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Congresswoman Yvette Clarke: A Woman on the Move

BY COLIN A. MOORE, SENIOR EDITOR

Yvette Diane Clarke does not conform to the stereotype of a traditional member of the New York Congressional delegation. The majority of the Congressional delegation is white, male, middle-aged and intellectually jaded. Yvette Clarke is "young, gifted and black," a breath of fresh air in the stagnant political waste land of New York politics. She is a political dynamo on the move, the latest incarnation of Shirley Chisolm, her celebrated predecessor in the 11th Congressional district.

The 11th Congressional district is a long swathe of land between East New York and downtown Brooklyn. It is a



complex district which is comprised of five distinct ethnic groups — African Americans, WASPS, Caribbean Americans, Hasidic Jews and Arabs. It comprises the communities of Bronxville, Crown Heights, East Flatbush, Kensington, Midwood, Prospect Heights, Prospect-Lefferts Gardens and Park Slope. It contains significant cultural institutions, such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, the Brooklyn Public Library, the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Children's Museum and the Prospect Park Alliance.

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Brian Figeroux, Esq.

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Advice for President Obama

BY ROLAND S. MARTIN

The recent election results are a bitter pill for the president and his supporters to swallow. To be essentially routed by the Republican Party from top to bottom goes beyond humbling. It is a wholesale rejection of the Democratic Party, and by extension, many of the policies championed by President Obama. So what world do we face now?

In many ways, I view the first half of President Obama's term like the first half of a basketball game, the president's favorite sport: some things good, some bad, at times leading, but now, clearly losing at the half. And like any smart team leader, his job now is to go into the locker room and make some pivotal halftime adjustments.

Here are the four adjustments I think the president must make to regain his footing, get back in the game and lead his team to victory.

First, team communication is a must. When a team is defending against the pick and roll, each player must communicate to know what the other is doing. That's basketball. Poor communication also hurts in politics.

By your own admission, Mr. President, you and your team have done a poor job communicating what you are doing, why you are doing it and what it will mean for the American people. You said on Jon Stewart's show that the American people don't know a lot of the things you have done. Well, that's not their problem, that's your problem. YOU have to make it clear and cut through.

Frankly, your communications team has been weak. They have missed or flubbed opportunities to make your case. Sir, you giving a great speech is one thing, but your communications team speaking persuasively to the American people on a daily basis is another, and that has to improve.

That leads me to the second issue, Mr. President. You have GOT to pass the ball. We often hear from your aides that no one is better at communicating the issues than you. That may very well be true. But just like in basketball, you CANNOT play all five positions.

In order for a team to win, that means every player must play their role and do their job. The business community has complained your administration is anti-business. So where is Gary Locke, the Commerce Secretary?

Employment is issue number one, so where is Labor Secretary Hilda Solis? There's a foreclosure epidemic, so where is Housing Secretary Shaun Donovan? We've said before that Attorney General Eric Holder has had a straightjacket placed on him. Discussions about energy policy? I never see Energy Secretary Stephen Chu.

It seems the only Cabinet members who have free reign to speak are Arne Duncan at Education, Hillary Clinton at State, Bob Gates at Defense and to some degree, Kathleen Sebelius at Health and Human Services. Mr. President, those may be your starters, but you need to play the bench, too. Let them engage, take some fire, deliver some blows and show folks that they are in this bat-

tle with you. There simply is no way one player can take on the opposing team all by himself. Ask Le Bron.

Third, go on the offensive. A running team knows when to push the ball up-court, hoping to put their opponent on their heels and run them out of the gym. There has been a passive attitude emanating from your administration.

Sir, when the other team continues to drive the lane and score on you, sometimes you have to deliver a few hard fouls to get their attention and send a signal. You must do the same.

Your opposition is emboldened by ripping you to shreds. Only rarely has your team engaged in the kind of fighting that can get your opponents' attention quickly. This isn't time to keep taking hits and act like they wont stick.

Mr. President, those body blows have stuck. Your White House is holding back the Democratic National Committee. It's time to let it go. Let them foul hard; be aggressive. If you don't, your opponents will do whatever they want with you, and you'll be on the losing side in two years.

Fourth, you've got to be the true team leader, like Michael Jordan. Magic Johnson. Oscar Robertson. Bill Russell. Hakeem Olajuwon. Kobe Bryant. When times got tough, their teammates looked to them for inspiration, energy and guidance. Right now, your teammates, the broad coalition of millions who put you into office, are confused by the conflicting messages sent out by your administration.

In many ways, this movement has been abandoned. Young folks, African-Americans, Hispanics and so many others are waiting to be engaged, to be put to work and to work with you to achieve victory. But if you're standoffish, don't talk to them regularly, don't inspire them, your agenda will never resonate with them, and you'll have a team in disarray, not knowing what to do. You want to be a transformational figure like Ronald Reagan, but that means leading your movement and keeping the members involved.

For all sports fans and President Obama knows this, no game is won in the first or second quarter. Yes, you can fall behind and look seemingly out of it. But until the clock reads zero, zero, zero, there is always time to rebound.

Mr. President, I'm often asked whether you will win a second term. Frankly, we don't know. But what I do know is that right now, you are behind and in desperate need of a second-half comeback to have any shot in 2012. ●

The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of Roland S. Martin. Martin is a syndicated columnist and author of "The First: President Barack Obama's Road to the White House." He is an analyst, commentator for CNN and the TV One Cable Network.

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WEEKLY TEAM**

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. —Hosea 4:6

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The Haitian Cholera Outbreak: A Preventable Tragedy?

BY JOSEPH CRUPI,
COHA Research Associate

On October 21, a case of cholera was identified in Haiti for the first time in at least 50 years. The disease spread rapidly through the Artibonite River basin, and by November 9, more than 580 people had died, and thousands more were gravely ill. The outbreak has raised questions about the international community's efforts to prevent the spread of disease in post-earthquake Haiti, and many agencies and organizations have faced criticism for their failure to prevent the crisis. In order to evaluate the accuracy of these criticisms, it is important to carefully analyze the steps taken by health workers, governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to prevent such a tragedy.

Health Workers Downplay Cholera Threat

In the aftermath of Haiti's earthquake, the leaders of the international health community did not acknowledge cholera as a serious threat. On March 2, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a report entitled "Acute Watery Diarrhea and Cholera: Haiti Pre-decision Brief for Public Health Action." While the report recognized that water-borne diseases could easily spread through Haiti's poorly-maintained tent cities, it also stated that an outbreak of "cholera [was] extremely unlikely to occur," largely because the vibrio cholerae bacteria had not been observed in Haiti in over half a century. The report downplayed concerns that the bacteria could be introduced by foreign relief workers or aid shipments and failed to consider that the bacteria might continue to exist undiagnosed in rural communities. In a February radio interview, Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, expressed agreement with the CDC report, saying, "There is no cholera in Haiti, so it would be extremely unlikely that there would be an outbreak of cholera in Haiti, even though you don't want to completely rule it out, it's not the first thing that you think of when you think of an outbreak of water-borne disease."

