



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## Senator Ruben Diaz Says Christians Need to Organize Better Against Gay Marriage

RUBEN DIAZ June 28, 2011

NEW YORK - Bronx state Senator Ruben Diaz, the lone Democrat to vote against landmark the gay marriage bill in New York, reflected on the defeat Monday, saying Christians need to organize better against gay marriage and support candidates who share their values.

Diaz, one of the 29 senators who voted "no" on the gay marriage legislation, is known as one of the most vocal opponents against the bill. He held a massive rally against the bill weeks before it was introduced by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to the state Legislature. When the bill was introduced for a vote Friday, he was also the only senator to speak against the bill on the floor.

In an interview Monday with The Christian Post, Diaz, a Pentecostal minister and president of the New York Hispanic Clergy Organization, evaluated the Christian response to the gay marriage fight in New York, saying there is "room for improvement."

"We have to organize better. The problem with the Christian movement, with the Christians and pastors, is that they pray too much and act too little," the Bronx state senator told CP.

Diaz has blamed the failure to block gay marriage in New York on switch-vote Republicans for "becoming a tool of the Democratic party" and in part on Senate Majority Leader Dean

Skelos for allowing the bill to come to a vote.

But speaking to CP, he also held fellow Christians accountable for the bill's passage, which made New York the sixth and most populous state to legalize marriage between same-sex couples.

"Gov. Cuomo, when he was running, said if I get elected, I will push for gay marriage. But pastors and brothers and sisters campaigned for him and voted for him. So we cannot fully blame Cuomo," said Diaz.

"Pastors and religious leaders are supposed to remember that we are supposed to be Christians before being Democrats or being Republicans. Our responsibility is with Jesus and not with Democratic Party or Republican Party."

He added that party affiliation is always secondary one's Christian faith in political decisions. Regardless of whether a political candidate is Republican or Democrat, Christians should support and vote for whomever shares their values.

"We should always think first as Christians," he said. "We should not be concerned if that person is Republican or Democrat. We should be concerned if that person has Christian values and go all the way for that person."

"We have to learn that because Jesus said that who is against us is not with us, that who is for us is with us. "

Diaz knows what it's like to vote based on faith first, being the only one in his party to vote against the bill. Despite the backlash he's received - from death threats against him to threats of sexual assault against his family - the Bronx senator said he would do it again.

"I made history. I'm the only New York State Democrat that voted against the bill. I will wear it as a badge of honor," he said.

"No one will make abandon my faith. No one can make me change my life. I love Jesus. All what I am or what I do, all of what I have is because of His grace."

When asked what he thought about Republican Sen. Mark Grisanti of Buffalo, who went against his Catholic faith and original position to eventually vote "yes" on the gay marriage bill, Diaz said he would back any churches that wanted to "teach him a lesson."

"I would be more than willing to go up to Buffalo to campaign against Grisanti if churches invited me," he said.

As for his next step in the gay marriage battle in New York, Diaz said that he is working now to see what can be done.

The Christian Post pressed Diaz on what specifically was being done and whether a referendum to overturn the marriage law was in the works but he simply responded: "Working on it."

But in the meantime, New York's gay marriage law will take effect July 24, which concludes a 30-day wait period on the signed bill.

Weighing in from a spiritual viewpoint, Diaz said that gay marriage is a sign of the End Times.

"I believe in the Bible. I believe in the End of Times and that all these things will come to be, that what is good will become bad and what bad will become good," he said. "Whenever I say this, people laugh at me and people make fun of me. I don't care because that is what I believe. I keep praying and keep believing."

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