



YOUR VOICE IN CONGRESS

GARY ACKERMAN

*Serving the Residents of
Queens & Long Island*

WINTER 2003

CONSTITUENT NEWSLETTER

\$\$\$ OBTAINED FOR NYC/LONG ISLAND COPS & FIREFIGHTERS

Congressman Gary Ackerman, seeking to best equip local emergency workers, recently helped secure federal funds for Long Island and New York City's bravest and finest. This money includes \$50,000 for the Manhasset-Lakeville Fire Department (which serves Manhasset, Great Neck and New Hyde Park), \$202,235 for Rescue Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 of Roslyn, \$28,100 for the Port Washington Fire Department, \$76,230 for the East Williston Fire Department and \$715,000 for the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). Covered items—depending on the department—include everything from fire prevention, code enforcement and public awareness to training, equipment, fire safety and hazardous materials response.

Ackerman also obtained \$80 million for the N.Y.P.D. to increase their reimbursement rate for the protection of foreign officials and more than \$30 million in back payments for that service from the U.S. State Department. Another \$9 million was approved to cover overtime costs related to homeland security and violent or drug related crimes.

In addition, Ackerman recently helped the Nassau County Police Department receive a waiver from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to overhaul its radio dispatching system, along with \$6 million to pay for it. This upgrade permits Nassau police headquarters to communicate with police and fire departments in the county's towns and villages, which the present system—due to incompatible frequencies—has been incapable of doing. This resulted in a communications system incapable of dealing with a large-scale emergency. The upgrade also eliminates congestion and static that has plagued communications when officers pursue suspects or respond to accidents.

Furthermore, \$196,604 was acquired for the New York State Police to install 46 patrol car video cameras that provide visual records of traffic stops and other infractions. The devices serve as evidence at trials, training devices and deterrents to assaults on state troopers. The cameras also help promote trooper integrity.

Another \$545,000 was awarded to several additional law enforcement agencies on Long Island including local village police departments.



Congressman Ackerman at the East Hills Day fair presenting more than \$202,000 to members of Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 of Roslyn.

Visiting Queens & Long Island Troops In Iraq War



Congressman Ackerman in Israel last winter, discussing military operations with U.S. soldiers from Queens and Long Island stationed at the Patriot Missile base for America's war against Iraq.

Receive E-mail From Congressman Ackerman!

Sign-up today to receive e-mail—including future newsletters and official updates—from your Congressman, Gary Ackerman. Simply register your email address by returning the enclosed postage paid postcard or clip and mail this coupon to: Congressman Ackerman, 218-14 Northern Boulevard, Bayside, N.Y. 11361. You can also sign-up online at www.house.gov/ackerman. Don't worry, it's totally free and your e-mail address is not shared with anybody.



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END UNWANTED TELEMARKETING CALLS

Are you constantly harassed by annoying telemarketers? Well, now there's a way to make them stop calling. It's under a new law the Congressman Ackerman recently promoted that establishes a national "Do Not Call" registry. If your name is on this list, telemarketers are not allowed to call you. Just imagine, no more unwanted calls from telemarketers attempting to sell you something while you're in the middle of dinner, watching television or sleeping.

You can register for this great new service by calling 888-382-1222. The call is free but it must be

made from the phone number that you want on the registry. Or you can sign up on the Internet at www.donotcall.gov. Remember to register your fax numbers as well.

Be advised that signing up costs nothing. Other web sites or phone solicitors that claim they can register for you or get you taken off telemarketing lists are a scam. Do not answer their questions and do not give them money.

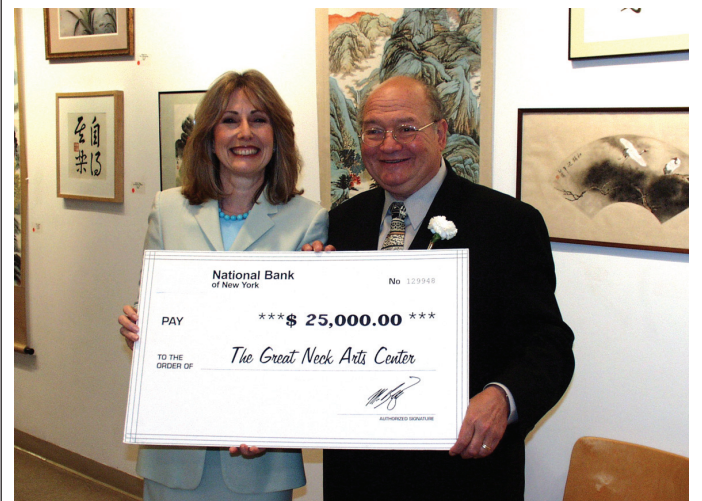
Phone solicitors who violate the Do Not Call Registry face fines up to \$11,000. To date, more than 50 million Americans are participating in the program including nearly 4 million homes in New York. That's 40 percent of all New

York households.