Health care administrators, trusting the consensus among experts that a cholera outbreak was unlikely, concentrated on more pressing health concerns. Trauma injuries received first priority after the earthquake, and health care specialists also devoted much of their time and resources to treating patients suffering from diabetes, heart disease, HIV, and tuberculosis. Health workers placed a high emphasis on immunization campaigns to prevent measles, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis. A cholera vaccine was available at a cost of only 50 cents a dose, but due to the perceived improbability of an outbreak, health care

administrators did not seriously consider widespread distribution to be necessary. Hence, while health workers had the technical capability to prevent an outbreak, they did not have compelling reasons to implement such measures.

Unmet Obligations and Broken Promises?

While health workers did not perceive cholera as an active threat in post-earthquake Haiti, other water-borne diseases did draw significant attention from health agencies. In February, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported, "Sanitation is a massive challenge that must be urgently resolved; an increasing number of diarrhea cases are being reported. If shelter and sanitation are not adequately addressed before the rainy season arrives, the risk of epidemic outbreaks of water-borne and other diseases will increase." These issues, however, were not sufficiently addressed. In early September, PAHO conducted a survey of health systems in northern Haiti, where the first case of cholera was diagnosed, in order to "identify programs, needs, and gaps in coverage." A report later released by the institution emphasized that "water and sanitation, provision of clean drinking water, and insufficient health care services" remained serious health issues in the region.

Conclusion

While the damage from the epidemic could certainly have been lessened by more anticipatory actions, it is unlikely that it could have been prevented completely. Health workers, operating under the assumption that a cholera outbreak was unlikely, understandably focused on more pressing concerns. While they may have had the capacity to significantly reduce the risk of an outbreak through vaccinations, health workers acted logically given the information they had. Although the failures of national, international, and nongovernmental organizations did not cause the outbreak, they may be partially responsible for the rapid spread of the disease. Whether or not poor coordination or delays in assistance actually facilitated the spread of the epidemic, as more Haitians are affected, increased (and long overdue) scrutiny of these shortcomings is inevitable. Reasonable preparations to contain a possible cholera epidemic were made in the months following the earthquake, and although it is premature to evaluate the international response, the effort to contain the disease seems to be well-coordinated.

According to PAHO deputy director Jon Andrus, cholera is not likely to be eradicated in Haiti for several years, and health workers have begun to prepare for a prolonged campaign against the disease. Speculation that Nepalese peacekeepers may have introduced the bacteria has led to protests and widespread anti-



The cholera outbreak in Haiti has killed over 250 people

UN sentiment, which will likely inhibit the UN's ability to operate effectively in the country. There are also fears that the flooding brought by Hurricane Tomas could expedite the spread of the disease, which is expected to eventually move across Haiti's porous border with the Dominican Republic. Clearly, the international community must be fully committed to controlling the spread of the epidemic. While it is important to hold institutions accountable for any fault that may exist, excessive criticism at this juncture may be an overreaction. There is simply not enough available information

to demonstrate the culpability of any one organization. Furthermore, attempts to assign blame for the crisis distract from and may even impede efforts to contain the disease. Given Haiti's already unbearable suffering, it is imperative that the international community, the Haitian government, and its people are unified in their response to the cholera outbreak, which, if allowed to become a point of division, has the potential to make a dreadful situation even worse. ●

Editor's note: This is an edited version of

Murder Rate Goes Up In Trinidad & Tobago

A sudden spike in murders in Trinidad and Tobago is worrying security authorities.

For a ten day period in November, there were 31 murders, the same number as the whole of July.

The newly appointed police commissioner, Canadian Dwayne Gibbs, has expressed concern about the increase in mostly gun-related violent crime.

The first seven months of the year had seen a modest decline in murders, but the recent surge means that last year's rate could be surpassed.

Since 2000, the trend in the two-island nation has been upward and is largely blamed on drug trafficking gangs.

The murder rate increased sharply from 7.4 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1999, to 42 per 100,000 in 2008.

A slight reduction to 39.1 per 100,000 in 2009 brought little satisfaction.

New team

In actual deaths, there were 118 homicides in 2000; 509 last year (down from the record 550 two years ago).

The People's Partnership coalition government, which came to power in late May,



Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, was chosen by *Glamour* magazine because she is determined to tackle her country's crime rate, boost pensions and eradicate poverty—all issues that greatly affect women. She is known for her inclusive leadership style and her desire to get more women into office.

will be disappointed that there is no change this year.

The government said security was its number one problem and a new Canadian team at the top of the police force has been tasked with securing an improvement.

Government ministers have betrayed their frustration with developments.

At least two government ministers — Works Minister Jack Warner and National Security Minister John Sandy—have gone

on record as favoring a resumption of hangings for the first since 1999.

Mr. Sandy told reporters in August that he believed that the death penalty will reduce the murder rate.

He said: "I know from experience that when our so-called criminals are about to face the death penalty, they go at length to try anything in the book to stay alive."

Visiting soldier

Britain and the United States are among nations warning about violent crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

A visiting United States army soldier killed during a suspected robbery became a symbol of the renewed killing spree in Trinidad and Tobago.

Sergeant Simeon Roderique of Queens, New York, was originally from Trinidad and was visiting relatives.

Police say he was dropping off a woman in the troubled Port of Spain neighbourhood of Laventille on 23 November when gunmen hit his car from behind and began shooting.

The woman's brother was also killed

Commissioner Gibbs told the *Express* newspaper that he hoped that the spike was merely an "aberration".

He said that his department was trying to control the situation ahead of the Christmas and Carnival seasons. ●

Guyana Forest program scrutinized

An environmental group has questioned the effectiveness of incentives given to Guyana to encourage the country not to chop down trees.

Norway has pledged to pay Guyana millions of dollars a year to preserve its forests.

But in the first year of the program, deforestation has actually increased threefold, according to Rainforest Foundation UK.

A Norwegian government official told the BBC that the Guyana programme was progressing well—but an independent assessment was being awaited. ●

The Wikileaks Caribbean Connection



President Preval will leave office in a few months. Haitian President Rene Preval is characterized as "isolated" but "indispensable" in a 2009 US diplomatic cable released by Wikileaks.

The whistleblowing website quoted another memo which said Cuban intelligence agents have deep involvement in Venezuela.

These are some of the references to Caribbean nations in the batches of 'reveals' so far.

The June 2009 memo about Mr. Preval, sent under the name of then US Ambassador to Haiti Janet Sanderson, was released by Wikileaks along with an earlier cable about the president.

It said the primary concern of the Haitian President ahead of the 28 November election for his successor, was to ensure the winner would not force him into exile.

Wary of change

According to the *Associated Press*, the memo says that Mr. Preval's "overriding goal is to orchestrate the 2011 presidential transition in such a way as to ensure that whoever is elected will allow him to go home unimpeded.

"Based on our conversations, this is indeed a matter that looms large for Preval," the diplomatic note said.

Six Haitian presidents have fled or been driven into exile since 1986.

In the case of Mr. Preval's immediate predecessor, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, that happened twice.

The memo, dated seven months before January's earthquake, paints the president as isolated, independent, "wary of change and suspicious of outsiders."

It calls his political decision-making "erratic," says he neglected his health after a bout with prostate cancer and had returned to drinking.

But it also characterized Mr Preval as "Haiti's indispensable man" and sole influential politician. ●

Source: BBC Caribbean

Is the Thomas Administration Falling Apart? PM Expresses Regret

Prime Minister Hon. Tillman Thomas has expressed regret over the resignation of Mr. Michael Church, as a member of his Cabinet.



