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## Mucarsel-Powell addresses issues in Upper Keys

**BY JILL ZIMA BORSKI** Key West Citizen

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Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, right, hosted a press conference at the Founders Park with Islamorada Mayor Mike Forster and Dr. John Norris III, left, to discuss the congressional and local response to the COVID-19 pandemic. (JILL ZIMA BORSKI/The Citizen)

U.S. Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell (FL-26) on May 19 had a busy day in the Florida Keys.

She helped distribute FarmShare food to needy families in Founders Park in Islamorada, and the state representative also heard from Upper Keys constituents about COVID-19-related issues.

She started her day by meeting with local fishermen to discuss recent legislation to help fisheries and workers survive the coronavirus crisis and to discuss how they can access federal assistance. She said the commercial fishermen wanted financial aid and were frustrated by the state's unemployment process. They also sought a delayed opening of the Keys to visitors.

Mucarsel-Powell hosted a news conference at the Founders Park with Islamorada Mayor Mike Forster and Dr. John Norris III of Key West to discuss the congressional and local response to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Our hospitals are the frontline, but we are counting on our residents to follow [distancing] and safety rules."

Mucarsel-Powell also met with concerned families of the residents at the Islamorada Crystal Health and Rehabilitation Center to discuss issues of transparency, safety and management at the facility. She then discussed her work to pass the Heroes Act, which would provide \$150 million for the deployment of expert strike teams to nursing homes, and would mandate transparency and demographic-specific reporting of COVID-19 cases, fatalities and other essential data.

The food distribution event was sponsored by the Ocean Reef Community Foundation, Monroe County and United Way of Collier and the Keys.

Mucarsel-Powell, an unopposed Democrat, will face either Omar Blanco or Carlos Gimenez, both Republicans, in the November election.

[jzima@keysnews.com](mailto:jzima@keysnews.com) (mailto:jzima@keysnews.com)