



# Your Congressman Reports

## Danny K. Davis

Representative in Congress

August 2006 – 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District - Illinois

### Citizen Participation: The Key That Unlocks the Door to Change

*All roads lead to the State of the District Town Hall Meeting*

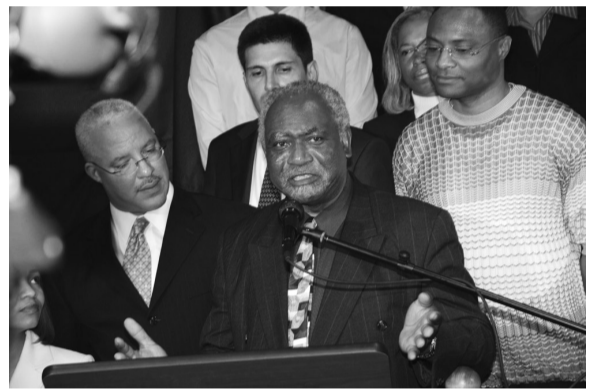
*Malcolm X College*

*1900 W. Van Buren Street*

*Chicago, Illinois*

*Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m.*

The actualization of democracy will only occur as citizens involve themselves in the actual making of public policy decisions. That is why I host a large number of town hall meetings – so that you, residents of the 7<sup>th</sup> District, will have ample opportunities to discuss your thoughts, ideas and concerns about issues of public policy. Please come out to Malcolm X College on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> and share in a great discussion. You will also be able to access information about jobs, childcare, healthcare, housing, health screening, nutrition and business development.



To register or to find more information, please call 773-533-7520. Young people are especially welcome. Churches, schools, programs and organizations are encouraged to bring groups so that they can all learn together. Meet people from the city, suburbs, downtown, Southside, Northside, Westside and all over.

Congressman Davis speaking at a Town Hall meeting on HIV/AIDS (Dr. Eric E. Whitaker, Director, Illinois Department of Public Health is to the Congressman's right).

To reach my office: 773-533-7520  
[www.house.gov/davis](http://www.house.gov/davis)

This has been a very busy, meaningful and productive year. I continue to serve on the Small Business, Government Reform and Oversight, and Education and the Workforce Committees. All of these committees have had heavy agendas which kept us busy with hearings, mark-ups and re-

authorizing legislation. In Government Reform and Oversight, I serve as Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce and Agency Organization and on the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources.

### Congressman Davis on the Urgent and Critical Issues Facing America

#### *War in Iraq*

I voted against the resolution which permitted the invasion of Iraq because I did not see justification and still do not feel that our military presence has been vindicated. I take the position that Iraqi forces should be in charge of their country's security and our task now is to make sure that they are adequately trained and equipped so that we can withdraw U.S. troops as soon as possible. The President and his advisors should set a time certain for withdrawal.

I have been consistently opposed to our military presence in Iraq, but remain a strong supporter of our troops. I voted against the Iraqi invasion, am a member of the Out of Iraq Caucus and believe that we should have a full-blown exit strategy which includes a well trained and equipped local security force by a targeted date certain. The U.S. invasion of Iraq has been too costly in lives, injuries, heartache, agony, pain, frustration and money.

#### *Minimum Wage*

As one who chopped cotton for 30 cents an hour with a college degree in my back pocket, no one needs to lobby me to support a raise in the minimum wage. I know first hand how degrading it is to work full time for a whole week and not earn enough to cover the basic necessities of life. It is inconceivable that Congress would vote itself a raise and not be willing to help lift out of poverty individuals who work full time jobs and can't pay utility bills, buy Pampers, send their children to school or take in a movie once a month.

If we really want to get the economy moving, I propose that we raise the minimum wage to a liveable wage, because every dime that poor people receive will be plowed right back into the economy, thereby adding to the circulation which helps to make the economy strong.

Any person who works a full-time job should earn enough money to meet the basic necessities of food, shelter, clothing, utilities, the ability to send their children to school and be able to put a little something away for rainy days. The current majority in Congress has steadfastly resisted and beat back every attempt to raise the minimum wage.

### ***The 2007 Budget***

Budgets are ways of expressing priorities and direction. Unfortunately, the budget passed for next year expresses seriously flawed priorities and serious misdirection. It is riddled with harsh spending cuts for the working class and poor Americans, tax cuts for the wealthiest 1% of the population, does not reflect the needs of the country and results in huge and unsustainable deficits.

