



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## If Charter Schools Help Our Black and Hispanic Children, Why Are Our Black and Hispanic Elected Officials Opposed to Them?

SEN. RUBEN DIAZ August 3, 2016

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### LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

ools. They included Rev. **Ruben Diaz** Sr., a Pentecostal n  
onx and president of the New York Hispanic Clergy Or  
**Floyd Flake**, a former US congressman and pastor of th  
llen African Methodist Episcopal Cathedral in Queens;  
urprise, Harlem's very own Dr. **Wyatt Tee Walker**.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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By Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz

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If Charter Schools Help Our Black and Hispanic Children, Why Are Our Black and Hispanic Elected Officials Opposed to Them?

You should know that charter schools are a blessing to help our Black and Hispanic children to be able to obtain a good education in our poor areas.

These charter schools have been opened in minority communities where Black and Hispanic children reside. There are very few charter schools in other communities.

If this is so, then why are our Black and Hispanic legislators opposed to these charter schools opening in our barrios.

It is important for you to know that in the Tuesday, August 2, 2016 edition of the New York Post, there is an article, “Minority report – charter tops” that was written by Selim Algar that states:

1. Minority charter students are twice as likely to be proficient in math than public school peers;
2. Minority charter students are 50 percent more likely to be proficient in English than public school peers;
3. 76 percent of charter schools outperformed their district schools in math;
4. 71 percent of charter schools outperformed their district public schools in English

The questions we all have to ask ourselves are:

1. If charter schools give Black and Hispanic children a guarantee for a better education so they can compete, then why oppose charter schools to continue operating in our area?
2. If our Black and Hispanic legislators say that they wish to improve education opportunities for our children, then why are the majority of these legislators opposed to

progress for our children by rejecting charter schools?

We legislators all have to recognize the importance of our public schools and we have to assign resources so teachers and principals will have all the resources necessary in order for our children to get a good education in their public schools.

On the other hand, it is well known that there is a high percentage of our Black and Hispanic children who are being left behind in our public schools, which we know by the high percentage of students dropping out, and other students being promoted to the next grade without knowing how to read or write.

The charter schools have to be competitive, and they are. They have proven that our children are smart, intelligent and with the right tools, resources and attention, they can compete with anyone else.

We all know that children in public schools that are located in other ethnic communities get better resources, buildings, equipment, maintenance, protection, and overall better attention than what is given to our children in our barrios.

You should also know that I, together with the Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker and Reverend Floyd Flake were the first ones who fought for the establishment and creation of charter schools in New York City.

In 1999, the three of us were part of the first charter school opening in the City: the Canaan Charter School in Harlem. I was happy to see this documented on page 27 in the book written by Mary C. Bounds titled "A Light Shines in Harlem."

Since that time, and as a New York State Senator, even with the opposition of Black and Hispanic legislators, we have approved 460 charter schools, we have at least 34 charter

schools that serve the families of my Senatorial District, and for this, I am very proud.

As a minority State Senator who wishes the best for our community, I will continue to fight to get more charter schools in my district because parents who I represent want the opportunity to send their children to a charter school or a school of their choice.

I will also continue to fight for more resources for the public schools in my district so teachers have the resources they need to educate our children.

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