

# Get to Know **Chris Owens**



Chris Owens is exploring a candidacy for United States House of Representatives from Brooklyn's 11th District.

When you know Chris' love of public service, the richness of his experiences, and his independent thinking, we believe you will join us in supporting this opportunity to bring new energy and fresh perspectives to Congress.

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**The vision to dream...**  
**The experience to build.**

# Brooklyn's 11th District



Map continues on inside back cover ➡



"It is time for a new generation in Congress of politically savvy, analytical, committed and energetic leaders to make our nation the great nation it can be for all people.

"What we need most from this new generation is wisdom and good hearts. We have seen enough of hatred and selfishness. Now, more than ever, we must support wise and compassionate approaches to solving our nation's — and our world's — problems.

"I am honored that my son, Chris, would like to succeed me in the House of Representatives after I retire. He has the character that I look for in a future leader. Chris will uphold a noble tradition of putting people first — and he will do it his own way because Chris is not afraid to speak out and blaze trails.

"As you read this booklet, I believe you will understand why I would be proud to vote for Chris Owens as my Congressional representative. Your financial support *now* will allow others to have that opportunity as well."

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Major R. Owens". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial "M" and "R".

**Hon. Major R. Owens**  
**Member, U.S. House of Representatives**



**Chris Owens:  
Born to activism.  
Ivy League educated.  
Dedicated to social justice.**

Chris Owens was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Memphis-born Major Owens, a librarian, and Brooklyn-born Ethel Werfel Owens, a college professor. Major and Ethel wanted their sons to be leaders, and immersed Chris and his two brothers in New York City's civil rights and anti-war movements.

Chris was raised in Brooklyn, went to public school, and graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, where he was a state champion in speech and debate. At Harvard University, he majored in Sociology while also serving in student government, working with cultural organizations and leading a funk band. After years of private sector work and community activism, Chris earned his Masters of Public Affairs and Urban & Regional Planning at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

Chris is married to Sandra Dixon; their sons are Elijah and Sampson.

**The vision to dream . . .**



**Building on an  
extraordinary tradition of  
political and community  
leadership**

Chris is an administrator of high quality health care for lower-income residents of Brooklyn. He has served as advisor and campaign manager for his father, Congressman Major Owens, and as a senior staffer with the City Council President, handling race relations, transportation issues, voter assistance and public information.

For Chris Owens, the activism and commitment of his parents have been inspirational. In high school, Chris protested education budget cuts; in college, he marched against South African apartheid and U.S. Central American policies.

As an adult, Chris pursues the dream of a secure peace in the Middle East, true equal rights for women and people of all races, and the ability of all children to attend excellent schools and receive quality health care.

**The experience to build.**



## Education advocate

Chris' parents battled teachers and principals to get the best education for their children. It was natural for Chris to become an advocate for quality education and parental involvement. During the 1990s, he was twice elected to his local community school board where he organized and empowered parents.

Chris launched a citywide coalition of school board members and taught education governance at Fordham University. In his school district, Chris worked to improve the lowest performing schools and to ensure that administrators and teachers were accountable for their performance. For his advocacy and promotion of multi-cultural curricula, Chris was honored by People for the American Way (NY) in 1996.

**"Chris is a renaissance man: education advocate, health care leader, political reformer, businessman, teacher . . . and songwriter. He's also one of the most compassionate people I know."**

*—Robin Brown, Chair, Chancellor's Parent Advisory Committee, NYC*

**The vision to dream . . .**

## Community builder . . . Heritage protector

During the 1990s, Chris Owens led the fight to improve community policing in his neighborhood and to address "quality of life" issues. He co-founded a local civic organization — launching a widely-read monthly local newsletter that analyzed crime statistics and trends before COMPSTAT was a law enforcement watchword. Chris' work pressured local politicians, rejuvenated the local precinct council, and brought community residents together.

Ten years ago, Chris joined a struggling organization dedicated to preserving historic houses and snapshots of life from Brooklyn's pre-Civil War free-Black Weeksville community in Crown Heights. Chris has now been President of the Weeksville Society's Board of Trustees since 1998 — and the organization has turned around. Restoration of the houses has started and, by 2006, Brooklyn's first African-American history museum will rise to teach children their history and culture and the contributions of African Americans to New York City and America.



*Groundbreaking for restoration of Weeksville's historic site: President Chris Owens, Executive Director Pamela Green, Executive Director Emeritus Joan Maynard.*

**The experience to build.**

**"Chris Owens is an energetic and creative thinker who is in command of the facts. He approaches people and policy challenges with an open mind — a willingness to transcend traditional boundaries. These qualities will make Chris a leader in the House of Representatives."**

**— David A. Paterson,  
NY Senate Minority Leader**

## Political reformer

During the 1990s, Chris Owens co-founded a reform political club, the Paul Robeson Independent Democrats (PRIDE). He also became chairman of the Brooklyn-wide reform wing of the Democratic Party and co-chair of New York's statewide reform organization. Chris is working for party policies that promote voter participation, increase ballot access, and protect the integrity and quality of the elected judiciary. During the past five years, Chris Owens has been a strong supporter of the new Working Families Party — an important voice for progressive values.

## Champion of women's rights

At the time of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, Chris' mother educated him about abortion realities prior to 1973. Chris linked the oppression of African Americans and the choices denied women in America. For him, freedom of choice became part of the civil rights struggle. This year, Chris completed seven years of service on the Political Action Committee of New York NARAL, the only African-American male to ever serve on the pro-choice PAC.

**The vision to dream . . .**

## Chris Owens will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to Congress

Too often our political choices are framed by fear and outdated ideologies. In truth, Americans want leaders rooted in principles, yet unafraid to put wings on new ideas and new perspectives.

Chris Owens is that kind of community leader. He is now preparing to represent his neighborhood, his city, and our nation in Congress. Chris Owens wants to transform



public education, housing and health care policies at the federal level. He wants a sound economy and sensible tax policies along with solvent Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare programs. Chris Owens will defend our environment, our homeland and our allies. And Chris Owens will seek an enduring peace built upon respect for the many different peoples who share our world.

As someone with a mixed racial and religious heritage, someone from a diverse urban area, someone with a rich employment and educational background, someone with a young family and a long-standing family commitment to serve the public, Chris Owens will be a fresh, unique and effective voice in the House of Representatives.

**The experience to build.**





## You can make a difference!

The Exploratory Committee to Elect Chris Owens has a goal for Calendar Year 2003: \$500,000 dollars raised by year's end. This level of support will build the foundation for a successful Congressional campaign.

This exploratory committee has been established in accordance with Federal law to handle Chris Owens' fundraising activities and to develop the infrastructure necessary for a Congressional campaign.

Please make your generous financial contribution today. A donor form and envelope have been enclosed for your convenience. If you have any questions, please contact our Finance Director, Anissa Sepulveda, at 212-353-2666.

Paid for by the  
Exploratory Committee to Elect Chris Owens  
895 Broadway, 5th Floor, NY, NY 10003-1226

Anissa Sepulveda, Treasurer  
[anissa@chrisowens.net](mailto:anissa@chrisowens.net)

Contributions to federal election campaigns are  
not tax deductible.

Corporate contributions are prohibited.



## Brooklyn's 11th District

Brooklyn's 11th Congressional District is large and densely populated. It is also very diverse and filled with vibrant enclaves — from African Americans living in Brownsville for generations to new young white families in Prospect Heights, from Orthodox Jews with decades in Crown Heights to Caribbean Americans of every island in East Flatbush, from newly arrived Pakistanis in Flatbush to Gay and Lesbian couples living for years in Park Slope.



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