I voted against the Administration's budget and worked with the Congressional Black Caucus to develop an alternative budget that is fiscally responsible and is aimed at reducing disparities in America's communities. Our budget is balanced in five years, and creates a surplus of 2.3 billion dollars in FY2011. It improves the deficit by an aggregate of \$313 billion dollars and results in a savings of \$10.5 billion in interest on the national debt.

We did this by returning to a responsible tax structure and by redirecting savings from a reduction in the Ballistic Missile Defense program in FY2007. We make America more secure by supporting our military, investing in our homeland security and caring for our veterans. We protect our troops in Iraq, increase the Army's troop level, maintain current National Guard strength and provide \$1 billion more for funding essential military equipment.

On the domestic side, we provide \$80 billion additional support over five years for education and job training and over \$20 billion more over five years for health care than the Republican budget. It also provides additional funding for job creation programs under SBA, Community and Regional Development Programs, Nutrition Programs, NASA research and development, Amtrak, Hope VI and Section 8 housing programs, Low Income Home Energy Assistance and housing for the disabled and elderly.

The CBC alterative budget recognizes that it is the federal government's responsibility to assist in a natural disaster that devastates an entire region of our country. Our budget provided money for school and college reconstruction and housing in the Gulf Coast. I was very proud to vote for the CBC budget and know that it was the best presented.

### ***Voting Rights Act Renewal***

On Thursday, July 27 after several false starts and some delays, the President signed the renewal of the Voting Rights Act without any amendments. Like many other members of the Congressional Black Caucus, I have been actively engaged in activities designed to promote passage and participate vigorously and enthusiastically in efforts to help set the stage for its passage.



Congressman Davis, Senator John Kerry and Marc Mauer (the Sentencing Project) speaking at a forum on the need to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act.

As one who grew up in rural Arkansas where my parents and their friends had to pay a poll tax in order to vote, and as one who lives in a large urban inner city community where manipulative games are played with peoples' rights, I know first hand the value of the Voting Rights Act and its importance to the safeguarding of our democracy.

There are still too many cases of at-large districting, polling place movement without proper notification and intimidation of unsuspecting voters who have language and education barriers. Every citizen should have the right to vote unencumbered and without incident. Renewal of the Voting Rights Act will help to accomplish this goal.

### ***Genocide in Darfur Must Cease***

The Congressional Black Caucus declared that genocide was occurring in Darfur, Sudan on June 24, 2004, with the introduction of H Con Res 467, both the House and Senate passed the resolution overwhelmingly. In September of that year, then Secretary of State Colin Powell also determined that genocide was occurring. The humanitarian, security and political crisis in Darfur has continued since the beginning of the genocide in 2003 despite growing national and international attention.

Darfur, a historically marginalized, underdeveloped and disabused region of Black Muslims in Western Sudan, is home to approximately seven million people. Of that population, an estimated 450,000 people have died, more than

2.5 million people have been displaced internally, at least 200,000 have fled to Chad, and three million people are surviving on emergency food assistance. Countless girls and women are being raped daily. As the violence escalated over recent months, at least 200,000 have fled their homes since January of this year. Bombings of villages by the military have occurred several times.

As part of the Congressional Black Caucus strategy, in addition to supporting the Hyde-Payne Bill HR3127, the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, Reps. Mel Watt (NC), Bargar Lee (CA), John Lewis (GA), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC), Gwen Moore (WI), and Al Green (TX), Delegate Donna Christensen from the Virgin Islands, and Danny K. Davis (IL) protested on May 16, 2006 and allowed ourselves to be arrested in front of the Sudanese Embassy in our belief that civil disobedience still has merit as part of our effort to bring attention to this problem and HR3127.

### ***Congressman Davis on Immigration***

One of the biggest, most complex and most passionate issues facing Americans today is the issue of immigration. In order to better understand where residents of the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District stand, I held a town hall meeting on June 1 at the Maywood Village Hall where a very heated and passionate discussion took place.



Congressman Davis speaking to Town Hall meeting on immigration.

