



Assemblyman  
**Keith L.T. Wright**  
*Reports to the People*

SPRING 2012

**REMEMBER TO VOTE!**  
**CONGRESSIONAL PRIMARIES ON JUNE 26, 2012!**

## Getting Harlem Back to Work!

This past February, Assemblyman Keith Wright teamed up with the New York State Department of Labor to organize a job fair at the Harlem Armory with over fifty different companies and organizations present. Over three thousand residents from Harlem and beyond attended and met with potential employers, unions and social service organizations. Although the event was set to begin at 9:00 AM, a line was wrapped around 142<sup>nd</sup> Street as early as 7:00 AM. Over a thousand New York residents from Harlem and beyond attended and met with potential employers, unions, and social service organizations. The attendees were well-prepared and eager to find positions, enroll in job training, or get information. Some were even interviewed on the spot, and the Department of Labor put all resumes into a database to be kept on file.

One Harlem resident interviewed with the New York City Housing Authority for a full-time maintenance job. She was pleased with her opportunity to interview, and impressed with the job fair in general, saying, "This job fair, this turn out—it's very good. This is the real deal. There are single mothers, singles fathers here, looking for work just to get by and provide for their kids. I'll take what I can get. I can't afford to be picky. Most people can't, and I'm just glad I got this interview."

The job fair was planned to help address a very real problem that Harlem is facing: the community has a massive and unacceptable unemployment problem. While the federal numbers regarding joblessness gain constant attention, you can almost always triple or quadruple those numbers and arrive at Harlem's. Such is the case in many Communities of Color. Harlem had an unemployment problem even before the recession hit. Today, the problem persists and is increasing as joblessness nationally increases.

The Assemblyman explained, "If America is suffering from a cold, Communities of Color are suffering from pneumonia. If this job fair helped keep even one roof over a child's head, put one meal on the table, helped a family keep the heat on or their kids in college, this event will have been a great success." Harlem's vibrant and capable workforce should not be ignored, as jobs are the key to progress and revitalization within a community.

He continued, "As the Chairman of the State Assembly Labor Committee, I am making it a priority to



*Assemblyman Wright and President Barack Obama.*



*Thousands joined Assemblyman Wright for his first annual Job Fair.*

enact statewide policies which help our residents get back to work. Whether it's funding job training programs that are affordable and accessible to our residents, working with organized labor to open up apprenticeship programs to more people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds or giving people pathways from welfare to work, the message is simple: Get New York Back to Work!"

In addition to Assemblyman Wright's job fair efforts, the 2012 New York State Budget has restored funding for a number of programs that focus on job preparation or offer direct access to the job market. Among those programs are Career Pathways, The Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN) program, and the Summer Youth Program.

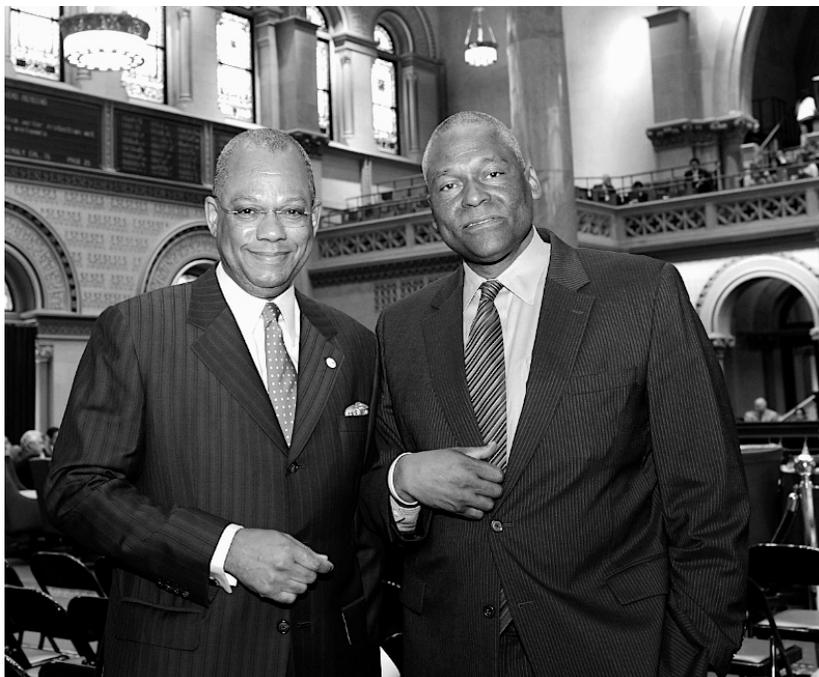


# Assemblyman Wright Announces Increase in Public Assistance Grant

During a time when New York State is trying desperately to curb spending and reduce the statewide deficit, Assemblyman Wright is proud to announce that the 2012 Budget includes the final ten percent increase to the public assistance grant. New Yorkers will see the first increase of five percent effective July of this year, and the remaining increase will go into effect in October. This completes the overall thirty percent increase that has been gradually implemented beginning in 2009. It marks the first increase to the grant since 1990.

Increasing the public assistance grant has been a priority for Assemblyman Wright since he served as the chair of the New York State Assembly Social Services Committee up until February of 2011. In that role, he was responsible for successfully engineering the first of the overall thirty percent increase. While Assemblyman Wright had fought for a higher overall increase, the thirty percent will benefit many Harlem residents. It's no surprise that with the economy in the state that it is, more New York residents are relying on public assistance than ever before.

