



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## **No One Likes a Copy Cat**

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What You Should Know

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NO ONE LIKES A COPY CAT

You should know that until today, I have been unaware of anyone else in the entire world – except for me – who has held an Abrazo-titled event. “Abrazo” is the Spanish word for “hug” or “embrace.” Although I never trademarked the term “Abrazo Boricua in New York,” it is my creation. So, you might imagine my surprise to see a flier announcing that the Hispanic Federation is going to host an “Abrazo Hispano” event right here in New York City on July 1st. As soon as I saw this, I thought to myself: what a bunch of copycats!

You should know that I am proud to be the founder of the “Abrazo Boricua in New York.” For more than 20 years, the “Abrazo Boricua New York” has been one of the

social events of the season. It precedes the National Puerto Rican Day Parade and celebrates the proud achievements New York Puerto Ricans, honoring leaders and elected officials from the New York and Puerto Rico.

Over the years, as the demand for more of my “Abrazo” events has grown, I have responded by establishing and hosting “Abrazo African American,” “Abrazo Garifuna,” “Abrazo Bangladesh,” and “Abrazo Dominicana.” Each community has enjoyed the opportunity to embrace its culture and heritage, and celebrate many honorees right here in the Bronx.

As my “Abrazo” events continue to flourish, they remain free to the public, and they are attended by Governors, Mayors, Members of Congress, elected officials, dignitaries, and religious and community leaders.

We all know the old saying: “Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery,” and we also know that this expression is often used by copycats, and not the person with the original ideas. In this case involving the Hispanic Federation – a group that I have worked with for decades – I cannot understand their refusal to give credit where credit is due when naming their 2014 LULAC event “Abrazo Hispano.” I cannot understand their need to grab – for all intents and purposes – what is mine and my success – and use it as their own.

You should know that as time goes on, I find more and more people in New York’s political circles using my signature “What You Should Know” expression, without so much as a hat tip to me and no acknowledgement at all.

My dear reader, I am a firm defender and proponent of the First Amendment, and I believe that words are there for us all to use, but I also know that no one likes a copycat. We try to teach children to be original, not to be copycats, and to credit others when they use their ideas and words. It's even more of a challenge to get that message through to adults.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have to hope that when the next political dictionary is written, it will record my use of these terms and the etymology of those words, and list, for the record, the many people who copied my ideas and words.

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