



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

What You Should Know

RUBEN DIAZ March 13, 2012

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“Cursed is the one who trusts in man” (Jeremiah 17:5) ... “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” (Romans 3:4)

These biblical passages bring to mind the struggle that the New York Dominican community and their leaders have been engaged in for many years in their efforts to be effective in the political landscape of New York City in this great State of New York.

In this fight, the Puerto Rican leaders have been very helpful and have tried to do everything possible to open doors to help Dominicans.

You should know that back in the year 2000, after the federal census results were released, Puerto Rican leaders such as former Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez, former Bronx County Chair Jose Rivera, Mike Nieves and many others got together to create a Senatorial District

that included a majority of Dominicans and Hispanics. Their intention was to see Guillermo Linares get elected to serve as the first New York State Senator of Dominican descent. Ever since that time, they have wanted to make history.

Jose Rivera and the others hoped that every single leader of the Dominican community would put their personal interests aside and like good Dominicans, join the effort to help Guillermo Linares become not only the first Dominican City Councilmember, but also to continue making history as the first Dominican Senator.

How sad and what a huge disappointment it was! – especially for Linares - to see that many of those very same Dominican leaders who today are calling for a Congressional seat to represent the Dominican community were the first ones to abandon Guillermo and went to campaign for Eric Schneiderman – a non-Dominican.

You should know that the result of that race could have been completely different IF every single leader of the Dominican community would have joined the efforts of New York Puerto Ricans to get Linares elected.

That is not the only time that Puerto Rican leaders have come together to help the Dominican community with their political aspirations.

You should know that every elected member of the Puerto Rican community throughout the City of NY - excluding me (I stood with mi amigo Hiram) - supported and campaigned for Jose Peralta against Hiram Monserrate to help Peralta become the first Dominican Senator in New York State.

When Eric Schneiderman became the New York State Attorney General, Adriano Espaillat became the second person of Dominican descent to become a New York State Senator. For that victory, we have to give special thanks and credit to Bronx Borough President Ruben

Diaz, Jr. for his intense, immense and positive contribution of convincing Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, Councilmember Oliver Koppell and the members of the Ben Franklin Reform Democratic Club to join him in asking for the Jewish community in Riverdale to vote for Espaillat against one of their own. Without that support, Espaillat would never have been elected.

Other Puerto Ricans, Jose Rivera among them, were the ones responsible for choosing and supporting Nelson Castro to become an Assembly Member, even though that position was formerly occupied by Luis Diaz, a Puerto Rican. And the Puerto Rican leadership has been very instrumental in recommending the appointments of judges of Dominican descent to serve on the Supreme, Criminal and Civil Courts of Bronx County.

Nowadays, the outcry from the Dominican community is to elect a Dominican to serve in the United States Congress. In fact, there are many candidates of Dominican descent who are qualified to effectively represent their community in the US Congress. Among potential candidates are State Senator Adriano Espaillat, State Senator Jose Peralta, Assemblyman Guillermo Linares, City Council Member Fernando Cabrera, and Bronx District Leader Yudelka Tapia.

I say this even though, as you know, Senator Adriano Espaillat and Senator Jose Peralta voted for gay marriage, and because of that they will have problems with Catholics and Evangelical Ministers within the Hispanic community. But Since Adriano is the frontrunner, I suggest that the gay community start a series of activities to raise at least a million dollars for Adriano before it's too late.

I pray that if and when the opportunity becomes a reality for a Dominican to run for US Congress in a district where he or she can claim victory, that everyone will get together and stand with the Dominican candidate - even if that candidate may not be the one they prefer

– AND – I also pray that what happened to Guillermo Linares in 2002 will not happen to anyone again in 2012.

To all those candidates - Dominican or not - who may aspire to run for public office, I would like to dedicate to them that biblical passage I used to start this column: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man” (Jeremiah 17:5) ... “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” (Romans 3:4)

I also recall the words of one of my professors from my philosophy class when I was a student at Lehman College: “My dear children, that blue sky isn't blue and it's not even a sky.”

I am Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz and this is what you should know.