



## **California Assembly Majority Leader Karen Bass**

### **Biography**

Karen Bass has been a State Assembly Member representing Los Angeles' 47th District since 2005. Speaker Fabian Núñez selected Bass as the Majority Floor Leader for the California State Assembly during the 2007-2008 legislative session, making her the first African American and the first woman to hold this leadership position. During the 2005-2006 legislative session, Bass served as the Majority Whip. She also serves as the chair of the Select Committee on Foster Care.

Since taking office, Assemblymember Bass has made Foster Care Reform her top priority. As chair of the Select Committee on Foster Care, she has organized bipartisan participation that has resulted in a legislative package of 25 bills focusing on improving the state's Foster Care System. These measures reflect the voices of hundreds of children, parents, foster families, labor unions, government experts and foster family agencies who testified at more than 15 public hearings hosted by Bass throughout California. She also has helped secure \$82 million in the 2006/2007 state budget for Foster Care Reform, which is the largest increased allocation in more than a decade and develop new laws to help improve the System.

Assemblymember Bass, who is the vice chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, commissioned a report to research the basic demographic profile of Black Californians including the basic social and economic conditions. The State of Black California report included a statewide organizing effort to involve Black Californians in identifying their concerns and making legislative recommendations.

Governor Schwarzenegger has signed ten of Assemblymember Bass' bills into law focusing on Foster Care reform; Healthy Families Insurance Coverage to help prevent children from going without health insurance; a small business policy that removes red tape by preventing businesses from filling out duplicate certification forms for the city and state; and a measure that expands the Baldwin Hills Conservancy.

She was raised in the Venice/Fairfax neighborhood and graduated from the University of Southern California, School of Medicine – Physician Assistant Program, where she has been a faculty member for more than a decade. Bass worked as a Physician Assistant in the nation's largest trauma center, Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center. During her tenure in the emergency room, she saw the despair and violence unleashed by the crack cocaine epidemic. Bass used her organizing experience by founding the Community Coalition, a direct response to the devastation of the drug epidemic and "war on drugs" on South Los Angeles.

Under Bass' leadership, the Community Coalition prevented, eliminated and converted dozens of local liquor stores, closed motels known as drug trafficking centers, improved the quality and selection of foods in local supermarkets, and secured millions of dollars in repairs to local schools. Today, the organization is recognized as a national model for grassroots organizing and a center for training the next generation of social justice activists and leaders.

As the Assemblymember for the 47th District, Karen Bass serves the cities and communities of Culver City, West Los Angeles, Westwood, Cheviot Hills, Leimert Park, Baldwin Hills, Windsor Hills, Ladera Heights, the Crenshaw District, Little Ethiopia and portions of Korea Town and South Los Angeles.

Assemblywoman Bass lives in the Baldwin Vista neighborhood of Los Angeles County, and is the proud mother of a daughter.

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