



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## What You Should Know

RUBEN DIAZ February 15, 2013

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

**By Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz**

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#### **Who is the real leader? Who is in command?**

You should know that when we, Black and Hispanic elected officials go out campaigning to become elected or re-elected, we promise our communities that we will fight, protect and stand against any and all things that will be detrimental to their benefit and goals.

That was the reason why in 2009, during the four amigos coup in the New York State Senate, I fought and asked that Blacks and Hispanics were appointed and hired to senior staff positions in the New York State Senate Democratic Conference.

At that time, all Black and Hispanic Senators were made chairs of committees, and Mr. Angelo Aponte was hired as the first Hispanic Secretary of the State Senate. Senator John Sampson became conference leader and he appointed Blacks and Hispanics as senior staff in the Democratic Conference.

Those were great achievements for our community and our people. Since then, many things have taken place in the New York State Senate, especially in our Senate Democratic Conference. All those achievements are gone and Black and Hispanic influence and power has evaporated.

You should know that during this month when we celebrate African American History and this weekend when the Black and Hispanic Caucus of Elected Officials comes to Albany to celebrate Caucus weekend, five people of Black and Hispanic descent functioning as senior staff members in the New York State Senate Democratic Conference have been removed from their positions. The five who received this St. Valentine's Day Memo are: Alejandra Paulino, Secretary to the Minority, Tonya Cantlo-Cockfield, Deputy Chief of Staff, Matthew Smalls, Special Counsel, Paul Rivera, Special Advisor, and Anthony Thomas, External Relations. All of them were appointed and hired as part of the Democratic Conference Senior Staff by Senator John Sampson.

Today under the leadership of Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, many have gone and the influence and participation of Blacks and Hispanics as senior staff members in our conference has been evaporating little by little.

You should also know that there was a coup organized by Senator Liz Krueger and Senator Michael Gianaris to substitute Senator John Sampson with Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Since then, one by one, our Black and Hispanic staff, little by little have been disappearing forcing me to ask the following two questions: 1) Who is really in control? 2) Who is the real leader of our conference?

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