Although this Do Not Call program was scheduled to take effect this past October 1st, it was blocked in late September by two federal judges who claimed the measure was unconstitutional and violated free speech. However a federal appeals court overruled those decisions saying the federal government can run the registry while a challenge from telemarketers winds its way through the legal system.

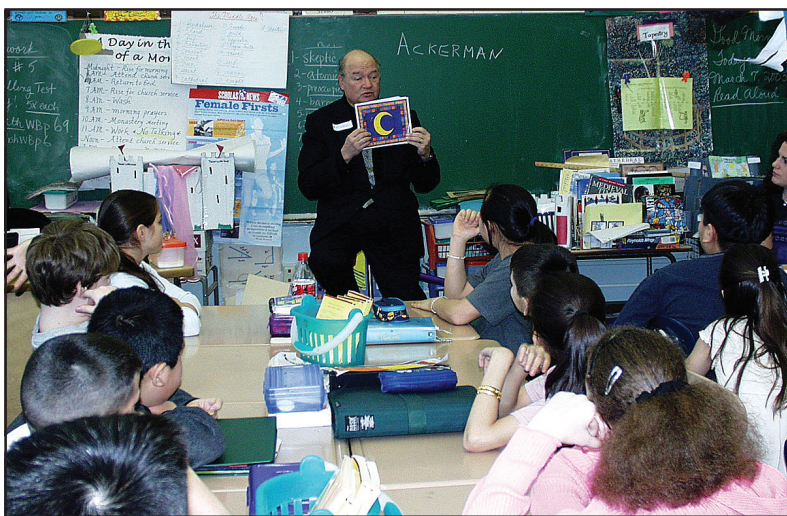
In the meantime, the Congressman will be watching this legal fight closely in the hopes that the courts allow the Do Not Call Registry to become the permanent law of the land.

Funds For The Arts Secured



Congressman Ackerman awarding \$25,000 to the Great Neck Arts Center for arts outreach to Long Island & Queens children. Accepting the funds is the facility's executive director Regina Gil.

ACKERMAN SPEAKS TO STUDENTS



Congressman Ackerman—a leader in obtaining education funding—discussing the role of the federal government with sixth graders at P.S. 107 in Flushing.

ACKERMAN DISTRICT IS TOPS IN RECEIVING FEDERAL MONEY

According to an independent study conducted by the Associated Press (AP), Congressman Gary Ackerman's fifth Congressional District was ranked first in New York State and 37th in the nation (out of all 435) for receiving the most in federal dollars—\$9.5 billion!

The news service's analysis compared total federal government spending among the nation's 435 congressional dis-

tricts. The totals include demographic-based funding such as Social Security and Medicare, direct spending on regional projects and government loans and insurance.

The only other New York district to make the top 130 on the AP list, was in upstate New York.

The computation was the result of 2001 spending. A 2002 study has not been released.

ACKERMAN BILL TO REFORM NEGATIVE CREDIT REPORTING BECOMES LAW

Have you checked your credit report lately? Do you know what it says and whether the information is accurate? If not, you're not alone because each year millions of Americans are erroneously labeled as deadbeats by the major credit bureaus. But errors like this which unfairly ruin people's credit will become much less common thanks to a new landmark consumer protection measure sponsored by Congressman Gary Ackerman and signed into law this month by the President.

This new law requires banks, financial institutions and other lenders to notify consumers any time negative information is added to their credit re-

ports, which are maintained by the credit-reporting agencies. Negative information includes items such as late payments and delinquencies.

Under the measure, consumers must be notified on their statement from their creditor for loans, mortgages, credit cards, etc. that the negative information is going to be reported. Presently consumers are not informed when such adverse data is sent to the credit-reporting agencies. Consequently, most Americans have no idea that such information, whether accurate or not, has been reported about them. This will also be vital notification for the con-

sumer whose identity has been stolen, another problem affecting millions of Americans each year.

The law, which was included in the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act (which amends the Fair Credit Reporting Act) also protects sensitive medical information from being shared. In addition, it also allows consumers to obtain a free copy of their credit report each year, something not permitted under current law.

