



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Serrano Statement Re: Governor Cuomo's Executive Order Requiring Language Assistance Services

JOSÉ M. SERRANO October 6, 2011



Today Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx) praised Governor Andrew Cuomo for issuing an Executive Order to provide language assistance services at 27 state agencies that have direct interaction with the public. These agencies will be required to provide official documents, forms, instructions, and translation services in six languages.

"I commend Governor Cuomo for issuing an Executive Order for a service that is long overdue in the State of New York," said Senator Serrano. "We pride ourselves on being a

cultural melting pot and the capital of the world, yet the lack of language interpretation services in our government agencies does not reflect the demographic realities of our state. This order will ensure that vital information is available in six different languages."

Serrano continued, "This is a great step on the road to cultural competency in government, but we still have much work to accomplish to ensure that every resident of New York State has equal access to information and receives equal treatment at our state agencies, schools and hospitals."

Senator Serrano is the sponsor of several bills promoting cultural competency: S2718, which provides language assistance to parents and guardians who have children enrolled in public school and who do not speak English; S2746, which requires state departments, divisions, commissions, agencies and other entities with a website to provide a link on such website to non-English information; S2701, which authorizes NYCHA to conduct a survey of housing developments to determine the percentage of non-English proficient residents, and requires the institution of language assistance programs at developments at which more than ten percent of residents do not speak English; and S2743, which requires healthcare professionals to receive cultural competency course work and training that will improve their interactions with minority patients, thereby improving the quality of our state's healthcare.