



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

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

José M. Serrano

October 10, 2012

Today Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx) praised Governor Andrew Cuomo's announcement that 27 state agencies are now in compliance with an Executive Order which required agencies to provide free language interpretation in six major non-English languages. Executive Order No. 26 issued in 2011 by Governor Cuomo, required state agencies that have direct interaction with the public, to provide official documents, forms, instructions, and translation services in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Italian, Korean and Haitian Creole.

"I applaud Governor Cuomo for providing a service that is long overdue in the State of New York," said Senator Serrano. "New York is the cultural melting pot of the world, yet for far too long our State Government has lacked essential language interpretation services to meet the needs of our diverse population. Today's news ensures that vital information is now available to the 2.5 million New Yorkers with limited English skills."

Serrano continued, "New York has thrived because of our immigrant population and it is important that all New Yorkers have fair access to Government and the many services it provides. It is important that our government reflects the diversity of our state by ensuring that every New Yorker has equal access to information and receives equal treatment at our state agencies, schools and hospitals. I commend Governor Cuomo for making this issue a priority and celebrating the diversity that has built this nation. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that every resident has equal access to the resources available to them."

Senator Serrano is the Senate 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.