To request a copy of your credit report, contact either of the three major credit reporting agencies which are Equifax: 800-685-1111, Experian: 888-397-3742 and Transunion: 800-888-4213.



CONGRESSMAN ACKERMAN BRINGS YOUR TAX DOLLARS HOME

\$1,000,000	Nassau County, cleanup of Brownfield sites (contaminated industrial areas posing health threats).
\$600,000	Port Washington Harbor Homes rebuilding, part of a \$12 million package.
\$100,000	Flushing YMCA.
\$450,000	Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, North Shore-Long Island Jewish (LIJ) Health System's mental health component.
\$25,000	Alley Pond Environmental Center in Douglaston.
\$750,000	Town of North Hempstead's storm-water management program.
\$1,200,000	New York Hall of Science, Flushing Meadows Corona Park.
\$2,500,000	Long Island Sound cleanup related programs.
\$495,000	Queensborough Public Library.
\$25,000	Great Neck Arts Center in Great Neck.
\$1,458,000	Flushing Bay/Flushing Creek dredging & cleanup.
\$250,000	Town of North Hempstead, emergency communications upgrades.
\$675,000	Nassau County park facilities, water quality infrastructure improvements.
\$250,000	Nassau County Long Island Bus.
\$250,000	MTA-Long Island Bus.
\$750,000	Institute for Student Achievement in Lake Success.
\$125,000	Tilles Center on C.W. Post campus, youth after school programs.
\$300,000	Village of Bayville, beach erosion study.
\$200,000	Village of Asharoken, beach erosion study.
\$1,000,000	City of New York to equip a new police laboratory.



Remembering Victims of 9/11



Congressman Ackerman in Manhasset speaking about homeland security at North Hempstead Town Hall during September 11th anniversary ceremonies.

ACKERMAN FORCES CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

In the wake of the Enron, WorldCom and other corporate scandals, accounting firms will be forbidden from consulting for the companies they audit under a new law authored by Congressman Gary Ackerman.

Last year the accounting firm Arthur Andersen, under scrutiny for destroying documents and bungling audits for the bankrupt Enron, was criticized for its dual relationship as a consultant and auditor for the energy giant. Anderson was also the accounting firm for WorldCom. Many analysts contend that Arthur Andersen overlooked questionable accounting practices for fear of jeopardizing consulting contracts worth tens of millions of dollars.

Up until passage of the measure, Andersen and the nation's other large accounting firms fended off past attempts to limit consulting work for their audit clients due to it becoming a lucrative part of their business.

The measure was introduced this measure shortly after the Enron scandal broke, and it was included in the Sarbanes-Oxley Accounting Reform Bill.

While more still needs to be done to punish and discourage corporations from "cooking the books," this new law at least prevents the fox from guarding the chicken coop. It also helps investors and public companies by avoiding even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

ACKERMAN VOTES AGAINST ADVERSE CHANGES TO MEDICARE

On November 22, 2003, Republicans in the House of Representatives brought a bill containing a landmark overhaul of Medicare to the House floor for a vote. When the clock hit zero, the Democrats won, defeating it by a count of 218-216. But the Republicans refused to lose and extended the routine 15 minute voting time to an unprecedented three hours so they could persuade enough of their members to change their votes. So at 3 A.M., the measure passed. Three days later, the Senate approved it, also in a close vote and sent the measure to President Bush, who signed it into law.

This new law is a faulty measure that fails to lower the sky-rocketing costs of prescription drugs and it creates only a very weak drug benefit for senior citizens. In addition, it ultimately leads to the privatization of parts of Medicare and forces millions of retirees to lose their health coverage. For these reasons, Congressman Ackerman fought and voted against this legislation.

Under these new regulations, seniors will now pay a premium for prescription drugs estimated at \$35 a month with a \$250 deductible. Medicare will pay 75% of drug costs between the deductible and \$2250, but then **NOTHING** for anything between \$2250 and \$5100! This creates a huge, gaping hole in drug coverage for seniors and keeps out-of-pocket drug costs staggering. For the first \$2000 of coverage, consumers will pay over \$1100; for the first \$5100 of coverage, consumers will pay approximately \$4,000, or 80% of their drug costs! Although a drug benefit for Medicare is welcome, this plan does not go far enough and it's a poor trade off for the significant weakening this new law does to Medicare.

