



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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End of Session Gossip in Albany

RUBEN DIAZ June 8, 2015

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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You should know that the Legislative Session for the year is about to end and there are eight juicy pieces of gossip that are making the rounds. Here they are:

(1) Word on the street is that the new Speaker of the State Assembly, the Honorable Carl Heastie has achieved a monumental goal by having Governor Andrew Cuomo take away \$100 million dollars from New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and send that money to the Assembly. This way, Carl Heastie can assign \$2 million dollars to each of his members to spend exclusively for capital improvement projects in city housing in the respective Assembly Members' districts.

Rumor has it that with this show of political gamesmanship, Speaker Carl Heastie has

outsmarted everyone and has made off with the candies. He has left Senator John Flanagan, Senate Majority Leader, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Leader of the Regular Senate Democrats, and Senator Jeff Klein, Leader of the Senate Independent Democrats in the dust.

(2) About three years ago, Senator Joseph Addabbo was elected by this column as the Senator with the best hairdo, beating Senator José Marco Serrano by one vote. (See Serrano v Addabbo – The Battle of the Hair <http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/what-you-should-know-20>) Senator Adriano Espaillat cast the deciding vote, showing all that it's true when they say that every vote counts.

Now, three years later, Senator José Marco Serrano has not only lost 65 pounds, but he has also changed his way of dressing by wearing bow ties instead of neckties. He has grown a stylish beard and walks with an air of confidence, causing Senator Adriano Espaillat to change his vote this year, proclaiming that Senator José Marco Serrano reigns as the indisputable champion, dethroning Senator Joseph Addabbo of his title as the Senator with the best hairdo. (We all agree that the hairspray that Senator José Marco Serrano uses gives his hair that extra hold – it is definitely a good one.)

(3) You don't have to say that you heard this from me, but there are rumors making their way through Albany that Catholic Cardinal Timothy Dolan has promised absolution to those legislators who will support the Parental Choice in Education Act AND that Governor Andrew Cuomo – a most astute politician – has requested two absolutions instead of one to cover up at least two mortal sins that he has committed against the Church.

(4) You should know that Senator Gustavo Rivera really surprised everyone during the End of Session Dinner sponsored by Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins on June 2 at Martel's Restaurant. You might be asking, "Why? What happened?"

Well my dear reader, let me tell you. While some people were making fools of themselves doing Karaoke, when Senator Gustavo Rivera took the microphone and started to imitate Ray Charles, he was just fantastic! He stole the show. I do believe that Gustavo has a life after politics.

(5) Nowadays, you can find Assemblyman Felix Ortiz walking aimlessly through the corridors of power in Albany. Since Somos El Futuro was taken away from him and given to Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, Felix doesn't seem to be too cooperative with anybody. I have not seen him at any Somos meetings and people are beginning to whisper and ask why he signed contracts in Puerto Rico for 2015 when he knew that there would be a new Chairman.

(6) Rumor also has it that even though there are two new leaders, Carl Heastie who replaced Sheldon Silver as Speaker of the Assembly and John Flanagan who replaced Dean Skelos as Senate Majority Leader, nonetheless, the key staff and confidants of the old leaders are still in place. This gives the perception that the old guard still has some influence.

(7) While the Legislature is busy making arrangements for the close of Session and the Senators are debating which bills and pieces of legislation should or should not get to see the light of day, Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson is occupying her time by collecting petitions to run for Mayor of Mount Vernon. Good luck with that, Ruth.

(8) Last but not least, now that American Pharoah has won the Triple Crown, you should know that there are some high rollers here in Albany who are keeping in touch with their bookies, and who are still 75% in favor of Senator Jeff Klein becoming President Pro-Temp in the near future. They are so certain that Senator Klein will become the Senate's President Pro Temp that to them, Preet Bharara is the only one who could stop Jeff Klein's ascent to the throne.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are some samples of the gossip that is floating around in Albany as the Session comes to a close.

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