



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

Corruption is Not Exclusive to Politics in Albany

RUBEN DIAZ May 26, 2015

What You Should Know

By Senator Rev Rubén Díaz

32nd Senatorial District

718-991-3161

Corruption is Not Exclusive to Politics in Albany

You should know that in his Commencement Address on Sunday, May 17, 2015 at Pace Law School in Westchester County, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara – one more time – has singled out corruption in Albany. Standing before the Graduating Class of 2015, he announced: “We have corrosive corruption in our State Capital,” giving the impression that corruption only happens in Albany.

It is important for you to know that I do believe that there is corruption in Albany, and it has been proven. But I also believe that when the U.S. Attorney keeps going after and saying that there is a culture of corruption in Albany, you should also keep in mind that it’s not only in Albany.

I can assure you that if U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara could use all of the resources that the

federal government provides for his office (including but not limited to money, lawyers, personnel, etc. etc.) on any other place such as the New York City Council, City Hall, state businesses, factories, media, Wall Street, Main Street, school systems, unions, etc. – if he concentrated on any of those institutions – he would also conclude that Albany is not an exclusive cesspool of corruption.

For example, an article titled “Lobbyist who helped Viv become council boss reaps rewards - SI FIRM THE LAW ‘MAKER’ FOR CITY UNIONS” written by Amber Jamieson appears on pages 10 and 11 of the May 24, 2015 New York Post print edition. The first three sentences of this news story state:

“The lobbying firm Pitta Bishop Del Giorno & Giblin helps elect politicians — then tells them how to vote when they get in office.

In her quest to become City Council speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito enlisted the help of the firm, paying it more than \$61,000 in consulting fees.

Since Mark-Viverito took power last year, Pitta Bishop has been paid more than \$3.3 million by clients to lobby council members, including the speaker, to get mostly pro-union laws passed.”

The article quotes Citizens Union Executive Director Dick Dadey: “ ... when one firm or individual controls too much of the information coming in and out of the elected official’s office, it’s a problem.

My dear reader, if U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara is cheering on recent law graduates to concentrate on Albany by highlighting the evil that is being done in Albany, and not

concentrating on the good things that are done in Albany, the conclusion that everyone will come to is that Albany is exclusively corrupt. But we all know that we can find corruption in any part of life. Man's heart can be geared toward evil things. Where you find human beings, you are bound to find corruption.

You should know that for now, Albany happens to be Preet Bharara's bull's-eye. Not only is he concentrating his U.S Attorney General attention and resources on State elected officials, but the media is also focusing on Albany with the sole purpose of finding corruption.

Even though there are many decent, well-intentioned and God-fearing elected officials in Albany who work hard on behalf of their communities, the topic of corruption is crushed into almost every news story and editorial about politics in Albany. It is a shame for all elected officials to be painted with the same brush and for so much good work to be overshadowed with the crushing message of corruption everywhere. It is as if nobody should know nor care about the real fights and struggles for social justice that some of our most dedicated elected officials take on in Albany to produce very good legislation and effectively represent their constituents.

To my colleagues in Albany whose good work and truly noble efforts are being ignored because of the concentration and fixation on evil and not good deeds in Albany: I take my hat off to you!

Ladies and gentlemen, I can assure you that Albany is not the only place where corruption can be found. While I agree that it needs to be addressed, its presence in the New York City Council, City Hall, corporate New York or elsewhere is probably just as much in need of U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara's resources and attention. The law school graduates he is cheering on should know about this as well.

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