The law also does not include any mandate for employers to continue providing drug benefits to retirees. While many companies have provided drug benefits to former employees, they will now have no obligation to continue providing them. So many retirees who spent a lifetime working for a good retirement benefit will be dropped and forced into Medicare for their drug coverage.

One of the most dramatic and troubling provisions in this overhaul is that Medicare will now compete with private plans. Privatizing parts of Medicare is dangerous. Unlike Medicare, private health insurance companies are unreliable and have no obligation to enroll everyone that applies. Private companies can 'cherry-pick' only the healthiest seniors and set higher premiums, leaving high cost seniors in traditional Medicare. Residents in Queens and Long Island should be guaranteed a reliable benefits through Medicare, not coverage administered through an ancillary businesses whose only priority is to make a profit.

These new Medicare changes also fail to hold down drug costs, as the government is **PROHIBITED** from negotiating better prices for drugs from the trillion dollar pharmaceutical industry. Without cost controls, drug companies will pocket billions from this law, and seniors will continue to see their drug costs rise. In addition, the changes **FORBID** senior citizens from continuing to purchase cheaper drugs from Canada or Mexico.

This terrible law also fails the test of a real Medicare drug benefit and fails the senior citizens of America. More than 13 million older Americans do not have any type of prescription coverage, placing them in peril in the face of the sky-rocketing costs of drugs. It is simply unacceptable that older Americans throughout our community and nation are often forced to choose between paying for critical medication, putting food on their tables or heating their homes. It is imperative that we keep our promise to improve, not destroy, Medicare and alleviate the costs of prescription drugs.

Despite the passage of this troubling legislation, Congressman Ackerman's commitment to secure a Medicare plan that benefits our nation's seniors has not been compromised. He will continue to fight to repeal problematic provisions, and to champion a benefit that will allow ALL seniors, regardless of income, the choice of an affordable and dependable Medicare prescription-drug benefit.

ATTENTION PET OWNERS AND PARENTS!!!

Congressman Gary Ackerman has introduced legislation aimed at combating the huge but widely unknown problem of antifreeze poisoning in children and animals.

Each year, more than 4000 children and 90,000 pets and animals accidentally ingest antifreeze from driveways, puddles and curbside road spills. Children mistake the substance's look and sweet taste for a soft drink, juice or other beverage and animals are naturally attracted to the chemical's sweet smell. Ingestion of antifreeze—even in tiny amounts—is often fatal. In cases where death does not occur, it causes extreme sickness.

The problem is particularly prevalent in Queens and Long Island due to the large number of area roadways and driveways. It poses a danger to kids playing outdoors, dogs being walked, cats let outdoors and even stray animals such as birds, squirrels, raccoons, etc.

Under the bill, manufacturers of antifreeze would be required to add a bittering agent to the chemical which would make the substance unpalatable to pets and children, assuring they would no longer drink the poisonous chemical. The process would be easy to do and cost only pennies per gallon. The requirement is already law in Cali-

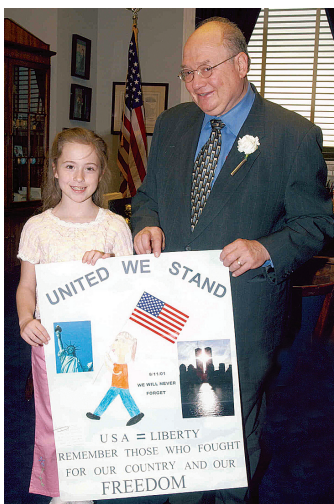
fornia and Oregon and it is pending in Nevada.

Speaking of animals, Congressman Ackerman this summer once again pushed his bill to prohibit the common practice of dragging sick and diseased livestock too injured to walk or stand (known as Downed Animals) into stockyards and selling them as food to supermarkets, butchers and restaurants.

However the measure didn't only appeal to animal lovers peeved over the abuse. It was also intended to reduce the risk of Mad Cow Disease in the United States. A downed animal caused such an outbreak several months ago in Canada, which led to a worldwide health threat. Canada's cattle industry was shut down as dozens of other nations, including the U. S. banned Canadian meat. Europe also continues to recover from a similar outbreak. An epidemic here could bring serious illness or even death to thousands of Americans and it would devastate our economy.

Although the downed animal provision did not pass due to intense lobbying by the cattle industry (the vote was 199 to 202), it went down after a valiant fight and passionate debate on the floor of the House. It's clearly not the last time Congress has seen this legislation.

Local Students Honored



Congressman Ackerman in his Capitol Hill office saluting Emily Goetz, winner of the student art contest in the annual Little Neck-Douglaston Memorial Day celebration. She is a fourth grader at P.S. 221.



