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DROMM ELECTED CHAIR OF IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE

Jackson Heights, NY, January 25, 2010 -- Council Member Daniel Dromm has been elected by the New York City Council to serve as the Chair of the Immigration Committee. Dromm, an openly gay former public school teacher, has been actively involved in civil rights and community organizing for over two decades. On November 3rd, 2009, Dromm was overwhelmingly elected to serve the 25th District, which has the highest percentage of foreign-born residents (encompassing parts of Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, LeFrak City, Corona, Rego Park, and Woodside).

At a press conference held in Jackson Heights with immigration advocates and community leaders, Council Member Dromm declared, "It doesn't matter where you come from or how you got here. What matters is where we are going together".

Council Member Dromm continued, "As committee chairperson, I look forward to addressing the wide array of issues that our immigrants face when they come here. In the City Council, I represent what is perhaps the most diverse, immigrant rich community in the city, if not the world. It is indeed an honor to chair this committee and I thank Speaker Quinn and my colleagues for supporting me in this effort." Dromm, who has Irish roots and speaks Spanish fluently, explained, "What immigrants want is what all New Yorkers want -- the right to pursue happiness and freedom in our great land."

"We are very excited to have Council Member Dromm as the new chair of the Immigration Committee of the NYC Council, not only because he represents Jackson Heights, New York City's most diverse neighborhood where seven out of ten residents are foreign born, but also because his leadership is rooted in his long-time work fighting for civil rights and dignity for all" said Ana Maria Archila, co-Executive Director of Make the Road NY. "He will bring the wisdom and experience gained from his work as a public school teacher to advance solutions to the drop out crisis and the challenges facing our schools. And his presence truly opens the doors of government to hundreds of thousands of Latino immigrants who are in the process of learning English, who will be able to communicate directly in Spanish with the leader of the Immigration Committee in the Council. Immigrant communities have a real ally and champion today as the chair of the Immigration Committee."

Ciaran Staunton, co-founder and president of Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform, said, "Daniel Dromm will be a strong advocate for immigrants in New York City, especially in these tough economic times. I have worked with him successfully in the past on local initiatives and I know that Danny's experience makes him the perfect person to lead our efforts to give my fellow immigrants the respect they deserve, and the resources they require."

"Council Member Dromm is a strong choice to lead the Immigration Committee of the City Council" said Seema Agnani, Executive Director of Chhaya CDC. "His experience as a community organizer showcased a determination to increase the participation of immigrants in the democratic process. His recent campaign was successful in capturing the hopes, and addressing the concerns, of many of our newest neighbors. We look forward to working with him on critical issues including improving immigrant housing conditions and advocating for comprehensive immigration reform by the federal government."

"As an immigrant of African descent, I applaud the appointment of Council Member Daniel Dromm, who has been on the forefront of the struggle for inclusion and equality, to be chair of the Immigration Committee," said George Onuorah, founder and CEO of Youths International. "There is no doubt Dromm understands the importance of tolerance and cooperation for the betterment of everyone. There can only be positives and pluses when we unite, for only in unity can we achieve progress."

"A patchwork of immigrants elects an openly gay councilman" is how the New York Times recently described Dromm's election. Among the priorities that Dromm outlined for the Immigration Committee are relieving school overcrowding in communities with large immigrant populations, expanding funding of English-as-a-Second Language programs, improving health care access for immigrants, opening a jobs and community center, improving immigrant housing conditions, supporting federal legislation for the DREAM Act and highlighting the need for comprehensive federal immigration reform.

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