an attack on women,

Communities of Color and low-income Americans.

Here are the facts that matter to communities like ours, and some out-of-touch politicians are choosing to ignore:

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Call, email or stop by my office to learn how to get involved and join the fight.

FROM HER BEACON-HAND GLOWS WORLDWIDE WELCOME

In November, the world paused and watched in horror as extremists carried out acts of terror in Paris. Small-minded individuals from an organization built from hatred murdered innocent people and further muddied western understanding of a culture and religion that should never be viewed congruently with terror. News of the attacks hit my wife and me much like it must have many Parisians, as my son was in Paris visiting while studying in Europe. Upon learning that he was safe and out of harm's way, we continued to follow updates of the situation and, like the rest of America, ached for the families and loved ones left mourning such senseless deaths.

In the wake of a terrorist attack in a modern and complex city not dissimilar to New York, a national discussion that has been taking place even before Syrian refugees began to flee their homes in 2011 became front page news. Dozens of governors announced plans to keep refugees from seeking shelter and safety in the states they represent. Despite mandatory and rigorous screening processes, they believe that by offering help, we risk welcoming terror. These refugees are putting their lives on the line to escape daily violence that few can truly comprehend. Their children are being murdered, their economy is shattered, and they have nowhere to turn.

So much of the world around us is marred by the tragedies of war and terror. Our brothers and sisters in humanity are knocking on our door, begging for help. Terrorists reeked havoc throughout a city just down the street from my youngest child. The fear and horror was personal. But to punish innocent people for these ungodly acts is to perpetuate prejudices.

As a New Yorker, as a father, as a community representative: it's time to open our arms and our door to the children and families voraciously fleeing the same terror we're mourning. Their lives depend on it.



At a candlelit prayer vigil in East Harlem, Assemblyman Wright takes a moment to remember fallen NYPD Officer Randolph Holder.

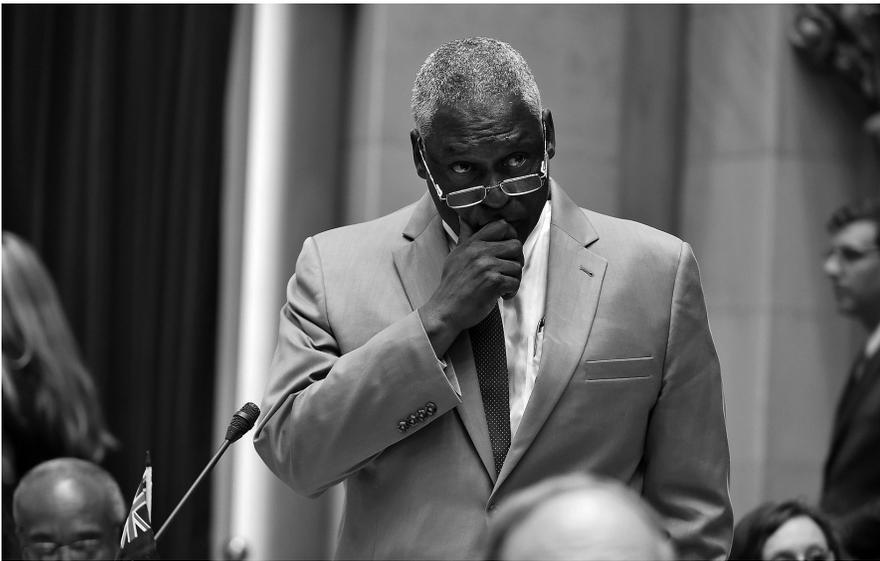
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- Planned Parenthood and its affiliates served nearly 3 million women, men and young people last year. As a result, teenage birth, pregnancy and abortion rates are at their lowest level in 20 years.
- In 2013-2014, Planned Parenthood performed 865,721 breast exams and pap smears.
- Due to their preventative approach, 87,988 women received early breast cancer diagnoses, greatly improving ability to fight the disease.
- The overwhelming majority of residents who access Planned Parenthood services live at or below the federal poverty line. Often, the care they receive from family planning centers is their only source of health care.
- More than half of Planned Parenthood's medical centers are in high-need and medically underserved areas.



Assemblyman Wright hosts a press conference joined by New York City Public Advocate Letitia James and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer to denounce efforts to defund women's health services, especially in medically under served communities like Harlem.

Regressive proposals at the federal level to defund Planned Parenthood threaten the public health, safety and vitality of our community. Women of all ages who rely on the organization for routine check-ups, screenings and education will be left in the dust if these proposals become a reality. Planned Parenthood New York City provides high-quality care to patients regardless of income, immigration status or age. Our sisters, mothers and neighbors deserve these invaluable preventative and basic health services. Threatening to remove such an important community health organization from our neighborhoods is unacceptable. To eliminate funding is to eliminate the most reliable and often sole health care provider in many communities across our nation. We must fight together to ensure continued access to these essential services.



Assemblyman Wright listens to questions from colleagues regarding his legislation to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate instances when law enforcement is involved in the death of unarmed civilians.

TAKING STEPS TO ERADICATE GUN VIOLENCE

Did you know that in New York State, the month of June is Gun Violence Awareness Month? First introduced in 2013 by members of the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus, the resolution unanimously passed the New York State Legislature. Major cities throughout the state followed suit, using proclamations and platforms to bring much-needed attention to the plague of gun violence. Governors, mayors, legislators, community leaders, advocates and victims joined the fight and intensified the drum beat. State events and activities during June have included public service announcements, billboards, legislative roundtables, gun violence sermons, gun safety workshops, gun buybacks, town hall meetings, youth basketball tournaments, marches, rallies, events with law enforcement and community barbecues.

Each day, 88 American lives are cut short due to gun violence. Our sisters shouldn't fear going to community health centers for care. Churches, movie theaters, universities, public schools, shopping centers, restaurants, avenues, street corners, housing developments and corner stores should not be battlegrounds. These are staples in our community, and part of our way of life as New Yorkers and Americans. We can no longer live in fear. June's designation brings awareness to something that destroys families, ravages neighborhoods, cities and states, and plagues our society as a whole. To succeed in eliminating such terror and preserving the lives of our loved ones and youth, is to move forward as one under a national campaign of awareness.

In November, following in New York's historic footsteps, our representatives in Congress introduced a resolution proclaiming National Gun Violence Awareness Month. Ushering this resolution to a national platform is one of my proudest accomplishments in public service. It is an affirmative step towards the ultimate goal that I know we all share: eradicating gun violence in our communities.

Here in Harlem and throughout the country, we spend each day mourning those we've lost to gun violence. We lament in our frustration with inaction, misunderstanding and the misuse of resources and education. We share in our concern for the future of our communities and the safety of our streets. In the wake of horror, we can take solace in signs of acknowledgement on the federal level. The introduction of a resolution on the floor of the United State House of Representatives proclaiming June as National Gun Violence Awareness Month—an acknowledgement unprecedented except by us here in New York—is an aggressive and promising step towards resolution.



The Reverend Al Sharpton, Congressman Charlie Rangel, Filmmaker Spike Lee and other supporters of a National Gun Violence Awareness Month look on as Assemblyman Wright discusses his ushering of the country-wide resolution.



Assemblyman Wright discusses housing issues with residents at Thurgood Marshall Senior Houses.



Students from P.S. 175 travel to Albany and visit their representative in his legislative office.



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WINTER 2015

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Wright presents to members and community attendees at Manhattan Community Board 10.