



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

What You Should Know

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By Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz

32nd Senatorial District, Bronx County, New York

Tel. 718-991-3161

Finally, The Four Amigos Have Been Vindicated

You should know that in 2008, the Four Amigos formed and had real power in the New York State Senate. Former Senator Carl Kruger was elected to Chair the Senate Finance Committee. Former Senator Pedro Espada was elected to Chair the Senate Housing Committee and was the first Hispanic minority ever to serve as the New York State Senate Majority Leader. Former Senator Hiram Monserrate was elected to Chair the Senate Consumer Affairs Committee, and I was elected to Chair the Senate Aging Committee.

You should also know that we got the first Hispanic ever to be appointed to serve as the Secretary of the State Senate. Also, every Black and Hispanic Senator got a Committee for the very first time in the history of the New York State Senate. We all got all of the lulus that come along with being Chair of a Senate Committee, and I got to stop gay marriage for 2

years.

For that, we were burnt.

Editorial boards, columnists, reporters and pundits called us all kind of names. They called us opportunists and extortionists. They said we were the example of quid pro quo. They never once gave us credit for what we achieved for the minority community during that time.

Since the Senate Democrats lost the Majority, the only Democratic Senators in the State Senate who have become Chair of any Committee – and get lulus and benefits for their offices – have been the four Members of the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC): Senator Jeff Klein, Senator Diane Savino, Senator David Valesky, and Senator David Carlucci.

Aside from these four Senators, Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky, and David Carlucci, during the past two years there have been no Democrats and I repeat no Democratic Senator – no Blacks, and no Hispanics – in any powerful positions in the New York State Senate. None are Chairs of any Committees.

When these IDC Senators Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky, and David Carlucci broke away from our Democratic Conference, their main issues for doing so were because they claimed that they wanted good government and because they opposed the hanky-panky in the Senate. They even attacked Senator Malcolm Smith because he was being investigated about dealings with the Aqueduct Racino along with Reverend Floyd Flake and U.S. Congressman Greg Meeks. Senators, Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky, and David Carlucci insisted that they wanted to be clean and far away from any hanky-panky.

They never said they wanted power to Chair Committees. They never said they wanted lulus. They never said they wanted better offices or more money for their offices and NO ONE ever attacked or questioned them about any of those realities.

Now, Senator Malcolm Smith sees an opportunity to do a little quid pro quo of his own with the Republicans and instead of being honest enough to just say, "I want the Republicans to support me so I can run for Mayor of New York City on the Republican line," he just broke away from the Democratic Conference and joined the Independent Democratic Conference claiming that he is doing so for better government and to do better for the people of New York.

During these past few weeks, Senators Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky, and David Carlucci are on record saying that the IDC wants to pass three pieces of legislation: raising the minimum wage, the Reproductive Health Act – which will make the already staggering numbers of abortion in New York's Black and Hispanic communities soar even higher – and the Marijuana Bill. They claim that they maintain their allegiance with the Republican Conference to help them to bring these bills into to law.

The IDC Senators Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky, and David Carlucci don't say that those three bills are in fact Democratic issues, and they don't explain why they need to go to the Republican side for support to pass those bills. Even assuming that I wouldn't vote for the pro-abortion or marijuana bill, there would still be more than enough Senate Democrats to pass those bills.

What these IDC Senators Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky, and David Carlucci don't say – and what no one is holding them accountable to even admitting – is the power they are getting.

You should know that when the Senate Session resumes, Senator Jeff Klein will get to be the Senate Leader every 2 weeks, trading off with Senator Dean Skelos and the other three will be getting good perks.

I have to say that I believe what these Senators Jeff Klein, Diane Savino, David Valesky, and David Carlucci are doing is a lot worse than what the Four Amigos ever did! And please don't think I am overlooking the fact that Carl Kruger, Pedro Espada, and Hiram Monserrate were indicted – but NOT because of what they did in as Amigos in the Senate. For that, of course there is a difference, but the quid pro quo and the wheeling and dealing that is happening now in the State Senate is so much worse than all of that.

You should also know that in 2008, I was honest enough to say to my colleagues that I would not support anyone who would bring gay marriage to the Senate Floor. Since the beginning that is what I said and I made it clear that that was what I wanted.

And so I must put this question out there to all of the editorial boards and all of the media and pundits who went after the Four Amigos: What are you saying now? What are you saying to and about the Independent Democratic Senators Senator Jeff Klein, Senator Diane Savino, Senator David Valesky, and Senator David Carlucci – and about Senator Malcolm Smith? What about Simcha Felder? What happened to concerns of cleanliness and not being associated with certain Democrats? What are you saying about power sharing? What about quid pro quo? Are they extortionists? Are they selfish? That is for you guys to find out.

If this is not a text book example of quid pro quo and if this is not a personal power struggle with such personal power and benefits equal to what the Four Amigos were accused of – or worse – then you tell me what it is.

In closing, I really have to thank Senator Jeff Klein, Senator Diane Savino, Senator David Valesky, and Senator David Carlucci because by doing and creating this power sharing movement they are vindicating the names of the Four Amigos.

So now you know the rest of the story: finally, the Four Amigos have been vindicated.

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