

# GARIFUNA COALITION USA, Inc.

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## Garifuna Voter Registration Drive

*Goal is to increase Registration by Garifunas and others*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 11, 2009**

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**New York** – The Board of Directors of the Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc. a, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit is pleased to announce the launching of the Garifuna Voter Registration Drive to promote voter education and registration at local areas where Garifunas meet across New York City. The nonpartisan voter registration's goal is to engage disenfranchised communities in the political process by registering new voters, and mobilizing them to turn out at the polls.

According to then presidential candidate Barack Obama, "After I finished Law school in 1992, I moved to Chicago to direct a voter registration effort called Project Vote. I learned that people who claim their voice by voting develop their capacity to transform their own lives, their communities, and their country."<sup>1</sup>

With so many seats coming open this year during the New York City Wide Elections - the mayor, comptroller, public advocate, four of the five borough presidents and two-thirds of the 51-member City Council to, cultivating voters among the city's various ethnic communities could prove both crucial and challenging for those seeking election.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Mayor Bloomberg has announced a special election on Tuesday, April 21 to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Adolfo Carrion, Jr. who is now director of the office of urban affairs in the Obama administration.

Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc. Board Chairman Rejil Solis said: "We feel it is very important to increase voter registration rates among Garifuna communities and are excited to work on this important effort. Since it seeks to empower the Garifuna Community, increasing nonpartisan voter education and registration is very much in line with the Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc's goals."

The voter registration drive will be led by Mrs. Janett Arzu and will kick off on Sunday March 15<sup>th</sup> from 2-6 PM during the Garifuna Food Expo at 489 E 169<sup>th</sup> Street (Between 3<sup>rd</sup> - Washington Avenues) a Garifuna Heritage Month activity and will be followed by drives at Ferry Point, Bill Rainey, and Crotona Parks in the Bronx and Linden Park in Brooklyn. The voter registration project will continue throughout the year making sure we register as many Garinagu as possible

The voter registration drive is consistent with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (commonly known as the "Motor Voter Registration Act"), in which Congress recognized the importance of increasing access to voter registration opportunities to low-income populations that have historically been disenfranchised, by mandating registration opportunities in locations accessible to disenfranchised populations. This component of the National Voter Registration Act is called the "Agency-Based Voter Registration Program. "This is a unique opportunity for our community and we must take advantage of it, we're here and must be part of the Civic process of this great City", concluded Mr. Solis

### **About the Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc.**

The Garifuna Coalition USA, Inc. is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization which serves as a resource, a forum, and advocate for Garifuna issues and a united voice for the Garifuna community.

<sup>1</sup> Obama, Barack, The Obama Voter Registration Manual

<sup>2</sup> Santos, Fernanda, Upheaval Among New York's Voting Blocs, The New York Times, July 13, 2008

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