"It is always a traumatic experience for a government to lose one of its members, especially at a time when all hands are needed in the rebuilding of our nation," the Prime Minister said.

He praised the former Minister of the Environment, Foreign Trade and Export Development for his leadership of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and his contribution to the fight against global warming in the International arena.

The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation to Mr. Church for his service to the Administration.

"I thank MP Michael Church for his contribution to my administration over the past two years. We have committed to continue working together for the development of the St. John's constituency and the country," the Prime Minister said in a press release.

He wished Mr. Church well in his future endeavors and hopes that his ministerial contribution will help to inform his contribution to the policies of the administration in Parliament. ●

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Undocumented? Get a Headstart with IJLEF Membership

BY JANET HOWARD

For an immigrant who is not yet a citizen, everyday life in the United States could be very precarious. A little oversight about one's past conduct could provide grounds for inadmissibility leading to deportation or leading to removability upon returning to the United States after a trip abroad. Or, even less obvious, being handed over to the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) by law enforcement officials after venturing near the Canadian border in an area where USCIS officers are more vigilant that they are in New York City.

What this means is that non-citizen immigrants must have up-to-date information on their status so that they can avoid being in a part of the country that may expose them to grounds for inadmissibility. Yes, it is true life in the United States (or anywhere else for that matter) for an immigrant could be a 'mine field'. One of the ways that non-citizen immigrants can obtain up-to-date information on their status and the kinds of violations that could lead to a finding of inadmissibility is for them to become members of the Immigrant's Journal Legal & Educational fund, Inc. (IJLEF).

I know of an individual who once attempted to enter the U.S. from Canada with false identification, but was discovered by the USCIS and sent back to Canada. Later, this person received a visa to come to the U.S. lawfully. After spending a number of years, in the U.S. the individual filed papers to adjust their status to that of a permanent resident. The resulting investigation by USCIS led to the discovery of this earlier violation (INA Sec. 212(a)(6)(A)), which provided ground of inadmissibility, subjecting this individual to deportation. The attorney in this case was able to obtain a waiver for this violation, but it would have been much wiser for this individual to know the consequence of this violation before attempting to adjust his status.

In this rather uncertain climate what might an immigrant do? Well, one of the options available is membership in the IJLEF. As a member of the IJLEF, one joins a community that not only provides valuable service to immigrants, but one also becomes part of a community dedicated to advocating the issues and interests of the immigrant community.

One of the key benefits of membership is free in-person consultations on all legal matters including immigration. Of



Membership benefits are valuable to everyone: U.S. citizen, Green Card holder and especially the undocumented. Becoming a member of the IJLEF helps one to prepare for comprehensive immigration reform.

all the benefits of being a member of the IJLEF, this benefit is of supreme importance. You may be contemplating some type of legal action and unsure about the exact nature of the violation or your rights. Well, all you need to do is make a call and you will receive the necessary information that you will need in order to make an informed decision.

Free in-person consultations are not the only benefits available. Members also get a free picture ID, assistance to open a bank account, get a tax ID, healthcare discounts, free monthly informational seminars, and a discount on the preparation of their tax returns. All these bene-

fits far exceed the annual membership fee of \$150. Despite some of the problems, many of us still believe that the United States is the best place to live and raise one's family at this point in time. Thus, you have a special duty to your family and other loved ones to take the steps necessary to preserve the level of comfort that you have attained. One of the ways to do this is to secure membership in the IJLEF.

To schedule an appointment for membership, call 718-243-9431/718-856-2569. ♦

Credit Repair Attorney, Credit Repair Lawyer

By the Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates

Today's credit and rating system is very flawed and can prevent a person from buying a car, a house, obtaining a loan, and can even determine the interest rate paid toward credit cards on any item financed. Negative credit reports can limit financial options available to you and can change your life forever! At Figeroux & Associates, we understand how difficult it can be to live if your credit report does not accurately represent your credit worthiness.

The Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates are different! If you are tired of surfing the web for a company to do credit repair for you and to deliver on their promises, the Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates can help. Unlike many other unrepeatable credit repair organizations out there that are unlicensed and simply send out form letters, the Credit Repair Attorneys at Figeroux & Associates will provide you with an honest and forthright analysis of your credit report and of what we can do to help you. Unlike many of the credit repair organizations who overpromise and underdeliver, the Figeroux & Associates approach to credit repair is not veiled magic but is instead methodical and effective.

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COVER STORY

Yvette Clarke

continued from page 1

Clarke prevailed in a highly contested Democratic primary with just 31.2% of the votes. In the general election of November 7, 2006, she was elected to the House of Representatives with 89% of the vote, against token Republican opposition in an overwhelmingly democratic district. She was re-elected in 2008 and 2010 by large pluralities.

As a testament for what she accomplished in her first two terms, Yvette Clarke received an A rating from the Drum Major Institute, a 100% rating by the Peace Action, the Brady campaign and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). She was also named After-School Hero by the After-School Corporation. In May 2009, Representative Clarke was presented with an Honorary Doctorate in Law from St. Francis College.

After some initial missteps involving claims about her education background, and after an extended absence from Congress due to an unexpected bout of illness, Yvette Clarke broke through the gates, at the end of her first term, and soared like an eagle into the political stratosphere. She became a Senior Whip for the Democratic Caucus, a Chair of the Sub-Committee on Emerging Threats, Cyber Security Science and Technology, a Whip for the Congressional Black Caucus, and a member of the board of directors of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF). Representative Clarke also sits on several committees, including the House Education and Labor Committee, the House Homeland Security

Committee, and the House Small Business Committee.

Homeland Security Committee

As the chair of the Sub-Committee on Emerging Threats, Cyber Security and Science Committee, she is responsible for implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 commission and for protecting the national's digital infrastructure from cyberterrorism, fraud, criminal activity, international and domestic attack or natural disaster.

Committee on Small Business

As a member of the Small Business Committee, Representative Clarke brings to Capitol Hill a vast reservoir of experience that she had acquired as Director of Business Development in the Bronx, and Chairperson of the Contracts committee in City Hall. In the 1990s she had been appointed by the Bronx Borough, Freddy Ferrer, as Director of Business Development for the Bronx Overall Economic Development. As Councilwoman, for the 40th Councilmanic District, she served as Chair of the Contracts Committee and Co-chair of the Woman's Caucus. As an advocate for the empowerment of women and minorities, she introduced legislation that resulted in a MWBE study that found that women-and-minority-owned businesses were not awarded their fair share of city contracts. This finding forced the City of New York to end its system of economic discrimination against women and minority contractors. As Co-Chair of the Women's Caucus, Representative Clarke secured \$9.5 million of funding for organizations that address the issue of domestic violence, breast cancer awareness, housing

and AIDS counseling for women.

Committee on Education and Labor

As a member of the House Education committee, Representative Clarke has strongly supported the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (HR 3221) which was passed on September 17, 2009. This bill is expected to:

- Invest \$40 billion to increase Pell Grant scholarships from 5,550 in 2010 to 6,900 in 2019.
- Strengthen the Perkins loan program that provides low-cost Federal loans to students.
- Keep interest rates low on Federal student loans.
- Make it easier for families to apply for financial aid by simplifying the FAFSA form.
- Invest \$2.5 billion in historically Black colleges and universities.
- Provide loan forgiveness for members of the military who are called up for duty in the middle of the academic year
- Build a modern work force by encouraging partnerships between community colleges, States and municipalities.
- Increase aid to community colleges
- Increase online training at high school and college level
- Increase the number of low-income children entering kindergarten.

