



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Vanessa Lowery Brown

2013 YEAR IN REVIEW

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JAN. 1, 2013

State Rep. Vanessa Lowery Brown gets sworn in for third term

State law requires the swearing-in of newly elected House and Senate members must occur on the first Tuesday of the new year following the November election. In 2013, that led to a New Year's Day swearing-in for the members. Rep. Vanessa Lowery Brown began her third term with the New Year's Day oath. First elected in 2008, she began serving the 190th District in January 2009.

She was the first woman elected to serve the 190th District and uses her position to fight for the residents by working to strengthen the city schools and provide constituent assistance dealing with state government red tape.

Her current term expires Nov. 30, 2014.

Rep. Brown leads annual Hug-A-Vet program

On Saturday, May 25, as part of the Memorial Day weekend, Rep. Brown and Sen. Shirley Kitchen celebrated the service of more than 50 veterans from

World War II and the Korean War.

The annual event was held this year at American Defenders Post 968, Philadelphia.



This annual free family event features music, food and entertainment in addition to the ceremony.

Members of the Philadelphia Police and Fire departments participated in the recognition, as well as local veterans' organizations and Boy Scouts.

Rep. Brown is joined by 2013 Hug-a-Vet honorees.

Brown elected to chair PLBC for 2013-14 session

Rep. Brown was elected Chairwoman of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus for the 2013-14 session.

Brown and other officers were sworn in at a ceremony in the Forum Auditorium following the House swearing-in.

More than 350 guests joined the celebration, which also included a number of youth performers and food.

The PLBC was organized during the 1973-74 legislative session by then-House Speaker K. Leroy Irvis in an effort to bring legislators from districts with highly concentrated populations of ethnic-minority populations together as a unified voice on public policies and issues directly affecting their constituencies.

The 2013-14 PLBC members include: Brown, chairwoman; Sen. LeAnna Washington, vice chairwoman; Rep. Stephen Kinsey, secretary; Rep. J.P. Miranda, treasurer; Sen. Shirley Kitchen; Sen. Vincent Hughes; Sen. Anthony H. Williams; Rep. Ronald G. Waters; Rep. James Roebuck Jr; Rep. Louise Williams Bishop; Rep. Thaddeus Kirkland; Rep. Michelle Brownlee; Rep. Curtis Thomas; Rep. Margo Davidson; Rep. Dwight Evans; Rep. Cherelle Parker; Rep.

Rosita Youngblood; Rep. Jake Wheatley; Rep. Patty Kim; Rep. Jordan Harris; Rep. James Clay Jr. and Rep. Ed Gainey.



Newly sworn-in Chairwoman Rep. Brown with other members of the PLBC at the PLBC swearing-in ceremony.

Brown hosts senior Chat-n-Chews

Rep. Brown holds regular Chat-n-Chews at local senior centers. She is joined by community partners and they provide giveaways to the residents. Brown also recognizes the oldest resident with her Sweetheart Award and recognizes deserving staff at the residences.

Brown began her Chat-n-Chew series in early 2009.

Chat-n-Chews have been held at the following locations: Angela Court, Pinn Garden Residence, Opportunity Towers III, St. Matthew Manor, Sarah Allen Home, Mt. Olivet Village, Simpson Fletcher Conestoga House and Katie B. Jackson Plaza. When additional sessions are held, residents at the locations will be notified in advance.



How can Rep. Brown's office help you?

In the past year, Rep. Brown and her constituent service staff have:

- Assisted over 200 residents in job searches
- Hosted 30 West Philadelphia EARN interns
- Provided over 400 food vouchers for local food pantries and cupboards
- Completed over 200 LIHEAP applications and aided with many other state services

Brown leads bus trip to remember the 1963 March on Washington

On Aug. 14, Rep. Brown and the PLBC took a group of constituents to Washington, D.C., to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.

On Aug. 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King and thousands of others met in Washington, D.C., for a peaceful protest for jobs and freedom for all races. Standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial, King gave one of the best-known speeches in American history – his “I Have a Dream” speech.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP:

Here is a brief summary of some of the legislation Rep. Brown has introduced this session:

H.R. 57 urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly to support youth tobacco prevention initiatives. Adopted unanimously in December.

H.R. 582 honors the life and legacy of anti-Apartheid icon Nelson Mandela. Unanimously adopted in December.

H.B. 890 would require anyone using the services of a pawn broker to provide proper identification, including the taking of a digital photo at the time of the transaction. The bill would also allow police to place a 90-day hold on merchandise believed to be stolen. The bill passed the House nearly unanimously and is currently being considered by the Senate Banking and Finance Committee.