Many of the speakers expressed fear of too many immigrants coming in from Mexico, taking jobs, undercutting wages and overtaxing social service systems. Others took the position that we should be more open, more flexible and more understanding of the desire that others have to come to this country. My position, stated at the meeting was undergirded by quoting Emma Lazarus, “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these the homeless tempest-tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”

We need to remember the history of how most racial and ethnic groups got to America and we need to remember “that immigrants are not the enemy.” There is a need for a comprehensive approach to immigration that includes fair laws for entrance from all countries, increased border security, articulated objectives and enforcement of our work laws. **I am opposed to:** illegal entry and building fences. **I am in favor of:** increasing border patrols; insuring that all legal workers in the U.S. should be assured nondiscriminatory employment opportunity for a fair and liveable wage; an immigration policy that will increase diversity of immigration from countries that have historically been under represented, such as the Caribbean, Africa, and Haiti; earned access to lawful permanent resident status for persons currently in the United States that takes into account the following factors: unification of immigrants with family members who are citizens or lawful permanent residents, proven employment records through temporary or guest worker programs or other temporary residence programs, good moral character throughout their stays in the U.S. for long periods of time without any convictions for criminal offenses and participation in some clinic or community service.

### ***Postal Issues***

I have been part of a four-member bipartisan leadership team in the House working on major Postal Reform. Our bill has passed both the House and Senate and is ready for conference, and I am currently participating in pre-conference discussions.

After experiencing some concerns and difficulties with mail delivery in the Loop and Near Northside areas, I initiated and convened town hall meetings at the Latin School and in Marina Towers to discuss the issues. I also worked with a team from the local postal operation and brought the issue to the attention of the United States Postmaster General, Mr. John Potter. On June 1, 2006, the Postal Service made Executive Reassignments which resulted in two key management changes. Kevin Mack was made District Manager/Postmaster for the Chicago Performance Cluster, and Michael A. Armstrong was brought in from Indianapolis, Indiana to become the Manager of Post Office Operations for the Chicago Performance Cluster. With these personnel changes and with the cooperation of union leadership working with management, I am confident that these issues will be resolved.

### ***Where Do You Stand on the Issues?***

I value your opinion. Please send the five (5) top issues you would like to have me work on. If it is something we’re already doing, that’s good too. Write to Congressman Danny K. Davis, 3333 W. Arthington Street, Suite 130, Chicago, Illinois 60624.

## Town Hall Meetings

### *North Lawndale Town Hall Meeting Draws Over 800*

On June 5, 2006, I held a town hall meeting in collaboration with 24<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Michael A. Chandler at the Greater Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, 1308 South Independence, Chicago, Illinois to discuss plans for revitalization and redevelopment of the North Lawndale community.

More than 800 community residents came out to hear city planners, department heads, private consultants, the Steans Family Foundation and representatives from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac discuss plans for new houses, businesses and infrastructure. This development is still underway and the community is indeed excited about it.



Congressman Davis takes questions from the audience at the Housing Town Hall meeting.

Also in attendance were several students and parents from the Roswell B. Mason Elementary School who had just returned from a trip to Washington where they visited my office.

### *Upcoming Town Hall on Recovery*

You are invited to a Town Hall meeting on Recovery on Saturday, September 23, 2006, 9:00 a.m., Union Park, at Ashland and Lake. Last year, our meeting drew more than five hundred participants. To sign up, please call 733-533-7520.

On June 26, in the wake of more than seventy deaths from fentanyl-laced heroin I assembled a town hall meeting of elected officials, community and institution-based providers, public health officials, community-based organizations, physicians and religious leaders to call for emergency funding of four million dollars to provide treatment to 600 addicts on waiting lists who were waiting for treatment.

Between 1994 and 2003, the drug arrest rate increased 24% in Cook County, from 1,002 to 1,270 per 100,000 population, more than double the rate in the rest of Illinois. Approximately 72% of male and 79% of female arrestees in Chicago tested positive for any drug use in 1999. It is clear that, in many instances, drug use and crime go hand in glove. Reduce drug use, reduce crime.

Recognizing the serious link between drug use and crime, I have written some ground breaking legislation, the Second Chance Re-Entry Bill. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee on July 26 and hopefully will be ready for floor action when we return from summer recess and be passed this session.

### *Annual Responsible Fatherhood Town Hall*

On June 3, 2006, I hosted our annual Town Hall meeting on Responsible Fatherhood in collaboration with Attorney Jeffrey Leving and the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood at Malcolm X College as a prelude to Father's Day. The event featured workshops for fathers, a job fair, health information and discussions on fathers' rights and responsibilities. Far too many of our children experience the absence of a father in their lives and we must do everything possible to help. Men should know that no matter what their circumstances and status in life they can still function positively in the lives of their children as a father.

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**U.S. House of Representatives**  
Washington, D.C. 20515-1307

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