



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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What You Should Know

RUBEN DIAZ November 14, 2012

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The Four Amigos, The Four Independents, and Simcha Felder. What's the Difference? Are They Colorblind?

You should know that there are some very interesting and unexpected things happening in New York politics.

As you know, in this past General Election, with Barack Obama's name at the top of the ticket, the Democratic Party claimed many, many victories in New York State to the point that the Democrats were prepared to take charge of the State Senate.

During this past week there have been so many meetings, phone calls, conversations and speculations with any variety of scenarios about the State Senate. There were Senators expecting to become Senate Leaders, and names being thrown around as possibilities. There

were conversations about how to bring the four members of the Independent Democratic Conference – Senators Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky and David Carlucci – back into the fold of the Senate Democratic Conference. There were discussions that Jeff Klein would be the leader, while others envisioned Mike Gianaris as the Senate Leader. Senator John Sampson was slated for sacrifice, and experts, pundits and officials were joking and buzzing about, all trying to pick a leader.

Reverend Al Sharpton called for a meeting about this and at the last minute, asked to cancel the meeting because it somehow backfired on him. Harlem Assemblyman Keith Wright saw an opportunity to become the unchallenged heir apparent to Charlie Rangel's Congressional seat by pushing Adriano Espaillat's name as a "unifier" to become the Senate's Democratic Conference Leader. If this were to happen, Keith Wright would successfully take Espaillat out of the Congressional race, leaving it to Keith Wright, just for the asking.

Early yesterday, newly-elected Simcha Felder ruined everybody's plans by indicating that he made up his mind to join the Senate Republican Conference. According to Simcha, he has been negotiating to see which Conference would treat him and his constituents better.

We will all have to wait and see what Republican Majority Leader Dean Skelos actually promised Simcha and what kind of Committees and bonuses and fabulous prizes Simcha will receive. By doing this, Simcha has moved very fast way ahead of everybody else, and has quite possibly weakened the four Independent Democrat Committee.

Now it seems that they will all have to follow Simcha. He has become, in fact, the hero. Hasn't he?

Keith Wright will no longer be the sole inheritor of Congressman Rangel's seat, and Adriano Espaillat will have to resume his plans to go back and try again to win that seat.

Dean Skelos's promises to Simcha Felder have already assured us all that the Republicans will be leading State Senate.

You should know that in 2009 when the Four Amigos – Senators Hiram Monserrate, Pedro Espada, Carl Kruger, and I – staged a coup and asked for a Hispanic to be named Secretary of the State Senate, and asked for positions of power for Hispanics so we could better serve our communities as was never possible before in the New York State Senate, we were called traitors, bandidos, extortionists, crooks, thugs and every bad name out there. All the Four Amigos wanted was for Senate Committees to enjoy the same opportunities as other ethnicities and have the chance for Committees to be led by Hispanics in the State Senate.

Now here comes Simcha Felder who makes his deal and will probably get a very powerful Committee and some plums just as the Four Independents did before him - and he and everyone involved in this effort are being called heroes. They have been called so "intelligent" and so "clever" and so "dedicated" and so "loyal" to their constituents – but when the Four Amigos did the same thing we were horrible people, the scum of the earth, and so many other things.

You should know, ladies and gentlemen, that this is New York, this is New York politics. And this is Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz and this is what you should know.