



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Serranos Applaud Obama LGBT Visitation Decision

JOSÉ M. SERRANO April 16, 2010

| ISSUE: **HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL RIGHTS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, April 16, 2010

Contact:

Damaris Olivo / (212) 828-5829

The Bronx, NY - Congressman José E. Serrano and State Senator José M. Serrano applauded President Obama's decision to order the Department of Health and Human Services to issue new rules for hospitals across the nation that allow visitation rights for LGBT partners of patients being treated.

"Too often the loved ones of LGBT patients are prohibited from visiting their partners, or even spouses, during hospitalization and treatment," said Congressman Serrano. "They have been barred from helping with their partners' major health decisions. And perhaps worst of all they have been forbidden from being with them in their final days. President Obama took the first step towards undoing this shameful situation. As our nation moves towards true equality for our LGBT friends and families, we must continue to take brave and righteous

steps like the President took yesterday. Our nation is built upon respect for individuals to live their lives as they see fit, and our legal and political structures should not keep any person from being with whom they choose in all major moments of their lives. I applaud President Obama for striking this blow for equality, and look forward to more of these steps in the near future.”

“Having the opportunity to accompany a loved one who is ill is not only an LGBT right, it is a civil and human right,” said Senator Serrano. “Respecting the wishes of patients by granting proper visitation rights to persons other than family members, and allowing them to decide who can make medical decisions on their behalf is vital to enhancing the integrity of our communities. As Americans, we share a fundamental commitment to equality for all, and I applaud President Obama for taking this very important step on the road to making this a more just, unified and inclusive nation.”

The White House announced late Thursday that President Obama had issued a memorandum to HHS Secretary Sebelius ordering her to make the visitation rule changes for any hospital that participates in Medicare or Medicaid. Since virtually all hospitals in the nation participate in those programs, the rules would effectively change policy across the nation.

###