



Assemblyman

Keith L.T. Wright

Reports to the People

SPRING 2016

Assemblyman Keith Wright Fights for Solutions to Crisis in Puerto Rico

As the island crisis continues to strangle the lives of millions of working Americans, Assemblyman Wright has joined a national campaign called “We Are One Puerto Rico.” Spearheaded in partnership with SEIU 32BJ President Hector Figueroa, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., the Reverend Al Sharpton, and New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer, the campaign promotes support for the island from Americans of every background. We Are One Puerto Rico also targets extremists in Washington who are opposed to a bipartisan solution.

As our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico endure an intensifying economic crisis, too many in Washington are standing idly by. It’s time for bold and swift action to avoid a fiscal catastrophe that will gut the island and hit low-income residents the hardest.

The White House has warned that the debt could lead to a humanitarian crisis on the island. The Department of the Treasury has called for swift Congressional action after Puerto Rico defaulted on \$422 million worth of municipal bond debt. As it stands, nearly 50% of Puerto Ricans are living below the poverty rate, and unemployment continues to rise. Uprooting their lives and separating their families, residents are fleeing their homes at an astounding rate—nearly 1,200 people weekly since 2014—in search of more opportunity on the mainland. This exodus furthers the economic troubles facing the island, and worse, it threatens the distinct fabric and culture of Puerto Rico. Providing assistance to our neighbors in need is a moral issue, and those who are stalling efforts to pull the commonwealth out of this debilitating crisis are not fulfilling their obligation to the people of this country. The 3.5 million Americans who call Puerto Rico home are being blatantly neglected by their government.

“We are One Puerto Rico, and it’s never been more clear that support for the island is widespread and diverse. Together, our voice cannot be ignored by even the most extreme and most hateful. As Puerto Rico goes, so does the United States, FDR said it best, “If your neighbor’s house is on fire, you don’t haggle over the price of your garden hose.” We must help our friends, neighbors, and relatives during this time of economic strife. America is the greatest country in the world. It’s time to come together to overcome this crisis hand-in-hand,” said Assemblyman Wright.

In Albany, Assemblyman Wright joined colleagues in the New York State Legislature to help advance a resolution urging Washington to find solutions for Puerto Rico’s fiscal problems. In a message to the U.S. Congress, Wright and others pushed for the House to pass and the President to sign both the Improving the Treatment of the U.S. Territories Under Federal Health Programs Act of 2015 (H.R. 2635), and the Puerto Rico Chapter 9 Uniformity Act of 2015 (H.R. 870).



Assemblyman Wright is joined by Reverend Al Sharpton, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., and Comptroller Scott Stringer to show their support of Puerto Rico.

Assemblyman Wright Secures \$1 Billion in State Funding to Bring 2nd Avenue Subway Uptown

Following months of strong advocacy by Assemblyman Wright, the State of New York has agreed to provide MTA with the funds necessary to continue expansion of the Second Avenue subway. Phase 2 of the project will bring the line up to 125th Street—providing increased and improved transportation options for uptown residents. Assemblyman Wright, Congressman Charlie Rangel, and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney applauded the state funding, which will help to ensure Harlem and uptown Manhattan are no longer short-changed by public transit.

“The bustling east side corridor has been underserved for far too long. This significant accomplishment will have an indelible impact on Northern Manhattan and I’m proud of the work Assemblyman Rodriguez and I did to make this a reality. Speaker Heastie, Congresswoman Maloney, and Congressman Rangel fought with us in lock step to secure these funds and we were able to deliver for our community.” – Assembly Member Keith L. T. Wright

Congressman Charles B. Rangel said, “Through the vigilant advocacy of Assembly Members Keith Wright and Robert Rodriguez, the new state budget will include an additional \$1 billion for the expansion of the Second Avenue Subway. Phase Two will extend the subway north from Second Avenue and 96th Street to 125th Street and Lexington Avenue and create the new stations in my Congressional District. Let me thank our great Governor, Assembly Speaker Heastie, and all the conferences for negotiating a deal that includes overall enhancement to our aged infrastructure; and expanding alternate transportation rail routes and more access to East Harlem residents.”

