



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Senator James Sanders Jr. Hosts Albany Caucus Bus Trip, Delivers State of the District Address, Presents Economic Development Workshops

JAMES SANDERS JR. February 19, 2020



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) hosted a free bus trip to Albany for his constituents on February 15, 2020 so they could join him for one day during the 49th Annual Legislative Conference of the New York State Association of Black and Puerto Rican Legislators, which lasted the entire weekend.

“I am glad that you took the trip down here,” Sanders told attendees. “I am so glad to see so

many friends that I know, and so glad to see so many friends that I'm getting to know. I am blessed."

More than 150 people from the community participated and were Sanders' guests at his State of the District Address. During his speech, Sanders discussed his position as the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Banks and legislation he has introduced to support the creation of public banks in New York State. He also spoke about increasing contracting opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBs) at JFK Airport, reinvestment in the community through the Opportunity Zone Program, encouraging youth engagement in government and STEM-related fields, and many more issues.

Sanders hosted two panel discussions at the legislative conference. The first panel was titled *Community Impact in Opportunity Zones: Will Opportunity Zones Spur Wealth Creation or Gentrification?* It explored whether opportunity zones will create tangible benefits for the residents of low-income areas. There are 21 opportunity zones in Senator Sanders' District, and 31 in Southeast Queens.

The Opportunity Zone Program created by the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 is the nation's latest public policy attempt to spur economic development in highly distressed areas by encouraging private investment. However, the program lacks critical safeguards that would ensure that these investments go where they are needed most.

The second panel was titled *How Coalitions Win: Using Community Benefit Agreements to Own Our Community*. Panelists focused on the potential gains and pitfalls of a CBA while exploring the role of the community, developers and government during the negotiation process. There was specific attention on the redevelopment of JFK Airport and how a CBA could meet the needs

and benefit the people being impacted by the project while fostering community cooperation.

He also co-hosted two workshops with Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte, one on how the Article-15A program has been renewed and made stronger and more sustainable to help Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBs) and the other on the dangers of flavored tobacco and how the predatory marketing of such products negatively affects communities of color.

"I support the renewal of Article 15-A, which is both valuable and necessary in ensuring that state agencies establish employment and business participation goals for minorities and women," Sanders said. "Under those conditions, we must work to ensure that the program is as effective as possible in remedying the State's history of contracting disparities, responsive in addressing new concerns, and is legally sound."

In addition to the programs offered by Senator Sanders, constituents were able to meet local and state legislators, walk the concourse flea market and enjoy educational and networking opportunities. Senator Sanders also showed his support of unions by attending the Annual Labor Luncheon.

We would like to thank our Albany trip sponsors Jeremiah C. Gaffney's Funeral Home, Richie Rich Palace, Marketplace Lending Association, Queens Defenders, Guyanese Girls Rock and Rockaway Development & Revitalization Corporation (RDRC) and Queens Library

On Sunday, February 16, 2020, the day after the bus trip, Senator Sanders hosted a stellar cultural event called *A Taste of Africa*, which was conducted in collaboration with the African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region and the Upstate New York Black Chamber of

Commerce. Featured guests discussed ways African people can work together to bring community economic development to the continent and the diaspora.

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2019-S5565A

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- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
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- - Passed Assembly
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May 07, 2019

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