



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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What You Should Know

RUBEN DIAZ July 17, 2012

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Without Per Diem Albany will be a Ghost Town

I heard that Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the Leaders of the NYS Legislative are in deep negotiations regarding pay increases for us the members of the NYS Legislature.

You should know that we as Legislators have not had a salary increase for more than ten years and that the hypocrisy of many of my colleagues is to say "NO" when asked if they will like to see their salary increased, even though most of them, just like me are in favor and wishing for it to happen soon.

The reason for their hypocrisy is that for many of them, per diem has become a “God Send” because they have found a “legal” and a “transparent” way in which to abuse the system and not be punished for it.

You should see, my dear readers, how many of those so call puritan Legislators have moved their families to Albany, while others have purchased houses, apartments and condominiums by using and abusing the per diem allowance.

It is amazing to see how when there is a two day session, e.g. Monday and Tuesday, how many Legislators stay for the whole five days just to be able to collect \$165 per day.

You should know that some Legislators collect on top of their salary anywhere from \$25,000 to \$30,000 yearly in per diem income. To be able to do this they have moved and centralized their staff in Albany, while abandoning their constituents and their district, coming back to their local district only during some weekends for one or two activities or during election time.

Gov. Cuomo and the Leaders should not only propose to increase the salary to \$100,000+ and eliminate the per diem, but they should also request for the Legislators to be full time; making it illegal to hold any other outside job.

If this happens, I am afraid that Albany will become a Ghost Town. “The Racket” I mean, the excuses of staying in Albany to collect the per diem will be over, Legislators will run back home every week the same day that session ends and the budget will be on time every year without too much fight. After June they would have no reason before January to go back to Albany because there would be no per diem to collect.

You should know that by doing this the State will save a lot of money. The people of the state will win because they will have Legislators full time working in their districts and after

June, when session ends, they would have no reason to go back to Albany before January, because there would be no per diem to collect and Albany will become a “Ghost Town.”

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