As a member of the Labor Committee, Representative Clarke has supported

- The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007, which provides wage increases to America's 13 million lowest paid workers.
- The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Play Act which provides for pay equity between male and female workers.
- Legislation that provides for collective bargaining, bars gender age and sexual discrimination, supported paid parental leave for working families, and paid sick leave in case of family emergencies.

■ The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) which enables workers to form unions and to bargain for better wages and working conditions.

■ She has also advocated for TSA workers to get the same benefits as other Federal employees.

Legislative Record

In her short tenure, Representative Clarke has built an impressive record in sponsoring and co-sponsoring progressive legislation. She has sponsored:

- H.R. 559-Fair, Accurate, Secure and Redress Act of 2009—This bill creates an office within

the Department of Homeland Security to address the concerns of individuals who are unjustly prohibited from boarding a commercial flight, due to being wrongly identified as a threat.

■ H.R. 1270 — Affordable Housing and Community Development. This bill funds the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBGP).

■ H.R. 1848 — Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2009. This bill funds the neighborhood reinvestment corporation with a specific focus on programs and activities that assist homeowners who are facing foreclosure.

■ H.R. 1992 — Immigration Fraud Prevention Act of 2009. This bill makes it a federal crime to willfully misrepresent the immigration process through fraud or misrepresentation. It also makes it a federal crime to falsely represent oneself as an attorney.

■ H.R. 2071 — Caribbean Census Count Bill. This bill requires the Secretary of Commerce to allow census respondents to indicate Caribbean extraction in addition to race identification. Such information will permit an accurate count of the various ethnic sub-groups within the immigrant community.

Conclusion

To those who wondered whether Representative Clarke would fill the shoes of the legendary Shirley Chisholm, the answer is an unequivocal "yes, she has." After a shaky start, she has soared, like an eagle, into the political stratosphere on Capitol Hill. During her second term, she acquired several important leadership positions. She became chair of an important sub-committee of Homeland Security, she became a Senior Whip in the Democratic Caucus, she became a Whip in the Congressional Black Caucus, and a member of the board of directors of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF). She has made a significant contribution in the House Education and Labor Committee, and the House Small Business Committee. She has sponsored or co-sponsored legislation on a wide range of issues. She has become a spokesperson on Caribbean affairs. As an African American of Caribbean ancestry, she can play an important role in establishing a liaison between the Caribbean American and African American communities. She has begun to persuade the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) to become involved in immigrant issues, such as comprehensive immigration reform and in Caribbean regional matters. We can only hope that as she continues to gain experience on Capitol Hill, Congresswoman Clarke will grow in stature and experience, and bring substantial improvements to her constituents in the 11th Congressional District, to the Caribbean Diaspora abroad, and to the Caribbean community at home. Well done Congresswoman Clarke, keep on, keeping on.

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Avoid Being Fat, Broke & Lonely for the Holidays

BY EMERALD STAR

Do you ever obsess about whether to order dessert, buy those hot boots, or be totally honest on a first date? If so, then you are already acquainted with the fear of being fat, broke & lonely. If only we could eat less, get paid better, and be more outgoing. Only it's not that simple. Well it can be with these three easy tips.

How to avoid putting on weight

The average weight gain from Thanksgiving until January 2, when the month of culinary atonement begins, is seven pounds. Too many Christmas cookies lying around the office and too much alcohol at company parties? However, you can maintain your current weight and even shed a few pounds during the next six weeks...and still go to all those parties! Remember, the key is to graze, eating five small but healthy meals a day. Also, avoid sugar as much as possible (not impossible, have tea/coffee without sugar; don't drink soda), eat more protein and salads than carbohydrates; have a healthy breakfast, workout before a big event (yes, sex counts).

How to avoid being broke

Research, compare and coupon. Take advantage of discounts and sales offered by stores. Make sure you do research and compare prices both in-store and online before making a purchase. Give yourself a limit. Make a list and stick to it. Don't hang your hat where your hands can't reach. Spend within you means. Don't go crazy with sales. Buy what you need, not what you want.

If you are already in a financial bind, you might want to consider bankruptcy. Call 718-222-3155 for a free, no obligation consultation to see if bankruptcy is right for you. You deserve a fresh start and the upcoming new year may just be the right time.

How to avoid being lonely

Second to Valentine's Day, is the holidays which fills us with feelings of angst and loneliness. Note to self, should have broken up in January, not October. Fear not. Here are some ideas.

The holidays are really about family. Focus on family and not yourself. Volunteer in your church (or the one in



Victoria's Secret model Chanel Iman

your neighborhood), or a soup kitchen. Visit with friends. Enjoy invitations where you will be in a group and not left alone like a wallflower. Take the extra time to rejuvenate and set new goals for yourself. Who knows? By January, you can be a smiling angel like Victoria's Secret model, Chanel Iman. ●

Health Matters

Q&A: Can Eating Fruit Raise My Blood Sugar?

BY JULIAN WHITAKER M.D.,
Lifescript Alternative Medicine Expert

Q: I started eating one piece of watermelon per day and my blood sugar level went up. Would the watermelon do this? S.C.



A: Fruit consumption is tricky for patients with diabetes. Most fruits have a high natural sugar content and people minding their blood sugar levels or their weight need to be careful. In general, I recommend no more than 1-2 pieces of fruit daily. That being said, some people, like S.C., may be sensitive — even to small amounts.

If this is the case, try a fruit that is lower on the glycemic index scale such as berries, apples, and oranges. And if your numbers are still high, unfortunately, fruit just isn't for you. ●

Want to learn more about diabetes control? Visit DrWhitaker.com.

World AIDS Day: Stars Bring Awareness to HIV/AIDS



Gabrielle Union

Brooklyn Borough Hall was illuminated (RED) to mark World AIDS Day on Wednesday, December 1, 2010, and to raise awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Brooklyn and sub-Saharan Africa. Joining Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz at Borough Hall were Deputy Borough President Yvonne Graham; Malaak Compton-Rock, founder and director of Journey for Change; Empowering Youth Through Global Service; former supermodel, maternal health advocate and founder of Every

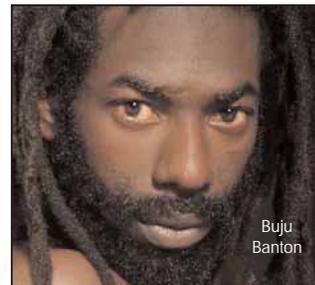
Mother Counts, Christy Turlington Burns; actress and activist Gabrielle Union; Academy Award Nominee Gabourey Sidibe (pictured on the cover), teens from Journey for Change; and New York City officials

Brooklyn Borough Hall was one of more than 80 distinctive landmarks around the world turning the color red on World AIDS Day. The lightings highlighted the attainable goal of ending mother-to-child transmission of HIV by 2015, creating the first generation of babies born HIV-free in 30 years. Despite the fact that HIV/AIDS is preventable and treatable, UNAIDS statistics published last week estimate 370,000 children are infected with the disease, down from 430,000 in 2008. About 90% of these babies are born in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Borough Hall landmark lighting ceremony raised awareness of the fact that in 2008, Brooklyn had the highest number of HIV diagnoses in New York City. The Journey for Change youth brought special attention to the statistic that 7.1% of the nation's children under 13 with HIV/AIDS live in Brooklyn. They also promoted the newly launched *Brooklyn Knows* campaign that encourages every Brooklynite to know their status. ●

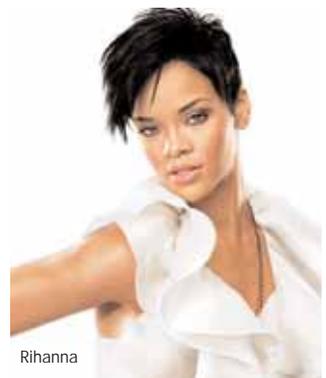
Caribbean Artists Receive Grammy Nominations

Jamaican music icon Buju Banton has received his fifth Grammy nomination in the Best Reggae Album category for his prophetic new project, *Before The Dawn*. Recorded mostly at his own Gargamel Music studio in Kingston, the album boasts some of the most powerful songs written by Banton since his professional entry into the music business over twenty years ago.



