



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

## NYS Conference of Black Senators Unveiled their 2010 Signature Agenda

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON May 26, 2010

| COMMITTEE: **NEW YORK STATE CONFERENCE OF BLACK SENATORS**

**ALBANY-NY** Yesterday, the NYS Conference of Black Senators (CBS) unveiled their 2010 Signature Agenda issues and expressed their concerns regarding these particular bills not being brought to the Senate floor for a vote. Members of CBS truly believe that African American Communities have suffered long enough within the areas of Economic Development, Education, Health, Housing, Environment, Crime, Racism and Discrimination. Last year, the Conference of Black Senators was very successful with pushing for the passage of the Green Collar Jobs legislation. This year the Conference is hoping to once again bring forth another victory to the African American Communities with passage of the following bills:

- **Economic Development Bills:**

Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson: **S. 1799 B- MWBE Article 15-A**

Senator Bill Perkins: **S. 1130- MWBE Disparity Study**

Senator Shirley Huntley: **S. 6844 A Contracts Bill**

Senator John Sampson: **S. 5987 B- MTA Small Business Mentoring Program**

“We must strengthen Article 15-A so that it is an effective law providing clear administrative and enforcement measures for the accountability called for in providing equal opportunities for minority and women owned businesses in New York State,” said Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson “By expanding the legislation to include all areas of state procurement and contracting, including professional and financial services, this reform will go a long way towards providing true equal opportunity for MWBEs in this, the most diverse state in the country” said by **Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Chairwoman of the NYS Conference of Black Senators (D-36<sup>th</sup> District).**

- **Education Bills:**

Senator Shirley Huntley: **S. 5452- Parental Rights**

Senator Shirley Huntley: **S. 4028 -Youth Suicide Prevention**

- **Election Bills:**

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins: **S. 2554 B- Voter Suppression**

Senator Malcolm Smith- **S. 5814 A- Clean Election and Campaign Finance Enforcement Reform Act.**

“ Most recently, attempts to suppress the vote were documented at an all time high rate in communities of color. The “Voter Suppression Bill” would fill an important void in the election law by creating a new statute that would fill an important void in the election law by creating a new statute that would directly address and hold people accountable for intentionally suppressing the vote. While it is unfortunate that such a law is needed, we as a citizenry must send a message that actions of voter suppression will no longer be tolerated and that from now on, under this statute, those who seek to suppress the votes will be held criminally accountable”, said by **Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-35<sup>th</sup> District).**

“S. 5814 is intended to modernize campaign finance law and provide voluntary public financing of campaigns for statewide and state legislative offices”, said by **Senator Malcolm A. Smith, President Pro-Temp (D-14<sup>th</sup> District)**.

- **Environment Bill:**

Senator Antoine Thompson: **S. 4315 A- Climate Change**

“Strict rules and regulations must be put in place, because global warming not only threatens our health and natural resources, but could have detrimental effects on our economic well being”, said by **Senator Antoine Thompson (D-60<sup>th</sup> District)**.

- **Health Bills:**

Senator Bill Perkins: **S. 1002 A- Lead Poisoning Prevention**

Senator Bill Perkins: **S. 7070- Toxic Prevention of Manufactured Products**

Senator Shirley Huntley: **S. 7483-Hospital Closure Planning Act**

Senator Shirley Huntley: **S. 3117 A- Medicaid Coverage for Extended Stay**

Senator Shirley Huntley: **S. 4484 A- HIV Written Consent Form**

“We must protect the children of this state by enacting meaningful legislation that will put an end to lead paint poisoning. Children are our most valuable assets, but they are also most vulnerable; they need and deserve our protection. The Lead Safe Housing Initiative is a vital step in ensuring that our children are protected from the hazards of lead paint poisoning. While in the City Council, I championed the legislation, worked tirelessly to see it passed, and have continued to do so while serving in the Senate. On the issue of toxic prevention, My legislation would put New York in line with other states by protecting children from

hazardous priority chemicals, such as lead and cadmium, that can lead to many damaging and permanent disorders including learning and reproductive disorders. There is a growing national concern with regard to chemicals found in children's products. States such as Washington and Maine have already adopted legislation that will identify priority chemicals found in children's products and it's time for New York to take the necessary steps to protect its most cherished and vulnerable individuals, our children", said by **Senator Bill Perkins (D-30<sup>th</sup> District)**.

