

# Citizens Not Serfs

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Di Gennaro to Residents: “We don’t work for FEMA, FEMA works for us”**

**Summerland Key, FL** (October 12, 2008) In a surprise visit by the Mayor of Monroe County, Mario Di Gennaro addressed a crowd of nearly 400 Citizens Not Serfs’ members and supporters this past Sunday to announce that he has joined the organization and is committed to working for positive change regarding downstairs enclosures.

“This is a serious problem that we have. People can’t get permits. People can’t sell their homes. People can’t get insurance. It’s just not right. We need to move as quickly as possible because our community is being tortured everyday by having to destroy parts of their home,” said Di Gennaro, “We don’t work for FEMA, FEMA works for us.”

Mayor Di Gennaro is now the third sitting public official to publicly join forces with the grassroots organization - the first being State Representative Ron Saunders and the second, County Commissioner George Neugent.

“At the State level, I will do what I can to work with the county and federal government to resolve this issue,” said Saunders, “Living in an area with such a high cost of living, we need to do anything we can to have this additional space. It make no sense to try and do away with something that helps fix an existing problem.”

Candidates for the Board of County Commission in attendance included Heather Carruthers, Bill Estes, Carlos Rojas and Sloan Bashinsky - all favoring better solutions to FEMA’s process with downstairs enclosures.

“We all wouldn’t be here if we didn’t believe in this issue,” noted Heather Carruthers, candidate for District 3.

Members of the organization expressed a renewed sense of hope that something might finally be done to resolve an issue that has been plaguing the Keys since FEMA began their PILOT program of mandatory inspections in 2002.

“After all the public outreach we have done through our letter writing, phone banking, and video testimonials, I’m so excited to see a diverse group of current public officials and candidates for office embrace an issue that is still affecting thousands in the Keys. It shows that when it comes to important issues, such as people’s homes, we can put the politics aside and work together,” said Brad Baker, an 11-year homeowner in Cudjoe Key.

In addition to four BOCC candidates, sixteen candidates vying for various local offices were in attendance.

Sheena Collum, Citizens Not Serfs Executive Director, stated, “The upcoming elections are critical and we wanted to provide our members and guests an opportunity to meet all the candidates on the November ballot face-to-face regardless of whether or not their candidacy is related to our objectives. We embrace that responsibility wholeheartedly.”

On Tuesday, October 21st, Citizens Not Serfs will be hosting a round table discussion with Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen regarding downstairs enclosures. Time and Location TBD. Please check the website [www.CitizensNotSerfs.com](http://www.CitizensNotSerfs.com) for updates. The public is encouraged to attend.

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