



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

Sen. Espaillat Calls on Republicans to Stop Playing Games with the Constitution

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Espaillat Criticizes Latest Republican Attempt to Consolidate Power by Striking Lt. Governor's Role in the Absence of the Governor

New York State Senator Adriano Espaillat (D - 31st district) criticized Senate Republicans for their repeated attempts to circumvent the constitution. In a power grab, the likes of which we saw when the same Republican conference executed a coup in June, 2009, Republicans rammed through a provision which strips the lieutenant governor of his constitutionally defined role. Now, Republicans are openly defying the state constitution in a bid to increase their tenuous hold in the Senate.

"Republicans and their Tea Party backers huffed and puffed about 'respecting the constitution' before the election," said Sen. Espaillat. "Now, they want to ignore the constitution for the sake of increasing their political influence and spreading their right-wing agenda."

Sen. Espaillat once again pointed to the constitutional provision that clearly delineates the powers of the lieutenant governor. Article IV, section 6 states: "The lieutenant-governor shall be the president of the senate but shall have only a casting vote therein." Sen. Espaillat has also renewed his call to Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to issue an official opinion on the constitutional implications of this latest Republican power grab.

Additionally, Sen. Espaillat questioned Republican senator Joe Griffo's attempt to change the constitution to further erode the lieutenant governor's power. Sen. Griffo's proposed legislation (S. 2869) would remove the provision allowing the lieutenant governor to act as governor when the governor is absent from the state, as outlined by the New York State constitution. "Republicans are always claiming to love the constitution. But what they really love is political power plays that expand their influence," said Sen. Espaillat.

"Voters sent us to Albany to focus on creating jobs and turning our economy around. The Republican obsession with assaulting our constitution and consolidating more and more power is disingenuous and must be stopped so we can get back to the people's business and help New York's working families."