H.B. 1026 would increase the penalty for individuals who sell or provide minors with tobacco products by reclassifying the offense as a misdemeanor of the third degree. Currently under consideration in the Judiciary Committee.

H.B. 1408 would enable local school boards to provide firearm safety education instruction to their elementary school students. Referred from the Education Committee for House consideration in December.

H.B. 1847 would amend the Confidentiality of HIV-Related Information Act, relative to the occupational exposure of certain individuals and employees of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, allowing employees to know about possible HIV infection. Currently under consideration in the Judiciary Committee.

H.R. 393 would recognize and honor the civic and social contributions of the PA Voter ID Coalition. Currently under consideration in the State Government Committee.

H.R. 594 would honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Currently under consideration in the Rules Committee.

H.R. 600 would recognize February 2014 as Black History Month in Pennsylvania. Awaiting House vote.

Brown elected to leadership roles with women in government groups

Rep. Brown has been selected to chair the 2014 National Foundation for Women Legislators 2014 annual convention, which will be held in Philadelphia this fall.

The NFWL provides the opportunity for women in elected office to build bipartisan coalitions for solutions to issues facing our society.

The annual convention brings female legislators from around the country together to discuss these issues.

Brown was also elected by fellow female legislators to serve as a State Director for Women in Government for 2014.

Women In Government provides conferences that feature expert speakers on a variety of public policy topics and their impact on states. Topics include health-care reform, diabetes, emerging issues in energy policy, cervical cancer prevention, the current status of women in state legislatures, childhood obesity, public health, economic security and opportunities, and many others. These meetings also provide attendees with the opportunity to network with colleagues across state borders and share best practices and experiences to advance successful public policies.

Women In Government Foundation, Inc. is a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of women state legislators providing leadership opportunities, networking, expert forums, and educational resources. Women In Government serves all 1,791 women who serve in state legislatures from across the country, including 37 Pennsylvania state representatives and eight senators.

Brown rewards readers with zoo trip

Rep. Brown sponsored her second annual Summer Reading Challenge during July and August.

Her resolution, H.R. 356 recognized June, July and August 2013 as Summer Reading Months in Pennsylvania.

Local school students are challenged to read for an hour every day through July and August.

Students who successfully completed the challenge were awarded certificates and 75 of the top readers were invited to join Rep. Brown on a day trip to the Philadelphia Zoo.

Dr. Sonia Sanchez, Philadelphia's poet laureate, attended as well and read to the children.

Readers hold their certificates for participating in the reading challenge.



Rep. Brown and some of the top readers at the Philadelphia Zoo. Poet laureate Dr. Sonia Sanchez is on Rep. Brown's left.



Brown joins anti-violence rally

On Feb. 3, 2013, Rep. Brown joined more than 200 local residents and community leaders in a rally condemning violence against children and women at Bryant Elementary School.

The rally was in response to the abduction of a 5-year-old student from Bryant School in West Philadelphia.

"The rally will bring awareness to the plight of violence against women and children," Brown said. "To know this abduction happened in the safe haven of a school is truly heartbreaking. It is time for the community to come together to end this type of violence. No more victims!

"We have the power and the voice of the people. It is the time for that voice to be heard and our faces to be seen, to let those who would cause harm know that we will not stand for it any longer."

Rep. Brown joins the crowd at the anti-violence rally in Philadelphia. White balloons are released as a symbol of peace during the rally.

Brown hosts annual Spring Fling and egg hunt

Rep. Brown hosts an annual Spring Fling and egg hunt to celebrate the arrival of spring.

The 2013 event was held on March 24 at the Horticulture Center in Fairmount Park.

The program is designed to encourage healthy food choices and outside physical activities as the weather turns warmer.

The Spring Fling included local service agencies and public safety groups, and featured an Easter Parade as well as a visit from the Easter Bunny.



Brown offers prom dresses and safety tips

On April 25, 26 and 27, Rep. Brown and her staff helped make local girls' prom dreams come true with her annual Prom Gown giveaway. More than 300 girls were able to select prom gowns that had been donated by local businesses and individuals.

In addition to the gowns, girls were also able to select accessories such as purses and jewelry.

During the giveaway, girls were given copies of the pamphlet "It's Your Prom." The pamphlet highlights the state's Good Samaritan law, which provides some legal protection for anyone calling 9-1-1 to report serious drug or alcohol issues. The students were advised that making a call could save somebody's life.

Underage drinking laws were also highlighted, including the zero-tolerance rules for underage drivers with alcohol in their system.

The 2013 giveaway included a fashion show at the beginning of the giveaway, and, for the first time, some tuxedos were available for boys.

A mobile prom gown giveaway was also included this year, taking gowns to area schools the week of May 6.



Officer Morris offers prom safety advice to the fashion show attendees.



