



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

Senator Reverend Ruben Diaz Continues to Insist Upon Decent Housing Laws

RUBEN DIAZ May 24, 2011

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Senator Reverend Ruben Diaz (D-Bronx) issued the following statement today in concert with today's Rent Regulation Rally in Albany:

"There's a lot of finger pointing about who will be responsible for New York rent control and rent stabilization laws that are still not extended and the pain it will cause for the poor and needy people of New York who rely upon these laws for decent housing.

Let's consider two issues: the Millionaires' Tax and Rent Control Laws. If Governor Cuomo would have included them both in his Budget, things might not be so bad.

Passing the Millionaires' Tax could have helped New York's government to prevent the loss of services in health care, education, senior citizen programs, etc.

Rent Stabilization and Rent Control Laws are set to expire on June 15th. These laws protect 2.5 million middle and low income New Yorkers – mostly Black and Hispanic – who depend upon them for affordable housing.

During Budget negotiations this year, I told my colleagues – Black and Hispanic Senators especially - that Governor Cuomo's Budget would not pass if we withheld our votes until he included the extension of rent control and rent stabilization laws and the Millionaires' Tax.

All of my colleagues know that politics is perception, and if Governor Cuomo even tried to pass a New York State Budget without any Black and Hispanic votes, he would look so bad. He needed us and we all knew it.

Unfortunately, my colleagues in the Senate did not press Governor Cuomo to protect affordable housing laws and insist that a Millionaires' tax be included in the Budget – as I had asked them to do. Senator Tom Duane and I were the only ones who did not vote for this Budget. The rest of my colleagues decided not to embarrass Governor Cuomo.

They voted on a Budget without demanding that rent control and rent stabilization laws be included to protect their communities. They voted on a Budget without the Millionaires' Tax to protect their communities against severe cutbacks.

Now that the Budget has been signed and sealed with a kiss by the Governor, our only hope for 2.5 million residents – mostly Black and Hispanics – who rely upon New York's affordable housing laws - is for the Republicans to undo what was not done during the Budget negotiations.

So who can we blame if the poor and the needy and the Black and Hispanic communities suffer? That remains to be seen.

In conclusion, I thank New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn for heeding my advice and for making time to come to Albany today to press for an extension of rent control and rent stabilization laws."