ACKERMAN DISTRICT ENCOMPASSES NEW COMMUNITIES

Last January, Congressman Gary Ackerman's fifth Congressional district was slightly redrawn to include several additional neighborhoods in Queens and Nassau County. The adjustment was the result of reapportionment, a process by which every ten years the boundaries of New York State's Congressional districts are reconfigured based upon population changes in the national census. The following is a list of all of the areas included in the new fifth Congressional district.

QUEENS COMMUNITIES

Aurbindale, Bayside, Bay Terrace, Beechhurst, Bell Park Gardens, Bell Park Manor, Corona, Douglaston, Douglaston Manor, East Elmhurst, Flush-

ing, Glen Oaks, Hollis Hills, Holliswood, Jackson Heights, Jamaica Estates, LeFrak City, Linden Hill, Little Neck, Malba, Queensboro Hill, Whitestone.

NASSAU COMMUNITIES

Albertson, Baxter Estates, East Williston, Flower Hill, Great Neck, Great Neck Estates, Great Neck Gardens, Great Neck Plaza, Greenvale, Kensington, Kings Point, Lake Success, Manhasset, Manhasset Hills, Manorhaven, Munsey Park, North Hills, New Hyde Park, Old Westbury, Plandome, Plandome Heights, Plandome Manor, Port Washington, Port Washington North, Roslyn, Roslyn Estates, Roslyn Harbor, Roslyn Heights, Russell Gardens, Saddle Rock, Saddle Rock Estates, Sands Point, Searingtown, Strathmore, Uni-

versity Gardens, Williston Park.

In addition to Washington, D.C., the local office—which remains at 218-14 Northern Boulevard (Route 25A) in Bayside—continues to assist both new and old constituents with problems involving federal matters. Feel free to call at 718-423-2154.

The location is no more than a 20 minute drive from anywhere in the district. It's also reachable via the Q12, Q13 and Q31 bus routes in Queens, the N20 and N21 bus lines in Nassau and the Bayside Long Island Railroad station. The Washington office can also be contacted at 202-225-2601 and the virtual office can be accessed at www.house.gov/ackerman.



Congressman Ackerman talking with constituents about Congressional issues at the town dock in Port Washington (L) and in LeFrak City in Corona (R).



ACKERMAN STEERS FORT TOTTEN TO PUBLIC PARK

NO HOMELESS SHELTER TO BE PUT ON BAYSIDE SITE

Possible plans for a massive homeless shelter on the grounds of the decommissioned Fort Totten Army base in Bayside have been quashed due to the intervention of Congressman Gary Ackerman. The homeless targeted the Fort's 9.6 acre U.S. Coast Guard station when the federal government began disposal proceedings for the property last July. Under the law, the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) as well as homeless advocacy organizations had first crack at the land.

Although sympathetic towards the homeless and an advocate for their cause, Ackerman argued with HUD and the General Services Administration (GSA), the federal government's real estate agent, that Fort Totten was not an appropriate location for homeless housing. The property is among the most prime pieces of waterfront real estate in New York City and the vision has been to make it into the region's most creative and beautiful parks, open to all.

The decision clears the way to transform the Coast Guard property into additional public parkland. This would complement the larger parcel of Fort Totten presently being transferred from the U.S. Army to the City of New York for use as a sprawling park and a Fire Department training academy which is pursuant to the community's wishes.

In addition, assurances were received from GSA and the Army Corps of Engineers that the Coast Guard site's mercury contamination would receive a clean bill of health before it is transferred to the City for public use.

And not to worry about the Coast Guard station. It only moved 1.3 miles down Long Island Sound to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point in Great Neck, an arrangement also brokered by the Congressman. The move allows the Coast Guard to cut costs without compromising response times to emergencies.

NEW PASSPORT OFFICES FOR QUEENS & LONG ISLAND

Congressman Gary Ackerman recently announced the opening of new United States Passport Acceptance Facilities in Bayside, Great Neck, Manhasset and Port Washington.

The locations include Queensborough Community College at 222-05 56th Ave. (718-281-5642), the Village of Russell Gardens at 6 Train Dr. (516-482-8246), the Village of Flower Hill at 1 Bonnie Heights Rd. (516-627-2253) and the Village of Manorhaven at 33 Manorhaven Blvd. (516-883-7000).

Passport facilities are operated under the auspicious of the U.S. State Department which is funded by Congress.

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