

PRESS RELEASE

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FREEHOLDERS SUPPORT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION HELD REGARDING CONGRESSMAN PAYNE’S EFFORTS TO BRING AN END TO VIOLENCE PERPETRATED BY BOKO HARAM



Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr., (far right) leads Roundtable Discussion to Bring an End to Violence Perpetuated by Boko Haram. He is joined by Essex County Freeholder President Britnee Timberlake (center) and Consulate General of Nigeria Norman Wokoma (far left). PHOTO BY: GLEN FRIESON.

(Newark, NJ) – Despite a wintery day, more than 100 people extended support by attending a Roundtable Discussion on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, at the Leroy Smith, Jr. Public Safety Building in Newark. The purpose of the roundtable was to determine ways to help end the genocide in Nigeria at the hands of the terrorist group “Boko Haram” and to bring public awareness to the conditions of the people. This out-pouring of support follows the charge initiated by Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr., to galvanize federal attention to end the atrocities against the people in the nation of Nigeria and Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake supports his initiative. The audience represented individuals from civic organizations, clergy members, political officials and others interested in fighting for social justice.

“Boko Haram continues to brutally and relentlessly murder innocent Christians and Muslims, wreaking havoc throughout Nigeria and other African countries,” said Congressman Payne, Jr. “Last year, Boko Haram was responsible for nearly 7,000 deaths, making it deadlier than any other terrorist group, including ISIS. As a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I know that the atrocities perpetrated by Boko Haram could very well cause further instability throughout the region and have significant implications for U.S. national security. The world must not ignore the ongoing atrocities committed by these monsters. I am proud to co-host

this roundtable to begin a public discussion about Boko Haram and draw increased attention to the horrors of this terrorist group.” Congressman Payne, Jr., continues to champion this issue as a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security. On February 2, 2015, the House Committee adopted Congressman Payne’s amendment of the Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Exercise Act of 2016 (H.R. 4404), to help protect the nation against terrorist threats.

The Board of Chosen Freeholders led by Freeholder President Britnee Timberlake support the congressman wholeheartedly. “It was important for the Freeholder board to show local support for Congressman Payne as he speaks boldly on the Federal level to eradicate Boko Haram,” said President Timberlake. Fellow Freeholder Board members attended the roundtable, as well and added the following sentiments: Freeholder Leby Jones: “When I see you (African community members) I see myself, we must work together to bring attention to the horrific acts of Boko Haram.” Freeholder Patricia Sebold: “Genocide is nothing new, but it is always wrong, we must collectively stand up to raise awareness.” Freeholder Cynthia Toro: “Anything we can do on the local level to raise awareness about atrocities anywhere in the world, we believe it can make a difference.”



Freeholder President Britnee Timberlake (right) is joined by Senator Teresa Ruiz (left) during the Roundtable Discussion. PHOTO BY: GLEN FRIESON.

The roundtable was scheduled in response to the January 31, 2016, assault in Nigeria where children were burned alive and 86 people were killed. Senator Teresa Ruiz expressed her advocacy and support and stated, “It is extraordinary how an ideal of extreme hatred, violence and terror turns into a tangible destructive tragic event.” She further stated, “The greatest way to combat this threat here in this country is to support, send resources and educate, educate, educate. Then the next generation of leaders will recognize what is wrong and what is right.”

The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders continue to support this effort and on Wednesday, February 10, 2016, during their regular meeting, unanimously passed a resolution in support of all federal officials speaking out about ending the genocide.

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