



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams  
Community Investment Advisory Board  
February 9, 2015**

My name is Eric L. Adams, and as the Brooklyn Borough President I represent 2.6 million Brooklynites who call our borough home. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony as the Community Investment Advisory Board (CIAB) holds its first public hearing as mandated under the new Responsible Banking Act.

I am even more thrilled that this first public hearing was held at Borough Hall. Brooklyn was particularly hard-hit during the subprime mortgage crisis, of which our country continues to recover. In addition, according to the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, Inc., Brooklyn has the second highest percentage of unbanked households in New York City, or households that do not have bank accounts. Bank branches are often clustered in certain neighborhoods while others like East New York and Bushwick, lack access to basic banking resources. Ensuring that banks not only operate in underserved communities, but operate in a fair, honest, and responsible manner that makes certain those communities recover and that our neighborhoods become even greater in the years to come, is integral to growing our economy and improving quality of life.

The Responsible Banking Act, enacted in 2012, is one of the strongest measures to hold banks accountable to local communities and is an important tool to foster improved transparency and ensure that these institutions are working to strengthen communities and not destabilize them.

Tens of billions of New York City residents' dollars flow to and through banks across the five boroughs. At any given time, banks in New York City hold roughly \$6 billion in deposits. These banks, by definition, are a collection of the resources of the community.

The Responsible Banking Act ensures that banks are utilizing those resources to provide affordable housing and first-time home ownership opportunities to local residents as well as support small community businesses, instead of propping up irresponsible landlords who harass and evict tenants. The Act strives to make certain that banks provide positive outcomes for local residents and hold banks accountable when they take advantage of people facing foreclosure or fail to open banks in certain communities.

Borough Hall has worked closely with responsible banks to improve financial literacy across Brooklyn, and we look forward to building upon these partnerships to bring even more banks to the table to support community driven revitalization. This will not only help promote responsible banking but also expand branching, lending, and community development opportunities for Brooklynites as well.