



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## Education for all our children!

RUBEN DIAZ June 9, 2014

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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Education for all our children!

You should know that with the legislative session concluding this month, Governor Cuomo and legislators can still accomplish much before we go home and campaign.

Among the positive things we can do in our remaining time in Albany is to pass into law the Education Investment Tax Credit bill to help thousands more families obtain private scholarships to attend pre-k through 12 schools, including private and parochial schools.

You should know that this legislation, which is chiefly sponsored by Michael Cusick in the Assembly (A.1826-D) and which I co-sponsor in the Senate (S.4099-A – Golden, Felder), would increase tax incentives for people to donate to private scholarship funds and also to public schools and nonprofit community organizations that help educate our children in the public schools. More scholarship money means more families can keep their children in parochial

and private schools. More families able to pay tuition in parochial schools, be they Catholic, Protestant, yeshivas, Muslim or whichever schools they attend, will allow those schools to stay open and continue to serve communities throughout our City and State.

You should know that in just the last three years, dozens of Catholic schools alone have closed in New York City and its metropolitan area – most of which affected immigrant communities and communities of color. We do not have to accept that. We do not have to have low-income families be denied the opportunity to have a religious education for their child.

As low-income families continue to lose the financial struggle to provide a parochial education for their children, only the wealthy and upper-income New Yorkers will remain with this opportunity. Is this justice? Is this where New York should go? Will this help in the fight for equality?

You should know that the New York Hispanic Clergy Organization, which I am proud to chair, last week endorsed the Education Investment Tax Credit so that we can reach more children and needy families with charitable investment to get them the educational opportunity they deserve. We join with Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Catholic bishops, rabbis, Imam and other religious leaders and dozens of community organizations in support of this bill for our children and our neighborhoods.

You should know that according to Cardinal Dolan, Governor Cuomo committed to getting the Education Investment Tax Credit approved, and the Governor himself recently told New York Post columnist Michael Goodwin that he supports this bill. With the Senate having passed this bill and more than enough support in the Assembly, the Governor needs to act on his words and, as Cardinal Dolan said, “get it done.”

Will Governor Cuomo follow through? Will he stand with needy families and communities of color?

Governor Cuomo did right by charter schools in the State Budget and you should know we provided more than a \$1 billion increase in state aid to public schools. Do struggling families with children in parochial schools get no help? Do they deserve less?

Ladies and Gentlemen, New York State has a long and proud tradition of religious education that has produced some of our finest leaders and citizens, including many who serve with me in the State Legislature – and Governor Cuomo himself, who graduated from Bishop Malloy High School in Queens.

My dear readers, enacting the Education Investment Tax Credit will ensure we continue to produce our leaders of tomorrow who have a parochial education, and sustain this valuable and important tradition in our State.

This is Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz, and this is what you should know.