“I am thrilled that Governor Cuomo has restored nearly \$1 billion for the Second Avenue Subway. That’s a great sign of his commitment to this critical project and a clear indication that real progress will be made in the coming years. I also want to congratulate my colleagues in the State Legislature, particularly Speaker Heastie and Assemblymen Rodriguez and Wright—for continuing to press for the funding. As subway ridership soars and the Lexington line grows ever more crowded, we need a full build Second Avenue Subway. With this increase in funding, Phase 2 will soon be well underway.” – Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney



Mayor David Dinkins, Congressman Charlie Rangel, the Hon. H. Carl McCall, and Mr. Geoffrey Eaton join Assemblyman Wright during the 2016 Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus Weekend.

Creating and Preserving Affordable Housing Remains Top Assembly Priority Under Leadership of Housing Chairman Keith Wright



Chairman Wright conducts a joint legislative budget hearing on housing in Albany.

The New York State Assembly's 2016 budget proposal included unprecedented funding for the preservation and expansion of affordable housing in New York City. With City residents facing insurmountable cost-of-living increases, including an average monthly rental cost of \$3,850 for a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan, it's time for an unprecedented state investment in affordable housing.

Thanks to advocacy efforts from Chairman Wright, the proposal includes \$2.5 billion in state funding for new and existing programs designed to house low to moderate income New Yorkers, senior citizens, and homeless families and children. It also provides for 5 years of funding towards the New York City Housing Authority, allowing for essential maintenance and upgrades to the City's largest stock of affordable housing.

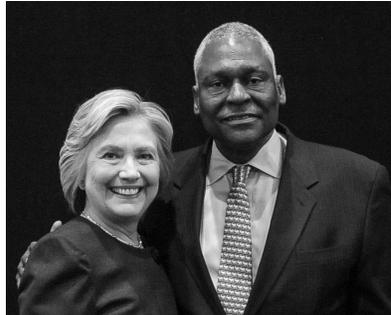
"The problem at our feet is unlike any housing crisis we've faced before. There's an urgent need to bring real, affordable homes to our neighborhoods or we're going to continue seeing long-time residents, senior citizens, and families forced out of their homes. New York risks becoming unrecognizable," said Assemblyman Wright. "It was imperative to think outside the box and fund new programs built to tackle these distinct problems. That's why we allocated millions in funding to build housing specifically for seniors, and that's why we created a State Section 8 program—to get people off the streets, out of shelters, and off of waiting lists and into homes that provide the quality of life that each of us deserve."

As Chairman of the Housing Committee, Assemblyman Wright proposed the following:

- \$250 million to repair and revitalize Mitchell-Lama properties;
- \$150 million for a senior affordable housing program;
- \$125 million for a State Section 8 Program;
- \$500 million for the New York City Housing Authority;
- \$1 million to fund the NYCHA Tenant Watch Program;
- \$5.8 million for the Tenant Protection Unit;
- \$125 million to be directed to the Low Income Housing Trust Fund;
- \$500 million to construct 6,000 new supportive housing units;
- \$100 million to build housing for the developmentally disabled;
- \$50 million for emergency shelter capital costs;
- \$20 million for HIV/AIDS rental assistance and housing support;
- \$22.7 million for Neighborhood Preservation Programs.



Wright monitors a panel workshop on police oversight and criminal justice reform.



Assemblyman Wright meets with Secretary Clinton in Albany.



Wright stands in solidarity with workers at LaGuardia airport.



Elevator Engineers and Assemblyman Wright talk about the new technology used to teach apprenticeship programs.

Wright Champions Emergency Affordable Housing Construction Act of 2016

Assemblyman and Housing Committee Chairman Keith L.T. Wright has introduced legislation that would create thousands of units of affordable housing across New York. The Emergency Affordable Housing Construction Act was crafted based on insight from a panel of community organizations and stakeholders convened by the Chairman earlier this year. To address the current housing crisis facing New Yorkers, Wright is pushing for a modernized and robust proposal to develop housing for low-income residents and seniors, and help sustain New York's heritage of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

The Emergency Affordable Housing Construction Act would develop new affordable housing for seniors and low to very low income families in several cities across the state. The lack of affordable housing opportunities remains the most devastating and urgent problem facing many New Yorkers; the estimated percentage of households with rents above the affordability rate, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is well above 50% statewide. In recent years, nearly 1 million households were defined as 'severely cost-burdened' under HUD statues. These trends are consistent throughout the state. The affordable housing crisis threatens the economic prosperity of New York and the quality of life of far too many.