Buju Banton

Released in September to critical acclaim, *Before The Dawn* debuted at #2 on Billboard's Reggae Albums chart and #26 on the mag's Heatseekers chart. Currently the album is perched at #1 on both the South Florida and the New York Top 20 Reggae Albums charts, #1 on Richie B's Jamaica Music Countdown and #4 on CMJ's World



Rihanna

Music chart. Highlights include "Do Good," "In The Air," "Struggle Together" and the especially potent "Battered & Bruised." The album's unofficial anthem, "Innocent" strikes a highly personal chord that resonates deeply considering the artist's ensuing legal battle.

The veteran Reggae artist, who had been incarcerated at Pinellas County Jail for 11 months, has not performed live in over a year.

Meanwhile, Bajan-born singing sensation Rihanna has been nominated for three awards including Record of the Year and Song of the Year for *Love the Way You Lie* with Eminem. Her other nomination came for Best Dance Recording for the song "Only Girl in the World" from her "Loud" album. ●

First Annual Caribbean International Fashion Show Set for NYC



A model wearing a design by Trinidadian designer Claudia Pegus.

Beverly Hills, California: Diamond Noir Collective (DNC, Inc.) and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) are collaborating to produce the First Annual Caribbean International Fashion Show set to take place Wednesday, June 8, 2011. This astounding fashion show will be held in the international capital for fashion, New York City, and will be part of Caribbean

Week in New York celebrating Caribbean American Heritage Month.

While this one-day event has been coined Caribbean International Fashion Week (CIFW), with the goal of developing the event into an annual weeklong extravaganza, the inaugural event will only be one day.

The first ever Caribbean International Fashion Week will showcase the Caribbean's best couture from established and up and coming fashion designers. CIFW will support Caribbean designers with their expansion and promotion on an international level.

CIFW's goal is to benefit Caribbean designers while raising funds for the CTO Foundation — a charity that provides scholarships and grants to deserving Caribbean nationals working in the hospitality and tourism industry. The CTO Foundation has assisted some of the most successful and promising hospitality and tourism individuals around the region.

Caribbean International Fashion Week will accommodate a multitude of elite media, buyers, investors, Caribbean officials, industry professionals and celebrities with the sole purpose of bringing more exposure and increased sales revenue to Caribbean fashion designers. In effect, CIFW will bring a greater appreciation for Caribbean fashion worldwide. For more information, please visit www.caribbean-international-fashion-week.com.

Paul Campbell Unveils New One-man Play

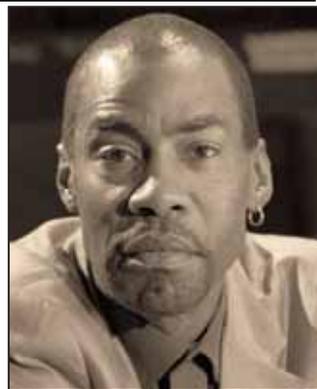
BY ANTHONY TURNER

There are the movies: *The Lunatic*, *Dancehall Queen*, *Third World Cop* and *First Sunday*. Now prepare for *Paul Campbell: The Life and Times of Jamaican Movie Star*, a one-man performance, scheduled to open in December 2010.

From one of Jamaica's harshest ghettos to the glamour and glitz of Hollywood, Paul Campbell, is today arguably Jamaica's most prominently acclaimed and internationally renowned movie star.

Over the last two decades, Campbell's stage and film performances have brought him wide recognition, awards and immense visibility within and outside the Caribbean Diaspora.

This one-man play, *Paul Campbell: The Life and Times of a Jamaican Movie Star*, will demonstrate just how and why Campbell has earned the international acclaim, and will introduce audiences to his versatility and virtuosity. This theatrical presentation is an extremely powerful story of a Jamaican actor who struggles to fulfill his life's dream of becoming the best at his craft. It is not your typical Hollywood-



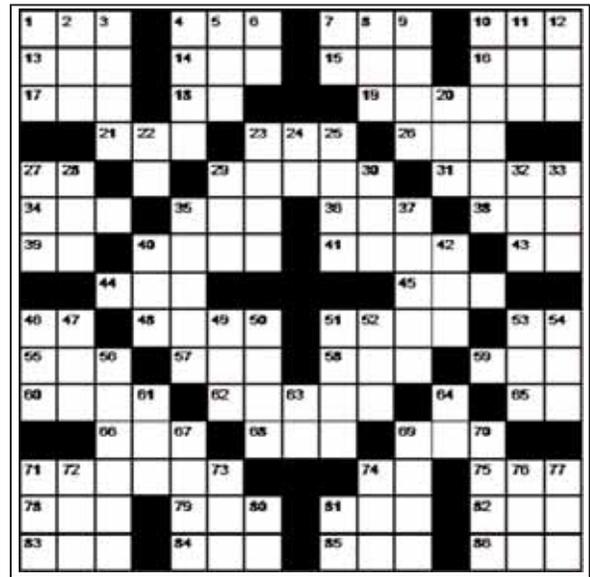
movie-star-rags-to-riches tale but a Jamaican telling of that same story. And its theme, indeed, is universal.

The play, as the title suggests, is about Campbell's development personally and professionally, and highlights incredible odds and unrelenting perseverance.

It is a unique, honest and compelling story that delineates aspects of Campbell's life as he developed as a person and as an actor. Along the way, it also offers a gritty perspective of Jamaican life and culture that many will find astounding, eye opening, if not just simply jaw dropping.

Campbell to many, especially in his homeland, Jamaica, is not just an actor but also a favorite "movie star." *Paul Campbell: The Life and Times of a Jamaican Movie Star* represents a new wave in theater with high definition interactive segments and a mixture of comedy and reality, it is destined to leave the audiences with a new perspective on one man stage shows.