Rep. Brown poses with some of her fashion show models.

Brown and PLBC salute Fattah in Washington

On Sept. 20 the PLBC sponsored the Taste of Pennsylvania reception during the National Black Caucus Conference at the Lafayette Tower on Drexel University's Washington, D.C., campus.

More than 200 attendees enjoyed Pennsylvania foods and entertainment, with music provided by the Kenny Gamble Band. Gamble and his musical partner Leon Huff were the masterminds of the Philly Sound of the '70s and '80s, and Gamble's band highlighted the sounds of Philadelphia.

Rep. Brown escorted a bus group to the event and the trip down included a stop at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, where a 30-foot high sculpture of the Civil Rights leader has been carved out of stone. Quotes from Dr. King surround the sculpture.

The PLBC also honored Philadelphia Congressman Chaka Fattah with its award for leadership and excellence during the reception.



Rep. Brown presents the PLBC Excellence in Leadership Award to Philadelphia Congressman Chaka Fattah while PLBC members Reps. Patty Kim and Ronald G. Waters join them.



Rep. Brown and her guests stand in the shadow of Dr. King.

REP. BROWN IN THE COMMUNITY Where can you meet Rep. Brown?

Rep. Brown regularly hosts and attends community meetings. Among the regular monthly community meetings she participates in for the 190th District are:

District Office Community Policing Meeting Third Thursdays (District Office)

West Philadelphia Coalition of Business & Neighborhoods

United Block Captain Association
EPIC Stakeholders Meeting

Police District Captains' Community Meeting

West Powelton Concerned Community Council Meeting

Women in Partnership With God
Parkside Business Association

East Parkside Residence Association

East Powelton Community Meeting

West Mill Creek Advisory Council

Mill Creek Recreation Center Meeting

ACHIEVEability Advisory Meeting

People's Emergency Center Meeting

Allegheny West Business Community Meeting

Chairwoman Brown and other members of the PLBC participate in a rally supporting small games of chance

The PLBC presented information March 7, 2013 on how groups can raise funds by hosting small games of chance.

A near-capacity crowd filled the meeting room at Philadelphia Community College's West Philadelphia Regional Center.

The State Police Liquor Enforcement Agency presented a PowerPoint program designed to explain who could qualify for a license, how to apply for a license, record-keeping and award limits.

Small games of chance may include bingo, 50/50 raffles and other games with small cash awards.

Religious groups, social organizations and local school and athletic groups are among the types of organizations that might benefit from these games.

Any group officials who missed the meeting, but would like to find out if their club may benefit from small games of chance may contact Rep. Brown's office at 215-879-6615.



Part of the near-capacity crowd at the small games of chance public meeting.



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Save these dates:

- Spring Fling and Egg Hunt:
April 19
- Prom Safety Dress and Suit Giveaway: April 23-27
- 2014 Image Awards:
May 9
- PLBC Scholarship application deadline:
May 15
- Summer leadership academy applications: May
- Hug-A-Vet: May
- Summer reading program:
July 1

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Summer Leadership Academy graduates recognized

On Aug. 28, Rep. Brown hosted a reception and celebration for the students who participated in the 2013 summer Leadership Academy.

During the ceremony, which was held at the historic Belmont Mansion, 15 students who completed the six-week program were recognized.

Congressman Chaka Fattah provided a keynote address to the crowd and the students spoke on their experiences.

The annual educational program is open to local students between the ages of 14 and 18.

To learn how your student can apply for the program this summer, please contact Rep. Brown's district office at (215) 879-6615.



Rep. Brown with the 2013 Leadership Academy graduates.



The PLBC presents Youth Leadership Academy Keynote Speaker Chaka Fattah with a special citation.

THIS NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTED A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE EVENTS REP. BROWN PARTICIPATED IN WITHIN THE 190TH DISTRICT.

Other events she participated in included:

- Coat Drive Giveaway (January)
- Community Briefing Meeting at Christian Stronghold Church (March)
- Hosted Fun Day for district Shelter Families Forward Philadelphia to support the families grieving from the shelter youth district community pool drowning accident (June)
- Two Community Leaders' Breakfast meetings held at CHOP (September) and Simpson House (December)
- Fan Giveaway during the summer for senior constituents (July)
- School Supplies and Book Bag Giveaway during Back to School Week (September)
- Indigenous Peoples Day Pow Wow at Clara Muhammad Square Park (October)
- Fall Harvest Fest at Clara Muhammad Square Park (October)
- Women and Children Safety Summit (October)
- Turkey Giveaway and Thanksgiving Open House (November)
- Tree Giveaway for constituents (December)
- Toy Drive and Youth Christmas Pageant hosted by Philadelphia MLK Association (December)