



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## To A Man Who Stands for Principle

RUBEN DIAZ May 7, 2015

### What You Should Know

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### To A Man Who Stands for Principle

You should know that on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, I was invited by New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo to join other Senate colleagues for a breakfast at the Governor's Mansion in Albany, New York. Along with Governor Andrew Cuomo, his Chief of Staff, Joe Percoco, his Counsel Alphonso David, and his Budget Director Mary Beth Labate, there were Senators Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Liz Krueger, Marcos Serrano, Gustavo Rivera, Adriano Espaillat, Brad Hoylman, and Daniel Squadron.

It is important for you to know that I took the opportunity to have Governor Cuomo sign for me a copy of his book titled "All Things Possible" which he gladly agreed by inscribing the following: "To a man who stands for principle."

You should also know that this book "All Things Possible" is important to me personally

because in it Governor Cuomo made reference to my name several times.

Chapter 10 of his book, titled "33" is devoted to the fight and the struggle that took place in order to get 33 Senators to vote in favor of same-sex marriage. In Chapter 10, the Governor gave me the honor of mentioning me by name on pages 382, 389, 400 and 402.

On page 382 the Governor mentioned me by name by stating: "We needed thirty-two votes. We knew that one Democrat, Ruben Diaz, a senator from the Bronx, was a no-go. A Pentecostal minister, he could not be moved to change his mind. That meant we had to lock in the remaining twenty-nine Democrats and sway three Republicans. Difficult? Yes."

On page 389, recounting his wheeling and dealing with Republican Leader Senator Dean Skelos, the Governor wrote: "In June, Majority Leader Skelos made a clever move that transferred all of the pressure from his team to ours. A skillful tactician, he announced that he wouldn't let the bill go to the floor unless we had all the Democrats with us except Ruben Diaz, the Pentecostal minister who we both knew was unshakable."

You should know that as the chapter continues, the Governor explains all of the roadblocks and troubles he had to bypass, and the negotiations he went through to get the same-sex marriage bill approved. He wrote about the chaos that ensued on the night of the vote, and how they prevented me and stopped me from speaking on the bill. On pages 399-400, he mentioned an important negotiation he had with Senator John Sampson:

"Republicans had asked for one concession. "We don't want long speeches," Skelos told us. They didn't want political rhetoric to inflame the already nervous senators. The Senate Minority Leader, a Democrat, John Sampson, who represented parts of Brooklyn including Crown Heights and East Flatbush, assured us he will keep the Democrats' comments to a

minimum. The plan was: Get the legislation on the floor. Do a rolling voice vote. Go home.

... Sampson had previewed with both Skelos and Steve that the only speech from one of their members will be from Senator Diaz, the sole opponent on the Democrats' side, who would speak for two minutes. Diaz, used to speeches from the pulpit, led with, "God, not Albany, has settled the definition of marriage a long time ago." And he kept going. When Lieutenant Governor Bob Duffy cut him off he said, "Senator, Senator, I know you want to go on but we have twenty-three people who want to speak on the bill."

Twenty-three people? The proceedings ground to a halt as Diaz and his allies complained that he had been cut off, and the Republicans approached Steve and Myland warning them that is exactly what was not supposed to happen."

The Governor continues explaining on page 402 how he managed to get things under control - and after the vote was taken and the gay marriage legislation was approved - how he decided to come to the Senate Floor to thank the senators. He stated that when he got to the Senate Floor: "Almost all of the Republicans and Ruben Diaz, who'd voted against marriage equality were all gone."

On my behalf, I am honored that the Governor not only mentioned me by name in his book to let the whole world know about my principled stand against his gay marriage legislation, now I am even more honored that he signed my copy by stating "To A Man Who Stands for Principle."

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