Caribbean Puzzle



Across

1. Bajan Olympian
4. [] Lanka
7. Tilt
10. Tree
13. Lie
14. Moray
15. Initials of writer James
16. Restroom
17. National police (US)
18. Former spouse
19. St. Lucia's 1st female GG
21. Male sheep
23. Under
26. Married woman
27. Sound of laughter
29. 'Guinep' in Guyana
31. Rule
34. Father's mom (indic.)
35. Wing
36. Avenue (abbr.)
38. Zilch
39. Mom
40. Vexation
41. Signal
43. All right
44. Company boss
45. Animal doc.
46. Bradley or Koch
48. Healing plant
51. A Guyana PM
53. Sheep noise
55. Throw
57. Make a mistake
58. Aurora
59. Clutch
60. Natural fiber
62. Batting star Lara (cricket)
65. Host
66. US Agency (intelligence)
68. Title of knighthood
69. School group
71. Sap-sucking insects
74. The Hawkeye State (abbr.)
75. Senior public accountant
78. Thai
79. Aspire
81. Ref. (in cricket)
82. Track
83. Compass point
84. Microgram (abbr.)
85. Hotel facility
86. Pride

Down

1. Disconnected
2. Part of baby's apparel
3. Red liquid dye (indic.)
4. Look
5. Jamaica's icon Nettleford
6. The Prairie State (abbr.)
7. Bajan calypsonian
8. Sick
9. Formal high school dance
10. Barbados soca queen
11. Distress call
12. Heavy freight barge
20. Vase
22. 'Land of the Midnight Sun' (abbr.)
23. Get out!
24. United Kingdom
25. Musical sound
27. [] radio
28. Father's dad (indic.)
29. Boxer Muhammad
30. First lady
32. [] de Janeiro
33. Dr. King
35. Tree lizard
37. Singer Presley
40. Ocean
42. Headed
46. Pixy
47. Pain unit
49. Sphere
50. Goofs
51. Parent
52. Long time
53. Brooklyn theater
54. Most basic
56. Small rented unit
61. Dozen (roman numerals)
63. Roman two
64. Pronoun (neuter)
67. Male Eden dweller
69. Dad
70. Land measurement
71. Dined
72. T&T musical instrument
73. Attack
74. Terror
76. Pooch
77. Trinidad Olympian
80. Milligram (abbr.)
81. We all

Puzzle created by Rod Broome. © 2010.

Sister DuBong's Horoscope

Wednesday, Dec 1
to Tuesday, Dec 7/10

Aries: Lucky Numbers: 321 3216
Lotto 35 23 2 20 19 6

Don't get discouraged with small annoyances. Just kept your eyes forward and stay in your path and you will be just fine.

Taurus: Lucky Numbers: 889 0508
Lotto 45 36 30 11 17 27

Love is in the air. Be patient with yourself and you will be rewarded with a loving spouse.

Gemini: Lucky Numbers: 275 1526
Lotto 37 36 10 18 16 19

If you know of anyone who needs your creativity be the first one to volunteer. Pick up any necessary household items while the sales prices are great reduced.

Cancer: Lucky Numbers: 717 7108
Lotto 48 14 49 17 28 43

So many suitors and so little time. Screen the group with your wish list of qualities you desire in a mate.

Leo: Lucky Numbers: 645 3219
Lotto 8 35 25 4 31 40

You will be very attractive now. Be careful not to waste time on someone that is not in your best interest.

Virgo: Lucky Numbers: 696 7366
Lotto 5 46 7 9 19 29

After the crowd clears you will be standing as the winner. Start making a space to display your trophy for all to see.

Libra: Lucky Numbers: 204 4329
Lotto 41 46 31 34 42 6

Do not linger on the past...remember this advice, you can change your future without holding on to things that do not benefit you. Live for the future.

Scorpio: Lucky Numbers: 551 1959
Lotto 38 23 41 29 3 2

The job is very demanding but you are up for the challenge. Bring in some big guns to help with a large project at work.

Sagittarius: Lucky Numbers: 600 3336
Lotto 25 40 34 26 19 37

At this time you will have lots of opportunity to expand your horizons. The stars have put many people in your path to be of assistance.

Capricorn: Lucky Numbers: 222 1227
Lotto 3 27 21 12 38 29

Walking a great exercise, costs nothing. Take a moment to smell the flowers and look at the holiday decorations.

Aquarius: Lucky Numbers: 040 1929
Lotto 27 16 30 1 3 29

Mixing business with pleasure is OK for a few days, then you must buckle down and get back to work. You never know, the boss may have a bonus for you.

Pisces: Lucky Numbers: 592 8747
Lotto 7 18 22 3 56 40

Follow-up is needed to protect your financial investments. Do some research to make sure you are getting the best rates.♦

Listen to Sister DuBong every Tuesday morning from 1am to 3am on WVIP 93.FM; ABR 90.3FM Community Radio & www.allblackradio.com

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Brooklyn, New York 11238

Keeping Romance Alive

BY KATHY ROUGIER, B.Sc

For many couples, romance is easy before marriage — no children to distract, no pressures regarding finances, no conflicting schedules. After marriage though, things start to eat away at your desire for each other and the amount of time spent together. Desire is a key part of romance. Perhaps you want to close a widening gap. If so, here are some ideas that could spark desire:

1. Communicate. In communicating with your loved one, share thoughts and dreams, expose your feelings and really listen to what is said. Set short periods, perhaps 15 minutes, at the best time of day for both of you, to catch up with each other's life — just talk.

2. Forgive quickly. Holding on to resentment and bitterness is detrimental to romance and the bond between two people. Choose to handle conflicts in a way to build up rather than destroy desire in your mate

3. Be selfless. Put the needs of your spouse above yours and you will find that there would be fewer arguments, greater fulfillment and happiness for both of you.

4. Make positive statements. Instead of pointing out the disappointments you have been faced with, give praise of your



loved one's great qualities that you admire.

5. Never stop saying, "I love you." Don't presume that saying, "I love you" on your wedding day, and/or on special occasions is enough. Saying those words and meaning them even when there is a disagreement or fight are important.

6. Laugh often. Be a best friend to your mate and invest time and laughter in your relationship. Do have fun together and create new fun memories filled with

laughter and love. Turn off the television and share jokes. If you're ready for a change in your romance include a little laughter in your schedule.

7. Guard your thoughts. It is said that the most sexual organ in the body is the mind. If your mind isn't in the mood for love, then nothing will be. People have a difficult time enjoying sexual intercourse if they are emotionally unprepared. The cure is to control your thought processes. Think of your partner only when you are intimate with him/her and do not think of it only as a physical event.

8. Bond spiritually. An intimate spiritual bond is more important than physical intimacy. Many couples have regular sexual activity, but are not intimate.

9. Check your expectations. If you find that your spouse is continually disappointing you, it may be that your expectations need to be examined. Do not create unspoken expectations for your spouse and then get annoyed when they aren't met. You will be less irritated and would build romance if you communicate your expectations.

10. Get help. When the desire is no longer on fire, counseling can help. Fear and mistrust erodes any potential growth. It also leads to bitterness and isolation. Be willing to work things out.●

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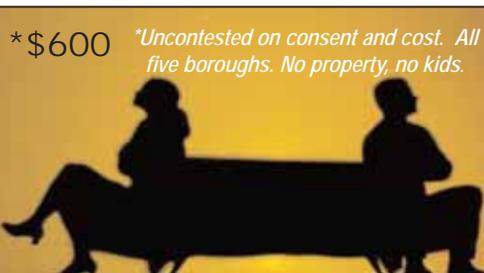
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ISLAND SPOTLIGHT: Saint Lucia is World's Best for Romance

For the fifth consecutive year, travel professionals the world over have voted the Caribbean island-nation of Saint Lucia the "World's Leading Honeymoon Destination."

