



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pedro Espada Jr.

## Senator Espada on Reform in Albany

PEDRO ESPADA, JR. June 8, 2010

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ALBANY JUNE 8, 2010—State Senate Majority Leader Pedro Espada, Jr. today said that the dramatic reform he led in the New York State Senate one year ago was not born out of rebellion, but rather the need to empower all 62 senators and the fastest-growing ethnic population in the state. He also said that the events of June 8, 2009 were fully done within the rules of the New York State Senate.

“The so-called coup is greatly exaggerated. It was a name for the headlines. The fact is, Albany reform was not pursued surreptitiously. It was not a power play, but rather born out of the need to empower the Latino population with long overdue representation in the highest ranks of state government, and to spread the power among all 62 senators for the benefit of the state's 19.5 million residents. Furthermore, it was achieved lawfully within the U.S. Constitution and Senate rules,” Espada said.

“The critics continue to blame June 8, 2009 for all that’s wrong in Albany. The fact is, we wouldn’t be where we are today, if not for June 8th,” he added.

Espada said the events of June 8th kicked into motion a long-needed reform process, but cautioned that much more work needs to be done.

“The Senate made a quantum leap in structural and procedural reforms, but we still have a long way to go as a legislative body in terms of budget, ethics, discretionary funding and redistricting reforms,” Espada admitted. “We need to support things like a special independent redistricting commission to draw the lines for state legislative districts.”

He continued, “I challenge all 62 of us in the Senate to remain steadfast in our commitment to finish the work of real, meaningful reform. Don’t be blinded because you disagree with how we got to this point, or by the fact that some who talk reform rhetoric still remain opposed to real reform and are doing everything possible to block continued progress and advance ethics, budget, redistricting and other reforms.”

Espada pointed to equalization of resources among 62 senators and the restructuring of committees as significant reforms that empower all Senate members.

“Members can ask for a bill to be let out of committee for a floor vote. The results of this reform was never more evident than in the marriage equality bill, which would never have seen the light of day had it not been for the events of June 8th. Every member can be an agent for change on behalf of their constituents, which means 19.5 million residents in New York State are receiving equal representation in Albany,” Espada said.

As for Latino empowerment, Espada said, “The fact is, Latinos throughout the state embraced June 8th because they realized that while it happened in a dramatic and bold way, this was likely the only way they would ever receive recognition, representation and a voice in the highest levels of state government.” #