



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

What You Should Know

RUBEN DIAZ December 23, 2013

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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Governor Andrew Cuomo Just Did it Again to Get Even with Me and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo

You should know that on Monday, December 16, 2013, the leaders of the New York State Republican Party, Chairman Ed Cox, New York State Senate Republican Conference Leader Dean Skelos, Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino and others, at the request of myself and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, came to the South Bronx to distribute 2,000 toys to our needy and poor children for my annual event "Christmas In The Bronx." You should have seen the excitement that radiated from the faces of all these children!

Two days later on December 18, 2013, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed and vetoed over 60 bills. One of his vetoes, Veto #249 to be exact, was the Immigrant Service Enforcement Act

(A.158A-S.786A). I am the Senate sponsor of this bill, and Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, who is also the Assembly Chair of the Task Force on New Americans, is the sponsor in that house.

You should also know that on the very next day, December 19, 2013, not one, but two articles were published in the New York Times: Immigration Remakes and Sustains New York, Report Finds and Life Expectancy of New Yorkers Rises With Influx of Immigrants, Study Finds.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when the venerable New York Times published not only one, but two articles on the positive impact immigrants bring to New York City, we have a Governor vetoed a bill that would strengthen protections against the rampant fraud to which immigrants are frequently subjected. How could the Governor veto a bill that requires immigrant service providers to register with the State? How could the Governor veto a bill that increases fines against immigrant service providers who seek to cheat the very people they are supposed to serve out of their hard earned money? How could the Governor veto a bill that is essentially a comprehensive consumer protection bill?

This bill is not only about protecting immigrants who speak Spanish. This bill is about protecting immigrants who speak Chinese, Russian, Creole, and even English speaking immigrants from Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, the Governor's veto is not only about his failure to protect immigrants who speak Spanish. His veto fails to protect the millions of immigrants who call New York City home.

Since Assemblyman Crespo and I represent communities in the Bronx, our concern is naturally for our constituents who are immigrants and who make their home here.

According to the New York Times: "From 2000 to 2011, the Bronx's foreign-born population increased by about 85,300, the largest growth of any borough." This growth, however, is not only evident in the Bronx. Again, according to the New York Times, in Staten Island the

“immigrant population grew 36 percent, the largest percentage increase of any borough.”

Ladies and Gentleman, a bill of this magnitude and scope does not get introduced, negotiated, amended and passed, unanimously in the Assembly and one vote shy of unanimous in the Senate, overnight. For three long years, Assemblyman Crespo has been working tirelessly with the legislative leaders in both houses, with the Governor’s office and with New York City’s leading immigrant service providers and advocacy groups, including the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, the Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the Queens Chapter for League of United Latin American Citizens, the New York Immigration Coalition, Casa Puebla and New Immigrant Community Empowerment, to craft a bill that everyone could support. Clearly, this bill had wide-spread community and legislative support

Even as final negotiations were taking place with the Governor’s office prior to the Governor’s veto, Assemblyman Crespo was willing to amend the bill further to address the Governor’s concerns. Instead of a good faith effort on the part of the Governor, the immigrants who contribute so much to the vitality, health and well being of New York City were given a slap in the face.

You should know that when the Governor vetoes a bill, he is required by state law to issue what is referred to as a “veto message.” The Governor’s veto message in part states: “Unfortunately, this bill fails to achieve its stated purposes, because, among other things, some of its key provisions are preempted by federal law, so they are unenforceable as State law.”

Since when did the Governor of New York State become the lawyer for the Federal Government? Our Governor is not the United States Attorney General. Why is the Governor hiding behind Federal law as an excuse to veto this bill? There is no Federal gay marriage

law, yet the Governor pushed that bill through, going so far as to force the Senate leaders to dispense with Senate Rules that govern floor debate. There is no Federal law that allows for the use of medical marijuana or is there a Federal law that decriminalizes marijuana, yet Governor Cuomo seems more determined than ever to make marijuana more readily available in our minority communities. There is no effort on the Federal level to expand abortion the way Governor Cuomo wants to expand abortion here in New York State.

You should also know that this is not the first time that the Democratic Governor who is the head of the State Democratic Party, the Party that is supposed to be the champion of the immigrant, has treated New York City and its residents with such disrespect. Governor Andrew Cuomo's refusal to include funding for the Dream Act in the State budget and his effort a few years ago to slash funding for senior centers which serve many immigrants, are among two of the horrible examples of how our Governor has treated the immigrant community.

You should know my dear reader, that Governor Andrew Cuomo just did it again and I am afraid that he did it to get even with Assemblyman Marcos Crespo and me for allowing Ed Cox, Dean Skelos, and Rob Astorino to come to the South Bronx to give 2,000 toys to our needy and poor children.

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