After receiving the top Caribbean accolade in this category at the World Travel Awards Americas ceremony in Jamaica last month, the Eastern Caribbean destination earned even greater global recognition at the 17th World Travel Awards Grand Final Gala Ceremony at Grosvenor House in London.

Accepting the award, Louis Lewis, Saint Lucia's Director of Tourism, said: "We are humbled to be considered the best in the world when it comes to weddings, honeymoons and romance."

Lewis also said that Saint Lucia will not be resting on its laurels, assuring "we will leave no stone unturned to ensure that we remain top of the class for many years to come. Working in concert with our hotels, resorts and attractions, we intend to redouble our commitment to excellence in the new year as we focus on delivering the world's best experiences for the luxury and romance markets."

The World Travel Awards encourages world-class competition, stimulates innovation and creativity as well as ensures that travelers receive exceptional value.

"This award bears testimony to the undisputed beauty of the island, the authentic warmth and friendliness of our



people, our commitment to service excellence, and the appeal of our small luxury properties which continue to win the confidence of today's discerning traveler," said Senator Allen Chastanet, Saint Lucia's Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation.

Saint Lucia was awarded "Best Caribbean Island in 2010" by *Porthole Magazine*, while many of its hotels, resorts and attractions continue to excel in top readers' surveys and award competitions.

The growing accolades reflect the country team's commitment to providing visitors with an excellent product with high standards of service and legendary hospitality. ●

PHOTO OF THE WEEK Jamaican-born burlesque dancer Edible Akynos



Caribbean Punch-a-Cream

This is one of the traditional Caribbean Christmas drinks. It is absolutely a favorite drink at Christmas.

It is similar to eggnog but much better. We drink it cold (over crushed ice), not hot.

- 1 can evaporated milk
- 2 cans sweetened condensed milk
- 1 egg
- 2-3 laurel (bay) leaves
- Nutmeg to taste (grated)
- White rum to taste

Simmer the evaporated milk with the bay leaves for 30 min. Remove bay leaves and mix evaporated milk, condensed milk and egg in blender. Add grated nutmeg and rum (a little or a lot). Bottle, allow to cool and refrigerate.

Serve over crushed ice. (Note – shake bottle before serving as the grated nutmeg tends to settle to the bottom) This quantity should make about 2 liters. ●



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IMMIGRATION MATTERS

The DREAM Act: A Central Element of Reform

The Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 729/H.R. 1751) is a bipartisan bill that would provide a conditional six-year pathway to legal permanent residence for certain unauthorized youth who, as children, were brought to the U.S. if they: complete high school; demonstrate good moral character; and complete at least two years of higher education or serve for at least two years in the U.S. military. The bill also would also repeal section 505 of the Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Reconciliation Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) that prohibits states from providing any higher education benefit based on residency to unauthorized immigrants unless they provide the same benefit to U.S. citizens in the same circumstances, regardless of their residence.

THE DREAM ACT CAN STRENGTHEN THE U.S. ECONOMY

The students who would benefit under the DREAM Act have been raised and educated in the U.S. and by allowing them to pursue a higher education, we are investing in the future of our country and our economy.

•Communities, states, and the nation would reap significant benefits from the DREAM Act. A RAND study showed that a 30-year-old Mexican immigrant woman who graduated from college will pay



\$5,300 more in taxes and cost \$3,900 less in government expenses each year than if she had dropped out of high school. This amounts to an annual fiscal benefit of over \$9,000 every year, money that can be used to pay for the education of others.

•DREAM Act beneficiaries will make up part of the educated workforce needed to help the U.S. compete in the global economy. In our globalized world, their multilingual and bicultural skills, and contributions are more important than ever to the success and global competitiveness of the United States.

CURRENT LAW PROVIDES NO WAY FOR THESE CHILDREN TO ACHIEVE LEGAL STATUS

•Due to the undocumented status of their parents and other family members, they have no available avenues for family-

based visa sponsorship.

•Few employers would or could sponsor them for a work visa due to their age and lack of work experience. Even if an employer was willing to sponsor them, the process takes precious years that these children cannot afford to waste.

STATES SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE WHO QUALIFIES FOR IN-STATE TUITION

•States are required to invest in elementary and secondary education for undocumented children, but can't collect on the return. However, when states are ready to earn a return on their investment through a highly educated workforce, they are barred from offering in-state tuition to these children. The states (and their taxpayers) have the right to earn this return.

•States should have the authority to determine how they allocate their resources. Such an educational investment pays dividends for the states by reducing the dropout rate, leading to substantial savings in criminal justice costs and the use of public benefits, and sharply increasing the taxes paid by those benefiting from this initiative.

THIS BILL REFLECTS A BALANCED APPROACH TO REFORM AND MUST BE PART OF ANY COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO OVERHAUL OUR IMMIGRATION LAWS

•This measure would require children to have lived in the U.S. for a number of years and to have no criminal record.

•This measure would require eligible children to dedicate themselves to learning English and succeeding in our educational system.

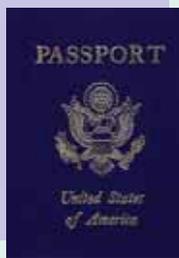
•This measure proposes a one-time only fix that would not encourage illegal immigration.

•This measure recognizes that the status quo needs to be reformed by granting children the means to continue their education and legalize their status. Such reform works for children and works for America. ●

Source: AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 09043072.

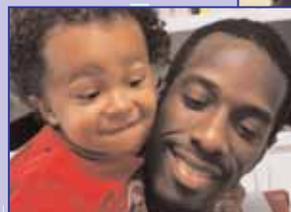
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Tis Better to Be Safe, Than Sorry

With the holiday travel season upon us, the Health Department and the Department of Transportation (DOT) released new research findings that highlight the need for drivers and pedestrians to pay close attention to their surroundings, even if the light is in their favor. New York City's traffic fatality rate is just one-quarter of the national average and has declined at twice the national rate in recent decades. Yet traffic accidents still rank among the city's leading causes of injury-related deaths and hospitalizations. NYC's traffic fatalities occur mainly on major roadways — especially at intersections — and more than half the victims are pedestrians. The new report, *Improving Traffic Safety in New York City*, uses data collected from 2005 through 2009 to pinpoint the greatest risks and identify simple ways to reduce them.

"New York City has an extraordinary record of traffic safety," said Dr. Thomas Farley, New York City Health Commissioner. "Our streets are among the nation's safest, and our research shows they're getting safer every year. The City's transportation and police departments have paved the way for this public health triumph. Now we should build on that success."

During the study period, 57% of the

city's traffic fatalities occurred on major streets (arterials) such as Broadway in Manhattan and Woodhaven Boulevard in Queens, even though arterials make up only 15% of the city's roadways. Some 566 pedestrians and bicyclists died on arterials between 2005 and 2009, as did 267 motor-vehicle occupants.

