



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Prince Hall Day of Advocacy at the Capitol

JAUKIA MCCONEYHEAD May 16, 2024



**Albany, NY-** In a historic collaboration, New York State, Senator Kevin S. Parker, and Assemblymember Alfred Taylor have announced the inaugural "Prince Hall Day of Advocacy at the Capitol" held on May 14, 2024. This landmark event showcased the participation of the Most Worshipful, Gregory Robeson Smith, Jr., Grandmaster of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York; Yvonne Ladson, Grand Worthy Matron; and Paul W. James, Grand Worthy Patron of the Eureka Grand Chapter of NY; as well as numerous Prince Hall

Freemasons from across the State.

This day is dedicated to advocating for priority legislation that addresses the urgent needs of the communities the Prince Hall Freemasons serve. Highlighting the significance of this event, Dr. Rev. Darren Morton, Deputy Grandmaster of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York, and Senior Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, conducted the invocation in the New York State Assembly, marking a moment of unity and reflection.

Prince Hall Freemasonry is a branch of Freemasonry founded by Prince Hall in 1784. Prince Hall Freemasonry distinguished itself not only by expanding Freemasonry among African Americans but also by its members' fervent advocacy for abolition, civil rights, and educational empowerment within the African American community. Over time, it has grown into a significant and widely respected institution, maintaining a strong commitment to social and economic upliftment, community service, and justice.

The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York is a fraternal organization that shares common moral ideals and esoteric values. While we are not a religious institution we all share a belief in a Supreme Being. Their membership is based on the doctrine of "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. While Masons loyally help each other, they also take pride in assisting others by participating in charitable activities and community service. In New York State, Prince Hall Freemasonry has a rich historical presence, with its roots stretching back to the early 19th century. Prince Hall Freemasons in New York have historically engaged in a variety of events and initiatives pivotal to African American civil and social progress. Specific events include annual scholarship banquets to support youth education, participation in community service projects like food drives and health fairs, and Juneteenth celebrations that unify communities around the values of freedom and equality. These activities reflect the organization's ongoing commitment to fostering community resilience,

advocating for social justice, and uplifting future generations, continuing the legacy of Prince Hall's vision in the Empire State.

State Senator Kevin Parker expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "The dedication of the Prince Hall Freemasons to social justice and community empowerment is an inspiration to us all. 'Prince Hall Day at the NYS Capitol' is a testament to the strength of partnership and shared commitment to the betterment of our society."

Assemblymember Al Taylor echoed this sentiment, remarking, "Today marks a monumental step forward in recognizing the vital contributions of the Prince Hall Freemasons to our communities and the critical advocacy work they perform. It's an honor to collaborate on this significant occasion."

At the heart of the day's celebrations, Gregory Robeson Smith, Jr., Grandmaster shared his vision, "As Freemasons dedicated to the principles of friendship, morality, and brotherly love, this day symbolizes our ongoing commitment to serve and uplift our communities. We are grateful for the opportunity to bring our legislative priorities to the forefront, fostering meaningful dialogue and action for the common good."

"Prince Hall Day of Advocacy at the Capitol" was a day of advocacy, unity, and progress, bringing together influential leaders and community members to champion causes that affect the lives of New Yorkers. Through collaborative efforts, the event aimed to highlight critical issues such as civil rights, police reform, veterans assistance, education, and housing deficits facing communities of color, while providing them with impactful legislative solutions.

This day of advocacy also featured discussions on priority legislation, community service initiatives, and the rich history and contributions of the Prince Hall Freemasons, setting a

precedent for future advocacy and community engagement in New York State.

### **About State Senator Kevin Parker**

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn district comprising sections of Flatbush, East Flatbush, Kensington, Ditmas Park, Midwood, Flatlands, Canarsie, Georgetown, Old Mill Basin, Mill Basin, Marine Park, and Bergen Beach. A lifelong Brooklyn resident, he is the Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and sits on the Senate Finance; Rules; Banks; Internet and Technology; Rules; and Budget and Revenue.