"What we need—from Brooklyn to Buffalo—is affordable housing; and our seniors and our families need it now," Assemblyman Wright said. "To counteract the housing crisis, we in state government need to take bold action and do everything we can to encourage affordable development in our cities. As long as we have soaring rates of homelessness, impoverished elders unable to afford their rent, and New Yorkers spending nearly their entire income to have a roof over their heads, we have a moral obligation to fix the problem."

Assemblyman Wright's legislation is a multi-pronged proposal that includes an Emergency Housing Development Fund, a Senior Citizens Housing Fund, and a Jobs Program.

"Amid crisis, we have a responsibility to heed the call for action. The Emergency Affordable Housing Construction Act will bring relief to our neighborhoods, bolster local economies, bring jobs to the community, and protect the longevity and fabric of our cities. We have an opportunity today to transform entire communities. It is not the time to remain stagnant. I urge swift passage of this critical legislation," Wright added.



Assemblyman Wright hosts World of Money, an organization that empowers youth through immersive financial and technology education.

Assemblyman Wright Presents Prestigious Awards to Congressman Charlie Rangel and Senior Chair of the Dominican American National Round Table Nestor Montilla, Sr.

The New York Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators lauded Congressman Rangel for his decades of public service at the 45th Annual Legislative Conference. Assemblyman Wright presented the Percy E. Sutton Empire State and Nation Builder Award, which is the association's highest and most prestigious honor.

"My Congressman, the people's Congressman, the Lion of Lenox Avenue—the Honorable Charles B. Rangel—has been a godsend for residents of upper Manhattan and the Bronx. During his tenure in Congress and throughout his lifetime as a resident of this community, he has delivered for our people time



and time again. Our neighborhoods have seen tremendous growth and improvement and our residents have experienced once-unfathomable representation, all thanks to the deft advocacy and unparalleled commitment to community of this year's honoree.

Assemblyman Wright with Nestor Montilla, recipient of the Louis Nine Award.

It is with great pride and humility that I present the 2016 Percy Sutton Empire State and Nation Builder Award to Congressman Rangel," said Assemblyman Wright.

Nestor Montilla, Sr., the Director of Government Relations and Community Development for Lehman College was also honored with the Louis Nine Award. Assemblyman Wright presented Mr. Montilla with the award, citing his profound work expanding opportunities for Latinos.

"Louis Nine was a heroic Puerto Rican legislator from the Bronx, and we honor him today by bestowing his award on a gentleman who could be viewed as a griot, a chronicler of history of our people, black and brown; someone who is tremendously talented and an absolute intellectual, and has committed his career to public service and education," Assemblyman Wright said. "It is a great honor to present the Louis Nine Award to Nestor Montilla."



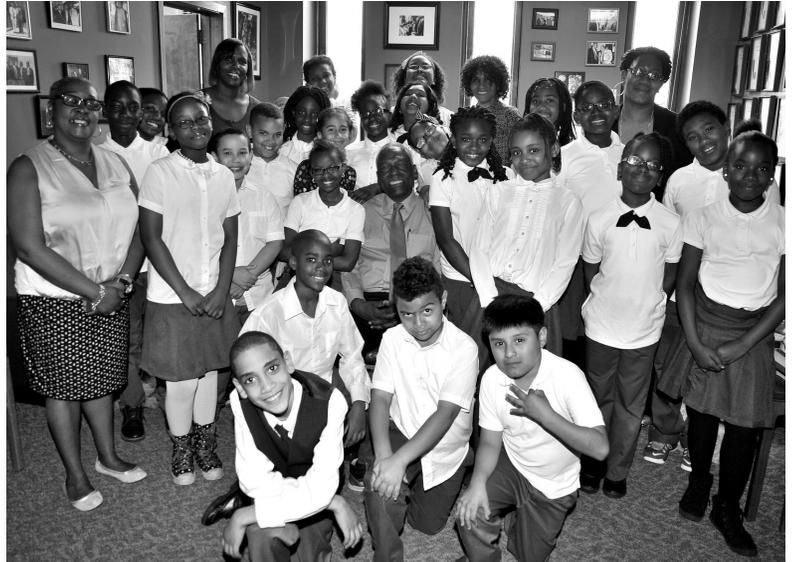
Assemblyman Wright presents Congressman Rangel with the 2016 Percy Sutton Empire State and Nation Builder Award during the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus Weekend.



