



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

## NYS Conference of Black Senators Unveiled their Signature Agenda

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON June 2, 2009

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



Today, the NYS Conference of Black Senators announced their support for the Signature Agenda of Legislative Issues that they wish to see passed before the end of this session. The members stressed the need for them to be brought to the floor quickly:

-**Article 15-A** : Senate Bill 1799, Sponsored by Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson

-**Better School Act (School Governance)**: Senate Bill 5576, sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker

**-Foreclosure:** Senate Bill 4109A, sponsored by Senator Jeff Klein

**-The Repeal of Vacancy Decontrol:** Senate Bill 2237A, sponsored by Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins

**-Healthy Teens Act:** Senate Bill 4633, sponsored by Senator Suzi Oppenheimer and Senator Velmanette Montgomery

**-Child Sexual Abuse Reform Act:** Senate Bill 5569, sponsored by Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson

**-Property Tax Relief (Middle Class- Circuit Breaker tax credit) :** Senate Bill 4239, sponsored by Senator Liz Krueger

**-NYS Fair Pay Act:** Senate Bill 955, Sponsored by Senator Craig Johnson

**-Reproductive Health Act :** To be sponsored by Senator Andrea Stewart- Cousins

**-Paid Family Leave Act:** Sponsored by Senator Diane Savino

**-Green Collar Jobs:** To be Sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker

“These legislative bills are crucial to the lives of African Americans in our community but also to African Americans all over the State of New York”, said by Senator Hassell-Thompson, Chairwoman of NYS Conference of Black Senators (D-36th District). We intend to pay particular attention to the areas of education, business development, and crime and justice in our communities.

Currently, a majority of these legislative bills have been sitting in committees and have not been addressed. The NYS Conference of Black Senators have pledged that they will urge

Senator Smith to push for these bills and vote for them once they hit the floor.

“The signature legislative issues that have been identified by our Conference of Black Senators represent the progressive initiatives which will help level the playing field in all our communities, and to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers”, said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-35th District). “ We will continue working together to ensure that each of these issues be given the attention that they deserve, and to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information about how to best advocate for, and legislate on behalf of, all of the concerns of the constituents we represent.”

### **Green Jobs**

“Thanks to President Obama , we are living in a unique moment in time. With the aid of the federal stimulus funds, we now have a chance to reshape our neighborhood economies, to create new skills and new career paths in our urban neighborhoods, and to provide a chance to put more people on the path to economic opportunity and success than we have seen in our lifetime. The “Green Job Bill” will seize this moment by leveraging stimulus funds and environmentally-oriented state funds to weatherize the houses of housing projects, lower-income family homes and the home of our middle-class. The next step after these jobs is to provide a career path along which green collar workers can continue to build skills and well paying and challenging jobs. Once we have created those stabilizing jobs in our communities, we will need to source the materials as close to home as possible and make certain that MWBE’s receive the share of resource contracts to which they are entitled,” said by Senator Kevin Parker (D-21st District).

“It is good that we’re pushing forward on issues that impact working families in addition to laws and policies that help create and grow minority and women owned business in New York State,” Senator Antoine Thompson (D-60th District).

### **Better Schools Act**

“First off, the Better Schools Act isn’t about control-it’s about continuing to improve educational equality for the City of New York”, said by Senator Kevin Parker (D-21st District). “ The Better Schools Act improves educational quality and equality for the City Schools by requiring transparency, imposing accountability, and ensuring access for the parents and students in the New York City Schools System. Our Society needs the contributions of our children-our next generation of thinkers, workers, leaders and parents. We cannot shortchange them, which is why we cannot reduce our investments in our schools. The reality of this Better Schools Act mends, but does not end Mayoral Control. And if we are going to continue to provide the schools with the funding our children need to succeed, we need to have effective oversight and enhanced parental involvement”.

On the issue of Mayoral Control and School Governance, “this is an issue that affect lawmakers, teachers, parents, and most of all –our Children. I hope that my colleagues keep in mind how these children’s academic goals and progress will be affected by the legislation that we create. Our ideas and efforts should be aimed at crafting an educational model that will promote parental involvement and ensure success and growth for all the children in New York City,” said Senator Shirley Huntley (D-10th District).

“In these trying times, government must abandon the old ways of waste: wasting time, wasting resources and wasting the trust of our citizens. These times call for a renewed effort by legislators to serve their constituents with vigor and effectiveness. As a proud member of the Conference of Black Senators, it is imperative that we not make excuses instead of progress and to that end I will work fervently to pass legislation that my constituents demand. Vacancy Decontrol and Foreclosure Reform are just two of the issues that echo in my district and throughout the state. The people of New York can count on to push these issues”, said Senator Eric Adams (D-20th District).

“ The impact of not passing these bills this legislative session would be detrimental to the constituents in my district”, said by Senator Velmanette Montgomery (D-18th District)