



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

# The Don Quixote of Albany

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## **What You Should Know**

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### The Don Quixote of Albany

You should know that Don Quixote de La Mancha is a book that was written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra back in 1605. For those who may not be familiar with the novel, here is a translation of an online summary:

"While wandering about the ruined and oppressed Spain of the late 16th century, Don Quixote is always prepared to undertake knightly deeds in the name of love for humanity, even though life roughly crushes his illusions. Believing himself to be a knight, Don Quixote sets off on an adventure with a ridiculous new costume and the hope of committing heroic deeds. However, it will not take long for misunderstandings to occur between the real world and the fantasy world of Don Quixote. In one scene, Don Quixote arrives to an inn, which he believes to be a castle, and demands that the innkeeper dub him the noble title of "knight". In

another scene, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, his assistant come upon large windmills which Don Quixote believes to be ferocious giants and thus attacks them. Throughout their adventures, Sancho Panza and Don Quixote encounter a wide range of diverse characters including innkeepers, pirate prisoners, prostitutes, goatherds, soldiers, priests, escaped convicts and scorned lovers."

You should know that like Don Quixote de la Mancha, there are some who have come to Albany with their swords drawn ready to fight the windmills. They also claim that they are doing their noble and knightly duties in the name of love for humanity, promising that they will get rid of corruption and villainy by "forcing everyone else to be as clean and as honest as they are themselves."

One of those people trying to be like Don Quixote is the Democratic Senator from Rochester, New York: the Honorable Senator Ted O'Brien, who has introduced legislation to end the use of campaign money by elected officials to pay for legal services while they are being investigated about, accused of, or indicted for criminal or civil activities.

The problem with this piece of legislation by Senator Ted O'Brien from Rochester, New York is that he would like to allow Governor Andrew Cuomo to use the Governor's campaign funds while the Governor is being investigated by the US Attorney Preet Bharara.

My question to the Honorable Senator Ted O'Brien is: "Why not the Governor? Why only the little guys?"

You should know that when Governor Andrew Cuomo came to Albany, he took out his sword, and like Don Quixote de La Mancha, started swinging it at every windmill imaginable, telling Sancho Panza that it was his duty to clean it up.

It was the Governor who accused every one of us of being corrupt. It was the Governor who accused every one of us of being dysfunctional. It was the Governor who accused every one of not being transparent. It was the Governor who promised to end the culture of personal interest in Albany.

Now my dear colleague, the Honorable Senator Ted O'Brien from Rochester would like to allow Governor Andrew Cuomo to use his vast \$35 million war chest to pay for

legal services, while being investigated by US Attorney Preet Bharara. And at the same time, the Honorable Senator Ted O'Brien will not allow anybody else to use even a penny of his or her campaign money to pay for legal defense if any of them find themselves under investigation. Again, I ask my dear colleague Senator Ted O'Brien from Rochester, New York: Why not the Governor?

It is important for you to know that I don't believe that any of my Senate colleagues - not even Liz Krueger - will vote for this legislation if they realize that it will include them and not the Governor.

On the other hand, I could be wrong, because some of my colleagues like to go to the Second Floor for a chat with the Governor. And some of them like to go to the Governor's Mansion to eat his food and drink his wine.

Ladies and gentlemen, Senator O'Brien should realize that even if he wants to tilt at windmills in Albany, he should at least be honest about cleaning up Albany and be sure that his law applies to him, and to me, and to every Member of the State Legislature - and especially the Governor - with no exceptions.

Other than that, I am afraid that Senator O'Brien has just become another Don Quixote, like Governor Elliot Spitzer and Governor Andrew Cuomo, coming to Albany vested with a knightly purpose to fight corruption - but at the end, he too will fall victim to the ferocious windmill of government.

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