



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

# **Senate and Hispanic Federation Hold Unidad Conference To Focus On Economic Opportunities For Hispanic Community**

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Senator John Flanagan (2<sup>nd</sup> Senate District) was proud to take part in two-day economic conference, entitled “Unidad Latina,” that the New York State Senate and the Hispanic Federation recently held in New York City. The conference was an opportunity to discuss ways to increase economic opportunities for the growing Hispanic community in New York.

The conference featured policy workshops, networking opportunities and presentations featuring speakers of local and national prominence. Scheduled speakers include Cristobal I. Conde, former CEO of SunGard Data Systems, a business with 20,000 employees and \$5 billion in yearly sales.

Additional information about the conference is available at [www.SenateUnidad.com](http://www.SenateUnidad.com). To view videos from the conference [please click here](#).

Also speaking at the conference were: Jorge Silva-Puras, Regional Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Previously, Mr. Silva-Puras served as Chief of Staff of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and Secretary of the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development; Irene M. Esteves, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for Time Warner Cable Inc; Dr. John B. King, Commissioner of Education and President of the State University of New York; and Lillian Rodriguez Lopez, President of the Hispanic Federation.

Senator Skelos and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg also addressed the attendees at the conference.

Panelists in the workshop discussions included recognized experts from the Hispanic community in the areas of business, education, health care and government. Unidad Latina Conference workshops included the following:

> **Minding Our Business: Protecting and Supporting Latino Small Businesses** – There are almost 100,000 Hispanic-owned small businesses in New York City. This workshop, which focused on promoting Latino job growth, highlighted unique challenges faced by Latino businessmen through loans, small business development and other measures

> **Got Jobs? Promoting Latino Job Growth** – The unemployment rate for Hispanics in New York City has increased from seven percent to more than 12 percent from 2007 to 2010. This discussion focused on what is being done at the government and community levels to help Latinos and others find jobs, including discussions about job training, adult education and support for small businesses.

> **Bridge to a Healthier Tomorrow: Addressing Latino Health Disparities** – This workshop looked at health disparities that imperil the well-being of the Latino population, which is disproportionately impacted by diabetes, asthma, HIV/AIDS, cancer, cardiovascular disease and the lack of health insurance. Panelists discussed successful community-based health care initiatives and public policies that can promote solutions to Latino health care needs.

> **Las Olvidadas: Confronting the Latina Teen Suicide Crisis** – According to the Centers for Disease Control in New York City, more than one Latina teenager out of every seven has attempted suicide. This workshop examined how to prevent suicide among Latina adolescents.

> **Our Future Depends on It: Increasing Latino College Success** – While Latino college enrollment rates have been increasing over the last 10 years, Hispanics currently have the lowest college

graduation rates of any major population group. This panel worked to identify programs and strategies to support and accelerate Latino college success rates to stimulate long-term community wealth and development.

Other organizations participating in the Unidad Latina Conference included: Adelante of Suffolk County, Alianza Dominicana, the Brooklyn Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council of New York State, Catholic Charities, Circulo de La Hispanidad, the College of Staten Island, the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans, the Hispanic Brotherhood of Rockville Centre, the Institute for Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, the Long Island Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the New York City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

According to the census, almost half of the entrepreneurs in New York were born in other countries.

“In New York City alone there are about 70,000 foreign-born business owners, many of them Latinos,” Senator Skelos said. “It is critically important that state government recognizes their contributions to our economy and helps them prosper and grow. The Senate’s Unidad Latina conference will help us achieve that goal.”