- **Housing Bills:**

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins: **S. 2237 A –Vacancy Decontrol**

Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins: **S. 3326 B- Mitchell-lama**

"Vacancy decontrol laws must be repealed to protect tenants, as well as to preserve the State's limited supply of affordable housing. The ever increasing challenge of maintaining affordable housing across New York State is a serious problem, and each year, vacancy decontrol regulations remove more of the stock of affordable housing units from the reach of seniors and working families. "Action is required to protect the middle income tenants who currently reside in Mitchell-Lama housing and who are facing eviction as limited-profit housing companies are exercising the program buy-out option. Preserving affordable housing continues to become more difficult, and too many seniors and working families cannot afford the major rent increases that ensue as this affordability program sunsets. It is critical that the Emergency Tenant Protection Act is extended to limited-profit housing companies, to ensure that existing tenants can continue to afford to live in their current homes, said by **Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins (D-35<sup>th</sup> District)**."

- **Juvenile Justice Bills:**

Senator Montgomery: **S. 6709 B- Alternatives to Residential Placement**

Senator Montgomery: **S. 6711 B- Alternative Detention Program**

"Re-Direct New York (S. 6711-B) is the true heart of my *New York State Juvenile Justice Reform Agenda*," said **Senator Velmanette Montgomery, (D-18<sup>th</sup> District) who chairs the NYS Senate Committee on Children and Families.** "It provides important new opportunities and assistance for young people in trouble, and pumps new life into our efforts to implement a landmark policy shift in the way New York responds to youth crime.

"My bill encourages the placement of court-involved youth in rehabilitative community-based programs instead of residential detention facilities. It supports this recommendation by giving localities financial incentives to create and utilize the more therapeutic community-based model for helping troubled young people turn their lives around."

Another key component of Montgomery's *Juvenile Justice Reform Agenda* is a bill (S. 6709-B) that requires Family Court judges to sentence court-involved youth to community placement instead of residential placement unless this action jeopardizes the best interest of the child or safety of a community.

- **Public Protection Bills:**

Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson: **S. 5893 A- Child Victims**

Senator Shirley Huntley: **S. 3119 B- Funeral Procession**

Senator Malcolm Smith: **S. 5053- Police Officer Abuse**

Senator Malcolm Smith: **S. 5054- Police Officer Training Program**

Senator Eric Adams: **Stop and Frisk**

“As a former nurse, I have seen firsthand the short-term and long-term damage that victims of sexual abuse undergo. This critically important and long-overdue legislation will hopefully ease some of the personal trauma that many continue to suffer from”, said by **Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Chairwoman of the NYS Conference of Black Senators (D-35<sup>th</sup> District)**.

“My first bill, S. 5053 is intended to authorize the Division of State Police to take control of any crime scene involving an offense by a police officer resulting in serious physical injury to another person. The second bill, S. 5054 is intended to provide funding and technical assistance to cities with a population of 100,000 or more to support the delivery of specialized police officer non-lethal tactics training. I am also fighting for \$4 Million for the Operation SNUG violence prevention initiative”, said by **Senator Malcolm A. Smith, President Pro-Temp (D-14<sup>th</sup> District)**.

- **Domestic Relations Bill**

Senator Ruth Hassel-Thompson: **S. 3890- No-Fault Divorce Law**

- **Racial Profiling Bill:**

Senator Antoine Thompson: **S. 6329-Marvin’s Law**

“We must work to uphold the law, and hold criminals accountable for their deeds. However, Marvin’s Law is designed to protect innocent people who are singled out by police for possibly committing crimes based only on the color of their skin. That’s a crime that must end”, said by **Senator Antoine Thompson (D-60<sup>th</sup> District)**.

These particular bills mentioned above will provide African American Communities with major social, and economic relief. Some of these bills have been under consideration in

committees for several months without any indication that there will be any action by said committee. Members of the Conference believe that, by making this concerted effort to bring attention to these bills that they will be brought to the floor for a vote. "The Signature Agenda Issues on which we will focus at the 2010 Conference of Black Senators encompass the breadth of matters requiring action in our determination to better the lives of African Americans and all New Yorkers. The bills, which focus on education, health, housing, and juvenile justice issues, are intended to improve the quality of life and facilitate the pursuit of happiness of all residents of our great State, particularly those from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds. We will continue to battle for all who need our assistance, and we will diversify the hearts and minds of our fellow citizens by promoting just and necessary measures state-wide", said by **Senator Eric Adam, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair of the NYS Conference of Black Senators (20<sup>th</sup> –District).**

"Through enhancing affordable housing to creating jobs and growing small businesses to improving access to health services, it is our job to meet the needs of all New Yorkers. We have made great strides, but more must be done to level the playing field and expand economic opportunities for underserved communities from Brooklyn to Buffalo, and every town in between. I applaud the efforts of my colleagues in the Conference of Black Senators for their vision, leadership, and unwavering advocacy of the communities we represent," said **Senate Majority Conference Leader John L. Sampson.**