



*Promoting economic opportunities & financial education*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE KATHY CASTOR TO VISIT LEE DAVIS CENTER  
IN EAST TAMPA ON FEBRUARY 12TH AT 10:00 A.M. TO BRING  
AWARENESS TO THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT  
Estimates are up to \$20 million in EITC is unclaimed  
in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties each year**

**TAMPA, FL — February 6, 2007** — U.S. Representative Kathy Castor will visit the Prosperity Campaign's Lee Davis Neighborhood Service Center free tax preparation location at 3402 North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street in East Tampa on Monday, February 12 at 10:00 a.m.

"I'm concerned because many of my neighbors do not get a tax benefit they are entitled to," said Castor. "In Hillsborough and Pinellas counties, up to \$20 million go unclaimed each year because people do not know about the earned income tax credit (EITC). We need to make our neighbors aware of this benefit, so they can get their full, earned share and we can put this money into the economies of Hillsborough and Pinellas County."

The Prosperity Campaign was created to support families' move toward financial independence and stability. One of its services, a free tax preparation program, provides free tax return preparation assistance for low- and moderate-wage earners, making sure they receive their earned share of the EITC. A family earning less than \$38,348 may be eligible for EITC of up to \$4,356.

"Working families can get the equivalent of 15 months of groceries, or over two years of health care with \$4,356", Castor continued. "This can help our neighbors keep up with the rising costs of providing for a family in the Tampa Bay area".

Launched in 2004 with the help of then Hillsborough County Commissioner Kathy Castor, the Prosperity Campaign of Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties is a regional collaboration of public, private, and nonprofit organizations including AARP Tax-Aide Foundation, Children's Board of Hillsborough County, IRS, Hillsborough County, Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, Pinellas County, and United Way of Tampa Bay.

Last year, the Prosperity Campaign's 400 volunteers and staff members prepared 16,434 tax returns with refunds totaling \$14.8 million, including \$4 million in EITC and \$1.6 million in Child Tax Credit, saving residents an estimated \$2.46 million in commercial tax preparation fees.

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As a County Commissioner, Castor fought hard for a Living Wage Ordinance. She has been working in Congress on similar issues that can directly help her neighbors. She co-sponsored a bill to raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 per hour to help working families in Tampa Bay. The increase will provide an additional \$4,400 a year for a family of three.

"As a working mother with two young daughters, I understand well the financial costs of keeping a family afloat," said Castor. "In a country where the average CEO earns more before lunchtime than a minimum wage worker earns all year, Congress must make a livable wage a priority."

Castor also co-sponsored the College Student Relief Act of 2007 to cut the interest rates on subsidized loans for undergraduates in half over the next five years, taking it from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent, to make college more affordable for working families in our area.

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