

Spring 2019



Assemblyman

**CHARLES BARRON**

*Reports to the People*

60<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT • EAST NEW YORK • BROWNSVILLE • CANARSIE

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## Legislation



From Left to Right: Assembly Member Catherine Nolan, Assembly Member Charles Barron and Council Member Inez Barron.

### Specialized High School Bill A2173

The Specialized High School Bill will create a new admission system for specialized high schools. This system will offer seats in the specialized high schools to public school students who are at the top of their school's eighth grade class, who also rank within the top quarter of eighth-grade public schools citywide, based upon multiple measures of student achievement, including grades in core academic courses and standardized test scores during seventh grade. This new admissions system will be phased in over three years: offers during the first year will be made to students who are in the top three percent of their school's eighth grade, during the second year, to students who are in the top five percent, and during the third year and subsequent years, to students who are in the top five to seven percent, the specific percentage to be selected to allow seats to remain open for admission by random selection. Black and Brown students currently make up about 70% of the population of the public school system but only have a representation of 9% in specialized high schools. When this bill is passed representation will increase from 9% to 45%.

### New York Health Act: A4738/S4840

As a member of the Health Committee, Assembly Member Barron co-sponsors the New York Health Act. Everyone needs health care. Health care is a human right! No one's health should be compromised due to the high cost of prescriptions, premiums and co-pays. The New York Health Act A5248 is a bill that provides a single payer solution.

What is single payer? A single payer health care system is a system in which the government; rather than private insurers, pay for all health care costs. The term "single-payer" therefore pertains to the funding mechanism financed by a single public body single fund. The benefits of single payer are cost effective. It truly costs less than what we now spend.

So, what is happening with health care on the Assembly level? The Act calls for: Universal coverage that is publicly financed; Comprehensive benefits; Long-term care; Coordination of care, but no gatekeeping; No cost sharing. The single payer system will be funded by existing Medicare and Medicaid and other public funds, along with a progressively graduated tax on payroll and taxable non-payroll (investment) income. The employer will pay at least 80% of the payroll tax; the employee no more than 20% of the tax. A self-employed person would pay the full payroll tax.

What can you do? Contact the Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins at: (518) 455-2585! Contact the governor at: (518) 474-8390! Tell them that you support this bill! Tell them that this bill is needed!

# Legislation

## Reparations A3080

W.E.B. Du Bois said, on the launch of his groundbreaking 1903 treatise *The Souls of Black Folk*, “for the problem of the 20th Century is the problem of the color line.” Assembly Member Barron says that the defining human rights issue of the 21st century is reparations. Assembly Member Barron introduced his Reparations Bill in 2017 and looks to get it passed this year. The bill relates to acknowledging the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of slavery in the city of New York and the state of New York. The bill establishes the New York state community commission on reparations remedies to examine the institution of slavery, subsequently de jure and de facto racial and economic discrimination against African-Americans, the impact of these forces on living African-Americans and to make recommendations on appropriate remedies. Reparations are a debt owed for 339 years of legal chattel slavery, ensuing era of Jim Crow and systemic racism in education, health, finance and employment. The cruel inhumane economic system of slavery was the foundation of the accumulation of wealth of this country.



# Programming Highlights

## Housing Forum

On February 7th at the Prince Joshua Avitto Community Center (PJACC), the office of Assembly Member Charles Barron and the office of City Council Member Inez Barron held an Affordable Housing for Us Forum that highlighted the work that the Barrons have done to maintain affordability to the residents of East New York. Assembly Member Charles Barron and City Council Member Inez Barron spoke to over 100 constituents in attendance, about understanding the AMI (Area Median Income) and the importance of ensuring that any development that comes to the 60th Assembly district and the 42nd City Council district is based on the area median income of the people represented. Assembly Member Charles Barron has and continues to fight hard to ensure that affordable housing is available to the people of East New York. There are 240 newly constructed units at 453 Hinsdale Street, 500 Livonia Avenue and 487 Livonia Avenue. Please check online for upcoming affordable housing through the 5-boroughs via the Housing Connect website: [nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://nyc.gov/housingconnect).