Road type aside, intersections posed the greatest risk of accidents. Approximately 66% of pedestrian fatalities occurred at intersections, and 45% of those killed at intersections by motor vehicles were obeying traffic signals when they were struck. To improve pedestrian safety, the Department of Transportation is re-engineering 60 miles of high-risk streets, including 20 intersections, for pedestrian safety, and will install countdown signals at 1,500 intersections. Pedestrian countdown signals display LED numbers that count down the number of seconds remaining before the "flashing hand" phase turns solid red. The report also confirms the risks associated with speeding. More than a quarter (26%) of the city's traffic fatalities involved a vehicle traveling at an unsafe speed. New York City restricts speeds to 30 mph on most roads specifically to protect pedestrians. Studies of pedestrian deaths suggest that a vehicle traveling 40 mph is four times more likely than one traveling 30 mph to cause a fatal injury. In addition, seatbelt use was low



among motor vehicle occupants killed in crashes. Seatbelt use data were available for only 21% of occupant fatalities, but among the deaths analyzed, seatbelts were not used by 44% of the drivers and 57% of the passengers killed in vehicle crashes.

Other major contributors to NYC traffic fatalities included driver inattention (17%), failure to yield (10%), and alcohol and drug use (9%).

Safety on city streets is every New Yorker's responsibility. Here are some ways for drivers and pedestrians to make New York City streets safer:

- Drive at or under the posted speed limit, which is 30 miles per hour on most NYC streets.
- Never use a cell phone or text while

driving. A new state law prohibits the use of hand-held cell phones while driving.

- Always yield to pedestrians, particularly when making left-hand turns. At a red light or STOP sign, stop before the crosswalk.
- Never drink and drive. If you have to travel by motor vehicle, either abstain from drinking or designate another person to drive.
- Wear your seat belt and make sure children use proper restraint systems.
- When walking, always cross at intersections and do not cross against the light.
- Older adults in particular should give themselves time to cross streets by waiting for a newly turned green or walk signal. ●

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Tax Tips for the Self-Employed

BY KANETTA BAPTISTE

Being self-employed is a dream for many people. Of course, the downside of being the boss is all the responsibilities that come with the job. Unfortunately, calculating and paying taxes are part of those responsibilities.

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), you are considered self-employed "if you are in business for yourself, or carry on a trade or business as a sole proprietor or an independent contractor." The IRS requires self-employed individuals to pay a Self-Employment Tax, which assesses Social Security and Medicare taxes similar to those paid by employees and their firms. The IRS also requires self-employed people to pay quarterly estimated taxes as a substitute for the withholding taxes that are applied against an employed person's salaries.

With that in mind, the following are some tax tips for the self-employed:

Consult a CPA. Even if you are intent on doing everything yourself, it is better to seek outside help than make a mistake when preparing your taxes. An error on your tax returns can result in escalating fines and penalties from the IRS. Tax law is complicated, particularly when it comes to self-employment. To be certain you are in compliance with all relevant requirements, talk to a CPA and review your situation.



Keep good records. Good recordkeeping is more than simply a good business practice; it is a necessity when it comes to dealing with the IRS, which may demand to see every last detail of your income and expenses, particularly when you claim deductions on your tax return.

Deduct all business expenses. Every drop of toner you buy for your printers, reams of paper, shipping expenses, business meals, postage, software, pens and pads, and anything else used or contributing toward your business is an expense that can be deducted. Be sure to save every

receipt to back up your claimed deduction. **Increase expenses to lower taxable income.** As the end of the year approaches, you can increase your deductions against that year's income by making business purchases before Jan. 1. Need a better desk or cushy new office chair? Buying it before the end of the calendar year means whatever you spend can be deducted against that year's income taxes.

Contribute to your Retirement. The options for self-employed people to save for retirement have never been better. All payments made to a retirement plan—solo 401(k), KEOGH, or SEP plan, are deductible against the current year's income (except, it should be noted, payments to Roth IRAs). Also remember that retirement plans have different contribution limits

Strongly consider the home office deduction. Many small business owners have at least one room devoted to some aspect of their business, whether it is keeping shipping materials in the garage, or a bedroom that has been converted into an office or filing storage space. With so many small businesses operating partially or completely out of people's homes, the IRS allows small business owners to deduct a portion of rent, mortgage payments, utilities and maintenance for qualifying home offices. ●

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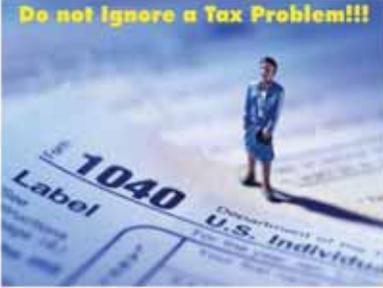


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Senator Reid Revamps DREAM Act to Address Republicans' Concerns



Senator Reid with Speaker Pelosi

Photo: Public Citizen

Amidst concerns raised by the Republicans, Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) filed a new version of the DREAM Act (S. 3992) with the aim of attracting broader support for DREAM to get the requisite 60 votes to pass the Senate. With the filing of this new bill, the anticipated date for bringing DREAM to a vote will be delayed. The earliest Reid could file a cloture motion on the new bill would be this coming Thursday. After waiting out the requisite 30 hours post-cloture, it could "ripen" over the weekend, and effectively come up for a vote on Monday at the earliest.

The new version addresses many of the concerns raised by Republicans and

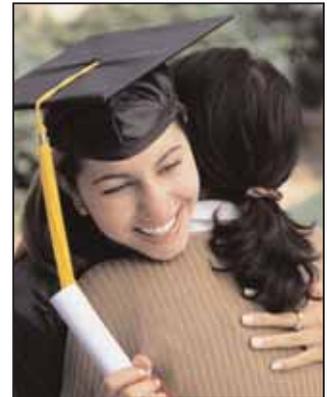
tightens the restrictions on eligibility in several respects. Among other changes, the new version does the following:

- Excludes from eligibility those with certain criminal convictions, such as for offenses punishable by a maximum term of more than 1 year (felony) or 3 misdemeanors
- Requires all applicants to provide their biometric data to DHS, to submit to background checks and medical examination, and to register for military selective service
- Requires applicants to pay all taxes
- Sets the cut-off age to those who are less than 30 years-old on the date of enactment
- Provides a "safe harbor" from removal

only to those applicants who present a prima facie case of eligibility

- Extends the good moral character requirement back to the date the alien entered the United States rather than the date of enactment of DREAM
- Expands the applicable grounds of inadmissibility to include the health-related, public charge, smuggling, draft dodging, and unlawful voting grounds
- Expands the applicable grounds of deportability to include public charge, unlawful voting, and marriage fraud grounds
- Excludes those who participated in persecution
- Clarifies that no one can apply before 1 year after enactment
- Requires applicants to demonstrate eligibility by a preponderance of the evidence
- Eliminates repeal of the in-state tuition ban
- Defines institution of higher education to include only U.S.-based programs
- Requires those who subsequently apply for adjustment to meet the English language and civics requirements typically required for naturalization
- Expands the circumstances where disclosure of confidential information about DREAM applicants is required for homeland security or national security purposes
- Creates conditional nonimmigrant status for 10 years, followed by 3 years of LPR status prior to application for naturalization. ●

FREE Legal Consultations for DREAMers



The Law Firm of Figeroux & Associates, which recently reopened at 1105 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn supports former Secretary of State Colin Powell and all others who have taken a stand for the DREAM Act and the undocumented youth. Speaking to the *Caribbean American Weekly*, Mr Figeroux said, "America has a moral responsibility to pass the DREAM Act. There is absolutely no real reason to have bright, talented individuals pay for the decisions of their parents. Moreover, it makes economic sense to pass the DREAM Act. To show our support, we are offering FREE LEGAL consultations to persons who came here before their 16th birthday to help them prepare for the passage of this Bill.

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