



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Chairs Unidad Latina Conference Higher Education Roundtable

JACK M. MARTINS October 27, 2011

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The first annual Unidad Latina conference held in New York State this weekend was an enormous success that brought together hundreds of people from the Hispanic community including local community members from Elmont, South Floral Park and North Valley Stream. Leaders from business, education, health care and government came together to discuss ways to promote economic growth, job creation and preparing the workforce. The

conference was organized by the New York State Senate and the Hispanic Federation.

“This conference was an impressive gathering of bright, talented people who came together to discuss how to make the Latino community more prosperous,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “Every conference room and ballroom was filled with people committed to giving Hispanic-owned entrepreneurs the resources they need to grow and improving the quality of life for Latinos.”

State Senator Jack Martins was tapped to chair a special roundtable discussion focusing on higher education and preparing the workforce for the ever changing global economy. “The conference and workshop sessions were invaluable to business leaders, college students and families. The discussion was lively, and a real focus on how to prepare our young people for college was actively debated. We also explored the different models that schools are using to educate our young people on the skills that are needed for college success and preparing our next generation’s workforce. The discussion was insightful and thoughtful on all levels,” said Senator Martins.

Among the bipartisan group of legislators who attended were: state Senators Charles Fuschillo, John Flanagan, Jack Martins, Martin Golden, Jim Alesi, Lee Zeldin, Jeff Klein, Diane Savino and David Carlucci; Assemblymembers Nicole Malliotakis, Guillermo Linares, Naomi Rivera, former Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez and former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer.

More than 200 people attended a luncheon that featured remarks from Richard Parsons, Chairman of Citigroup and former CEO of Time Warner; as well as a presentation by Jorge Silva-Puras, Regional Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Also speaking at the luncheon was Assemblyman Guillermo Linares of Manhattan. Dr. Linares was the first Dominican-born elected official in the United States and was appointed by President Bill Clinton to Chair the White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Other speakers at Unidad Latina were: New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg; 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 former Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer. Unidad Latina Conference Workshops were highlighted by a roundtable chaired by Senator Martins and an all-star panel of education leaders.

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 helped to identify programs and strategies to support and accelerate Latino college success rates to stimulate long-term community wealth and development.

Workshop participants included: Frank Sanchez, CUNY Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs; Lillian Rodriguez Lopez, President of the Hispanic Federation; Frances Lucerna, Executive Director of El Puente Academy; and Carlos Medina, Associate Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor of the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The workshop was chaired by Senator Jack Martins and Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis.

In addition to the workshops, a CUNY youth roundtable discussion was conducted by Senator John Flanagan to discuss career challenges and opportunities. The roundtable included a number of CUNY students, along with Senators Golden and Alesi, and senior CUNY officials including Senior Vice Chancellor and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Jay

Henderson, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Frank Sanchez, Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges Eduardo Marti and CUNY Trustee Rita DiMartino.

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 and the New York City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.