



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## What You Should Know

RUBEN DIAZ January 23, 2013

| ISSUE: **CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

### **WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

**By**

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### **MY TWO CENTS ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM**

You should know that there is an ancient Roman saying that states: “Caesar’s wife should not only be pure, but also have the appearance of purity.”

In these times of political upheaval and distrust, our Governor and some people are trying to present an appearance of purity by calling for campaign finance reform, while at the same time their political coffers are overflowing with all kinds of campaign contributions. Others are making a lot of money by having part time jobs or other kinds of income and sometimes using their offices as a way of getting customers for their law firms or businesses.

You should know that there will not be an honest, forthright and serious discussion about campaign finance reform if these discussions do not also include the prohibition of outside employment by a legislator during his or her term of office as well as a requirement for elected officials to post certain information regarding campaign contributions to his or her website. In order to address these important issues, I have introduced two bills, S.384 and S.787-A.

You should also know that as of today, none of my Senate colleagues have co-sponsored either of these bills, and then they want to talk to me about campaign finance reform. Please, give me a break!

Senate Bill 384 is an act to amend the legislative law in relation to prohibiting outside work by a legislator during the term of office.

How much transparency should be demanded by the people of their representatives? As long as we allow legislators to hold outside business interests, there is a potential that these outside business interests could one day cause a serious conflict of interest, or at least in the public's eye, the perception of one.

Senate Bill 787-A is an act to amend the public officers law, in relation to requiring elected officials to post certain information regarding contributions on his or her websites.

The provisions of this legislation will require that the Governor, Comptroller, the Attorney General and any member of the Senate or Assembly post on the homepage of his or her websites, a direct link to the Board of Elections website to his or her campaign contributions. Likewise, all contributions valued over two-hundred and fifty dollars will also be required to be posted on the homepage of the official's web sites within thirty days of receipt of the contribution. The specific dollar amount and the identity of the donor will also be required.

Furthermore, New York State employees are prohibited from posting such information while performing their duties as a state employee. Deliberate failure to comply with the provisions of this legislation will be a Class E Felony.

The public should have easy, timely access to information regarding contributions to their elected officials. Currently this information is only available through the Board of Elections. This legislation improves both transparency and access regarding contributions to elected officials and provides for a criminal sanction impact for willful violation of its provisions.

These bills are good indications of not only being pure but also having the appearance of purity.

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