



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

Robert Johnson, the Criminal Justice System and His Detractors

RUBEN DIAZ September 23, 2015

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW By Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz District 32 Bronx County, New York Tel 718-991-3161

Robert Johnson, the Criminal Justice System and His Detractors

You should know that Robert Johnson has been the Bronx District Attorney since 1989, and that after 26 years as the Bronx's top Prosecutor (the longest serving District Attorney in office in any of New York City's five counties) Mr. Johnson would like to step down and seek a nomination as a New York State Supreme Court Judge.

You should also know that because of this, there has been criticism of Robert Johnson – and one of the criticisms is that he has one of the lowest criminal conviction rates of all of the District Attorneys in the five boroughs.

You should know that throughout the years, members of our community and some news reporters have been accusing the criminal justice system of discriminating against minority communities – especially our youth.

We have seen demonstration after demonstration in different parts of the City where community leaders demand the better treatment and the end of the unequal enforcement of the law for minorities.

We have read columns and editorials from different publications and news reporters criticizing how minorities have been targeted, arrested for non-violent crimes, prosecuted and sent to prison.

We have seen statistic after statistic about the increase of the population in the New York State's prisons showing how they are packed with Black and Hispanic people – especially our youth.

We have heard sharp criticism against different District Attorneys who have been accused of discriminating against Black and Hispanic youth, and how these same District Attorneys use a double standard of prosecution just to obtain high rates of conviction.

On the other hand, when we look at those who are fighting against and accusing the system of using a double standard to pack our jails with Black and Hispanic youth, those same reporters and community leaders who have been fighting to change our laws so our youth won't go to jail - those are the same people who are constantly demonstrating against the system because according to them, the system is unjust to our minority community – especially our Black and Hispanic youth.

But, surprise, surprise!

Those same reporters, news stations, newspapers and community leaders are the same ones now accusing Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson of being ineffective because his rate of conviction is less than the other District Attorneys – especially compared to the District Attorneys in Queens and Staten Island.

It is important for you to know that what dignifies Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson and what makes him stand out is his lack of desire to have a great record of conviction at the expense of sending members of our community to jail for non-violent crimes.

Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson has never concentrated on benefitting himself by getting a high conviction rate. Instead, he has been making sure that our community – especially Black and Hispanic youth are treated with the same standard as others are treated.

Robert Johnson was never interested in sending anyone to jail just to boost his own record of conviction.

Ladies and gentlemen, even though some people judge a great District Attorney by his or her record of conviction, there are others who judge them by their fairness and their ability to see the bigger picture. And I believe that Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson qualifies for the latter.

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