With jobs and careers sparsely available, even the most qualified New Yorkers are out of work. The increase will aid families and individuals that are struggling, while also allowing low-wage earners to offset today's high cost of living with a slight boost from this public assistance grant. This increase, along with budget initiatives that are focused on establishing long-term economic self-sufficiency, such as job training programs, will help New Yorkers emerge from the darkness of the economic downturn. "For



*Assemblyman Wright and Reverend Doctor Calvin Butts of Abyssinian Baptist Church.*

the first time in over two decades, our families in desperate want of assistance are getting a little more help from our state. While this increase does not solve the problem in our state and in my opinion does not go far enough to help our struggling families, it is a good start. I have successfully championed the issue of increasing the public assistance grant since my time as Chair of the Social Services Committee from 2007 to 2011. I will ensure that the State Assembly keeps fighting for these critical increases," said Assemblyman Keith L.T. Wright.

## Mayor Bloomberg's Inept Handling of FDNY Hiring Bias

In January, Mayor Bloomberg unfairly and in a truly contradictory fashion accused Federal District Judge Nicholas Garaufis of bias after his ruling for federal oversight on the over four-year-old litigation concerning diversity in the New York City Fire Department. Bloomberg even went as far as to ask for Judge Garaufis' removal from the case. Assemblyman Wright expressed his discontent with the City's ruling, explaining, "After protecting the nepotistic and blatantly racist practices of the FDNY for what equates to an entire mayoral term, it is ridiculous and shameful for the Mayor to again stand on the side of ignorance with this bizarre request. As Judge Garaufis has correctly stated, 'The City still doesn't get it' and Bloomberg's bombastic request for removal confirms that Mayor Bloomberg 'gets it' about as much as Blacks and Latinos get jobs as firefighters in New York City."

While the City has taken some actions to attempt to integrate the FDNY in recent years, in moves designed to draw attention away from the fact that they were still fighting the integration of the FDNY in the courts, the Judge is right to be distrustful of this administration and their true level of commitment to justice and equality. Mayor Bloomberg's handling of the situation was disgraceful and indicative of the discrimination that his administration has demonstrated for some time now.



*Assemblyman Wright with United States Senator Charles Schumer at Caucus Weekend 2012.*

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*- Assemblyman Wright*

## A Comeback for Harlem's Legendary La Marqueta

In its heyday, La Marqueta was an informal marketplace for vendors and merchants that brought livelihood and a true neighborhood feel to the streets of East Harlem. The New York Times once referred to the marketplace as “the most visible symbol of the neighborhood.” La Marqueta was a revered Harlem mainstay and hopefully, will regain its presence in our community through a planned revitalization program.

The Harlem Community Development Corporation, which Assemblyman Wright chairs, has announced a new project to revitalize the once-booming La Marqueta. The new proposal, La Marqueta Mile, will encompass the original 22 block-long open-air public market under the Park Ave Metro North elevated viaduct in East Harlem. The new renovations would bring immeasurable good to Harlem's economy and community as a whole. The new marketplace would help address the unemployment problem that Harlem faces by creating over 4,000 new, living-wage jobs for local residents.

The new, outdoor market would be of historic significance to our Harlem community. It would channel the original neighborhood La Marqueta of the past while providing key community engagement and bringing jobs to Harlem. When asked about the ambitiousness of the La Marqueta Mile, Assemblyman Wright aptly responded, “Of course it's ambitious- it's a mega-project- but if we didn't have ambition, Harlem wouldn't be the center of the universe and God's green Earth.”



*Assemblyman Wright with Bill Richardson, former Governor of New Mexico, at Caucus Weekend 2012.*

## Harlem Organizations Receive Helpful Funding from 2012 Budget



*Assemblyman Wright and Governor Andrew Cuomo during Caucus Weekend 2012.*

Assemblyman Wright is pleased to announce that the 2012 New York State Budget includes almost \$400,000 dollars in funding for two of Harlem's most indispensable organizations. The Neighborhood Defenders Association of Harlem and Harlem Legal Services are both groups committed to finding justice and providing excellent legal advice and representation for those who would otherwise be without. Organizations like these rely heavily on grants and state funding, and this money secured for them will ultimately be felt most by the Harlem community.

The Neighborhood Defenders Services of Harlem received \$138,722 in programmatic funding for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. “NDS is appreciative of the continued support of NYS government as we strive to meet the ever expanding legal needs of our indigent constituents and their families,” said Rick Jones, Executive Director of Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem.

“Manhattan Legal Services, a part of Legal Services NYC, is extremely grateful for the support of the State Legislature and the leadership efforts of Assemblyman Keith Wright in ensuring that our funding is continued. In our Harlem office, the money we received will support the crucial work of representing victims of domestic violence as they strive to flee abusive relationships and rebuild their lives as well as supporting our work obtaining critical benefits for disabled clients. Without this support, we would face the loss of a staff attorney to serve Harlem residents, translating into hundreds of vulnerable residents—disabled people and families facing violence—unable to access a lawyer,” said Peggy Earisman, Director of Harlem Legal Services.

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*- Peggy Earisman, Director of Harlem Legal Services*

## Assemblyman Keith L.T. Wright

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