## Property Tax Assessment Forum

On March 5th, a property tax assessment event was held at the Marjorie Richardson Court located on 359 Hendrix Street. In East New York, property tax is considerably higher than other communities that have a higher household income median. Why the disparity? At the property tax assessment event, homeowners were able to meet with the Department of Finance to dispute the high property tax assessment. Over 50 constituents were able to resolve their unfair increases in their property tax.



From Left to Right: Community Liaison Melvin Faulkner and Community Organizer and Deputy District Manager of Community Board 5 Keron Alleyne.

# Programming Highlights

## Education Forum

On April 8th at the Prince Joshua Avitto Community center located on 876 Schenck Avenue, the Office of Assembly Member Charles Barron held an Education Forum for educators, parents and residents. The Education Forum had presentations by pioneering education extraordinaire, Dr. Bernard Gassaway, PhD and activist, Jasmine Gripper of the Alliance for Quality Education. Over 45 residents, educators and education stakeholders were in attendance. The education forum informed and sparked deeper conversations about the structure and design of NYC public schools, funding for public schools and equal access to specialized high schools. Dr. Gassaway and Jasmine Gripper highlighted the need for change in the NYC public school system. The public school system serves over 1.1 million children and is comprised of predominately Black and Brown children. Therefore, curriculum, teachers and school community should reflect their identity. If we continue in a system with no vision and no plan, Black and Brown children will continue to be disenfranchised. “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.” – Kofi Annan former Secretary-General of the United Nations



Assembly Member Richard Gottfried, Chair of the Health Committee reviewing the New York Health Act with constituents of East New York.

## Health Care Forum

On March 15th, a health care public forum was held at the Prince Joshua Avitto Community center (PJACC) located at 876 Schenck Avenue. The program featured Dr. Donald Moore and Chair of the Health Committee of the New York State Assembly, Richard Gottfried. The topic was all about health care on a single payer system. The guest speakers spoke about the benefits, opportunities and need for the New York Health Act to be passed and enacted for the betterment of New Yorkers.



From Left to Right: Assembly Member Charles Barron, Jasmine Gripper of Alliance for a Quality Education, Chief of Staff Viola Plummer and esteemed educator Bernard Gassaway PhD.

# On The Horizon



New Lots Brooklyn Public Library Branch and Schenck Playground will be receiving a complete makeover! New Lots Brooklyn Public Library Branch will become a cultural center that houses books, programs, a research space, a cultural hub and so much more. Schenck Playground will be renamed, renovated and renewed to reflect the history of East New York. More details to come in the very near future.

Schenck Playground located at the corner of African Burial Ground Square and Livonia Avenue.

Charles Barron • 669 Vermont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11207

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## APPLY ONLINE!

*Join the 2020 Census Team!*

**2020census.gov/jobs**

**1-855-JOB-2020**

**(1-855-562-2020)**

**Federal Relay Service (800) 977-8339 TTY / ASCII**

**[www.gsa.gov/fedrelay](http://www.gsa.gov/fedrelay)**

The Federal Relay Service (FedRelay) provides telecommunications services to allow individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and/or have speech disabilities to conduct official business with and within the federal government.

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## Census 2020

Census 2020 is a crisis in the making! In America, race plays a huge role in the protection of minority groups. Racial categories can trigger voting rights protection, anti-discrimination laws, funding for social services and much more.

However, race, ethnicity and nationality are not the same thing. For example, one can have national roots in countries like Nigeria, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico; be part of a specific ethnic community; and also be considered part of the “Black” race.

For the first time, on the 2020 census, persons of African descent, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, will be able to indicate their ethnicity/nationality and their race! So when you fill out the census and list your nationalities, be sure to also check Black for the race category. For more info: <https://2020census.gov/en/how-to-help.html>.