

COMMENTARY *By* DR. DHANPAUL NARINE

Congressman Meeks: We Will Defend DACA!

Congressman Meeks met with his constituency a fortnight ago at a Town Hall in Queens, New York. He touched on a number of issues that included the shutdown in Washington, DACA, and President Trump's State of the Union address. Mr. Meeks boycotted the address citing disrespect on the part of the president as the reason. This article looks mainly at the question and answer session at the Town Hall meeting.

Could President Trump be impeached for his comments about the people of other nations and for his behavior in general? Mr. Meeks said that impeachment is not likely "unless there is a change in the make-up of Congress in 2018. The Republicans are currently making all sorts of excuses in protecting the president. Realistically, we don't have the votes to impeach him."

This writer pointed out that he has been teaching in the City of New York for over 30 years. He sees the fear in the eyes of some of the students and their parents whenever deportation is mentioned. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducts sweeps in the community and people are scared. What message does the Congressman have for the community?

Mr. Meeks replied that people from all over the world live in Queens; they speak over 200 languages. "I want them to know that we will be fighting for them. We are lucky that we have a City Council and Mayor that has determined that New York is a sanctuary city. We will do all that we can to protect our people. In fact, we plan to sue Homeland Security for some of the raids that are taking place."

One questioner suggested that welfare reform did not amount to much and that people were poorer as a result of Trump's proposals. Mr. Meeks agreed and promised to publicize it

in Washington. Another question touched on Trump's inability to get on with Congress. It was pointed out that the shutdown was not about DACA although the Republicans wanted people to think that immigration was at the heart of it.

Mr. Meeks agreed. He said that the election in 2018 would be critical for the country. People have to make sure that they come out and vote. But the seats that are occupied by Republicans will have

the response was terrific. Mr. Meeks said that he spoke to young people in the community and they were talking about politics. They had a good idea of what was taking place in the country. According to Mr. Meeks, his faith encourages him that God is in charge. He then touched on the

local there were questions that dealt with the tax base in Queens, employment opportunities at the JFK Airport and the absence of a kiosk machine at a post office.

Mr. Meeks explained that Governor Cuomo wants to have an equitable tax system for New York and that the kiosk

ulated Mr. Meeks for fighting for his health benefits after he was injured at the World Trade Center. As a result of Mr. Meek's intervention, the judge is in good health and is receiving his full benefits.

There were concerns about property taxes increasing as a result of



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versation. People need a decent place in which to live, he stated to applause.

Congressman Meeks completed a successful Town Hall meeting in Queens and returned to Washington. He was quickly on the ball on two issues. He called for the immediate dismissal of House Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes. Mr. Meeks pointed out that Rep. Devin Nunes and the Republican leadership, and the White House, have placed "self-interest and their political agenda above national security."

Mr. Meeks stated further that Chairman Nunes and the Intel Committee have abandoned impartiality and warned that America could be 'dragged into a constitutional crisis.' On February 7, 2018 Mr. Meeks and 32 other Democrats urged the Federal Banking Agencies to strengthen the Community Reinvestment Rules.

The Democrats wanted the Administration and banking regulators to "re-examine the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), to modernize regulations and to better assess whether bank mergers and acquisition benefit the public beyond the gains for financial institutions through increased profits and market power." The letter was addressed to Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Comptroller Joseph Otting.



Congressman Gregory Meeks is flanked by supporters at the Town Hall meeting in Queens, New York.



A section of the audience at the Town Hall meeting. The Congressman has pledged his support for DACA.

to be won by Democrats in order for change to happen. How could the people of South-east Queens become diligent in political affairs? Mr. Meeks replied that his Town Hall meeting was a good example of community mobilization.

The Town Hall was planned in four days and

diversity in his District. There were many nationalities in Queens. His job was to represent all, even the Republicans.

Mr. Meeks said that there was a lot of work to do to bring back Democrats into the fold so the party could be stronger and that the tent bigger. Since politics is largely

will be taken up with the postal authorities. As far as JFK is concerned, the Congressman said that he will look into the grant of concessions at the Airport and will work with other elected officials to ensure that everyone has a fair shake. A retired administrative judge congrat-

inflated housing prices in certain parts of Queens. Mr. Meeks said that more money was needed to invest in public housing. What is happening is a patchwork, he said. He is hopeful that there will be more money for public housing and that he will get people involved to start the right con-