Assemblyman Wright discusses solutions to homelessness at the historic National Black Theatre in Harlem.



Assemblyman Wright talks with students about the fight for education funding and special needs programming during a meeting in Albany.



Students from Henry H. Garnet Elementary visit their Assemblymember in Albany.



Teachers from Harlem join the Assemblyman in Albany to discuss legislative priorities and ways to improve education in the 70th Assembly District.

Diversity in Entertainment: How Assemblyman Wright is Fighting to Change the Industry

Recognizing a widespread need to diversify the entertainment industry, Assemblyman Wright sponsors legislation to incentivize the hiring of female and minority writers and directors.

"Like millions of Americans, I want to see more diversity on screen. The entertainment industry's difficulties with diversity—on screen and behind the camera—is both apparent and troubling. It's not reflective of what our families, our classrooms, our neighborhoods, and our towns look like. Why aren't black and brown kids able to watch a show where the characters look a little bit more like they do? We should be celebrating New York's beautiful demographics and provide an important foundation for the telling of diverse storylines. It's common sense and a win-win to extend the current success of the Film Production Tax Credit to women and people of color, while also giving viewers more compelling and more American entertainment." An overwhelmingly white industry fails to reach all communities—plain and simple."

Housing Chairman Wright is joined by Borough President Gale Brewer, Tenants and Community Advocates to Denounce the Eviction of Families and Seniors in Washington Heights

Tenants from throughout upper Manhattan joined Assemblyman Wright and Borough President Gale Brewer in a call for justice for the recently evicted residents of a home in Washington Heights. Calling for a stop to tenant harassment and for better coordination between city departments, attendees demanded swift action and resolution for the displaced families and seniors.

The building in question has been sold to investors whose tactics made clear their desire to profit from the land. The long-term residents who called the building home faced a barrage of attacks, from multiple court orders to ultimate eviction, despite their documented right to be there. The landlords refused to maintain basic services, such as electricity in the common areas, or make necessary repairs in an effort to drive tenants out. The State of New York had determined that these units were rent stabilized, but heedless landlords and insufficient oversight almost resulted in the permanent loss of these greatly needed affordable units.

Assemblyman Wright, who has long fought against unscrupulous landlords said, **“Everyone deserves a home, and the Urena and Bruno Liriano families are no exception. These families and seniors have endured unthinkable abuse due to the greed of the building’s owners. We must do everything possible to protect vulnerable tenants and preserve this City’s affordable housing.”**

“At P.A.’L.A.N.T.E., we work with hundreds of cases but this we have never seen before,” said Elsie Vasquez,



Assemblyman Wright, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and P.A.’L.A.N.T.E. Harlem in Washington Heights denouncing predatory landlord tactics and fighting to bring displaced tenants home.

Founder and Executive Director of P.A.’L.A.N.T.E. Harlem. “This is the most deplorable tactic that I’ve ever seen in an attempt to evict law abiding tenants. These are elderly, handicapped women who deserve to be treated with respect. Since the landlord used such methodic tactics to evict these vulnerable families, we have no choice but to organize and take the so-called new owners to housing court to compel the owner and/or HPD to conduct the necessary emergency repairs so that the Urena and Bruno Liriano families can return to their homes.”



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Wright Helps Raise the Wage and Improve Workplace Justice

The voices of millions nationwide demanding a livable wage and better workplace rights has created a social movement. The Assembly is proud to stand with fast food employees, home care workers, airport service employees, and all New Yorkers who work too hard to be stuck in an unjust cycle of poverty. Today, more than 3 million New York State residents make less than \$15 per hour, the majority of whom are women and people of color supporting families. Assemblyman Wright has fought to change that.

The New York State Budget included an economic development plan that includes job creation, a \$15 minimum wage, and a paid family leave benefit that New Yorkers can be proud of. Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour with adjustments for inflation, and providing 12 weeks of paid family leave will help our communities meet the rising cost of living and provide more for our families.

For more than half of Americans living below or near the poverty line, this minimum wage increase will mean more food on the table, a roof over their heads, and a pathway to financial success. The minimum wage increase will help to ensure that steady work can promise financial improvement. The Fight for \$15 was won in New York, and the lives of millions will be improved.