



VALERIE WELCOMES REV JESSE JACKSON TO WALSALL COLLEGE

On Thursday 5 December 2013, Valerie welcomed the Rev'd Jesse Jackson to an event at Walsall College.

Valerie said: "The Rev'd Jesse Jackson is an iconic figure within the Civil Rights Movement in the USA. When I introduced the Rev'd Jackson to the audience I highlighted the movement he founded, the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, which aims to bring people together to serve humanity. The movement works to expand education, employment and business opportunities for people who are disadvantaged and for ethnic minorities. The Rev'd Jackson touched on this theme when he pointed out the dearth of ethnic minority students at Oxford and Cambridge."

"Nevertheless he emphasised to the audience that progress has been made in the pursuit of equality, saying that ethnic minorities no longer face the same difficulties experienced 50 years ago in accessing public amenities or taking part in the democratic process."

Office Move

From Monday 6 January 2014, the Walsall Office will be located at 16A Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TJ. The telephone number remains 01922 635835.

Small Business Saturday



"Small Business Saturday took place on 7 December 2013 and celebrates the contribution of Small Businesses to the local and national economies. It is a grass-roots campaign that encourages people to shop locally and support small businesses in the local community. Ahead of Small Business Saturday, I invited the Shadow Business Secretary, Chuka Umunna MP to Walsall College on Thursday 5 December 2013. He spoke about the important impact that Small Businesses make and the importance of giving them more support."

Nelson Mandela 18.7.1918 - 5.12.2013



The House of Commons paid tribute to former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela who died on 5 December 2013.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Valerie said: "Not many of us would have his courage not to compromise

our principles, and many of us today are still judged by the colour of our skin, rather than on our talents. As he said, he was not bitter, because if he had been so, he would still have been in prison. We can only honour his legacy if we together work for his values of forgiveness, perseverance, peace and hope. We give thanks for his life and may he rest in peace."

Referrals to Family Mediation Down

At Justice Questions, Valerie asked the Secretary of State what recent assessment he has made of family mediation services. The Secretary of State replied that there had been a drop in referrals to family mediation services following changes to Legal Aid in April 2013.

Valerie said: "This was a foreseeable consequence of cuts to legal aid. Referrals to family mediation service have dropped by 47% since April 2013. It is crucial that the Government takes steps to change its policy now."

Health Select Committee



On Tuesday 17 December 2013, the Health Select Committee, of which Valerie is a member, heard evidence from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Health, Jeremy Hunt, and the Chief Executive of NHS England, Sir David Nicholson.

Valerie said: "I asked the SoS to confirm if there has been £600 million underspend so far this year. He replied that this is money that has been committed to budgets in many different parts of the NHS and they did not know that they were going to underspend until the end of the year. Given there is a crisis in A&E and more doctors and nurses are needed, it is not clear why £2.2bn was returned to the Treasury in 2012/13 and £1.4 billion in 2011/12. In November the SoS announced an extra £150m to go to CCGs, in addition to the £250m announced in September for hospitals to cope with winter pressures. He confirmed this is not new money and is being taken out of the underspend."

"I asked Sir David to confirm if there will be a new regime in place to make CCGs accountable to NHS England. He said CCGs will now be subject to quarterly assessments of their effectiveness by NHS England. Whilst CCGs should be accountable for public money, this new regime shows there was a flaw in the Health and Social Care Act which set them up as statutory bodies."

Statistics

In 2013, Valerie spoke **64 times** in the House of Commons. Since her election in May 2010, Valerie has taken on **1,924** new cases on behalf of constituents. This is equivalent to **10** new cases every week.

Surgeries

Valerie holds regular surgeries. To arrange an appointment, please call the Constituency Office on 01922 635835

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