



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

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(Brooklyn, NY) "Join me in wishing a happy 95th birthday to Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa and global inspiration.

Through his example, Nelson Mandela taught us that when we live our principles, adversity only makes us stronger. Despite a twenty-seven year unjust imprisonment for fighting against the racist Apartheid system in South Africa, when he was released Nelson Mandela did not seek vengeance, instead he pioneered the idea that achieving truth and reconciliation was more important than revenge.

As the first Black President of South Africa, and the first President elected in the country in a fully democratic process absent of vote suppression, dilution and disenfranchisement, Nelson Mandela taught us the value of the electoral franchise. As Americans we know that the ability to vote freely and for the candidate of our choice is one of our most basic values, but in these highly polarized political years, an example like Mandela's election is especially important.

Nelson Mandela has been and remains a inspiration to us all. From his receipt of the Nobel Prize for Peace, to the American Presidential Medal of Freedom, and all of the other more than 250 international leadership awards he has won in his life, Mandela has taught us that acting in a moral, decent and caring manner is not merely an adjunct to leadership, but the core of effective leadership.

In recent months, former President Mandela has been deeply ill and in intensive care. We are heartened that he appears to be recovering and we wish him many more birthdays.

His example inspires us. His life of achievement is a model upon which many of our youth can build their lives. His service humbles us.

Happy 95th Birthday, President Mandela.”

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About Senator Kevin Parker

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and the Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.