



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

A Bad Start for the New Year

RUBEN DIAZ January 5, 2012

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For Immediate Release

New York State Senator Reverend Ruben Diaz released the following statement in response to Governor Andrew Cuomo's 2012 State of the State Address:

Although I may be the lone voice crying in the wilderness, I need to publicly and ardently disagree with New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo and his plans to call for an amendment to the State Constitution to legalize casino gambling. I also need to express my strong opposition to his proposal in his State of the State Address to build a DNA databank of samples taken from criminal defendants in New York State.

Like the rest of us, Governor Cuomo must know that by legalizing casino gambling, gambling addiction will increase and more and more families and children will suffer. Rent will not get paid. Food will not be on the table. In a State where poverty levels have increased, gambling revenues will not draw from expendable income but from families' necessities. Instead of helping the many New Yorkers who already suffer from gambling addiction, this amendment will only continue to destroy their worlds and further exploit vulnerable and poor New Yorkers and their families.

Governor Cuomo has already legalized gay marriage. Now he wants to legalize casino gambling. What's next – legalizing prostitution and marijuana and drugs – all in good “faith” to make money to raise tax revenues for the State?

In regard to Governor Cuomo's hopes to build the DNA database, he must be aware of the racial injustice that exists within New York's prison system. It is unsettling how on one hand, the Governor says that he opposes harsh fingerprinting requirements for families who need food stamps, and on the other hand, he wants to expand the DNA databank samples of criminal defendants. The racial imbalance targeted by both of these rules is clear, and the disregard of civil liberties and privacy protection laws and the implications it gives to the authorities is also clear.

To some, Governor Cuomo may seem to be unstoppable, but I do not see him as our economic savior. I see him as quite the opposite.