



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

The Hypocrisy of Some State Senators

RUBEN DIAZ July 24, 2013

You should know that I have received a copy of a letter that has been passed around to all Democratic senators to sign and to be sent to New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The letter in question starts by stating: *“The 421-a program was created to spur residential housing construction in economically struggling neighborhoods.”* However, as a recent Daily News editorial headline accurately stated, *“Apartments for billionaires should not be getting taxpayer handouts.”*

“News that omnibus housing legislation passed this year that restored co-op and condo tax breaks and offered critical relief to homeowners struggling after Hurricane Sandy also contained wildly inappropriate tax breaks for 5 ultra-luxury buildings has generated widespread and justified outrage.”

You should know that some of the same senators that are asking me to join them in signing the letter, are the same ones who did not want to listen to me, and went ahead and voted in favor of the legislation that now, because of the Daily News editorial, want to appear “Clean and Honest.”

You should know that on January 23rd, 2013, that piece of legislation came to the floor of the senate. The legislation, S.2320 sponsored by Senator Martin Golden, was debated and everyone got the opportunity to express their opinions in favor or against the piece of legislation. I took my time speaking against it and asked my fellow senators to vote “NO”.

Only 6 of all the Democrats heard my call and voted no; they are: Senator Adriano Espaillat, Senator Terry Gibson, Senator Bill Perkins, Senator Marcos Serrano, Senator Gustavo Rivera and Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk, the rest voted in favor of Bill S.2320.

Today I am including a copy of my speech on the Senate floor on January 23, 2013 expressing my opposition to the legislation in which I criticized Senator Liz Krueger for her vote in favor of the legislation.

My complete speech during that day goes as follows:

"Senator Krueger, I just love you. I love you so much. You know, I love you for keeping me one hour listening to you talking bad about a bill and at the end saying "I'm voting yes." I love you. I love you.

Mr. President and ladies and gentlemen, once in a while I write a column called "What You Should Know," It's my way to inform my constituents and the voters of New York of what's going on.

Today, I wrote one. And I call it, based on the Roman Empire old saying, I entitled it "Caesar's wife should not only be pure but should also have the appearance of purity." And by voting for this bill, we might be sending an appearance of impurity, because this bill only benefits the rich. It is a multi-million program of rent exemption and abatement for landlords who renovate their buildings.

This piece of legislation, ladies and gentlemen, does nothing to protect and strengthen tenant protection. So tenants in the City of New York will not be protected with this bill. On the contrary, they might be put in danger. It is just a tax benefit to developers producing luxury buildings.

This bill, ladies and gentlemen -- and I'm so sorry that Liz Krueger voted for it -- this bill does nothing to prevent landlords from double-dipping. That's a word that -- a nice word, double-dipping. Meaning that a lot of them are receiving a J-51 tax credit from the government and at the same time will be increasing the tenants' rent based on a major capital improvement. So this bill will allow landlords to get money from the government for the renovation based on J-51 and at the same time will allow landlords to increase tenants' rents based on something called major capital improvement for the same renovation.

And this bill will extend 421-a tax benefits to the owners of 15 specific plots in 22 Midtown and downtown Manhattan which are now being developed as luxury condominiums and office buildings. Fifteen of them. And according to the New York Tenants and Neighbors Coalition, it seems that only five specific developer companies will benefit from this piece of legislation.

They are number one, Extell Development Company, Extell Development Company, for their billionaire tower, One57, Silverstein Properties, the owner of the World Trade Center. Thor Equities, the company behind the controversial Coney Island redevelopment for 516-520 Fifth Avenue. Number four, Steinhardt Management, who wants to develop two former Stock Exchange buildings in Lower Manhattan. Number five, Shoreham {ph} Association, Incorporated, who plans to build a 30-story glass tower over the site of the original New York Times building.

Ladies and gentlemen, these developments do nothing to address the New York City ongoing affordable housing crisis. Therefore, to vote for this bill we might be sending a message, an impure message, that we're only working for the landlords and against the tenants and the regular people in New York City."

Now, after some of them voted in favor of that legislation, and reading The New York Daily News Editorial they want Governor Cuomo to repeal it. And that ladies and gentlemen is pure hypocrisy.

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

Floor Votes:

01/23/13 S2320 Senate Vote Aye: 56 Nay: 7

Aye Adams	Aye Addabbo	Aye Avella	Aye Ball
Aye Bonacic	Aye Boyle	Aye Breslin	Aye Carlucci
Aye DeFrancisco	Nay Diaz	Aye Dilan	Nay Espaillat
Aye Farley	Aye Felder	Aye Flanagan	Aye Fuschillo
Aye Gallivan	Aye Gianaris	Nay Gipson	Aye Golden
Aye Griffo	Aye Grisanti	Aye Hannon	Aye Hassell-Thompson
Aye Hoylman	Aye Kennedy	Aye Klein	Aye Krueger
Aye Lanza	Aye Larkin	Aye Latimer	Aye LaValle
Aye Libous	Aye Little	Aye Marcellino	Aye Marchione
Aye Martins	Aye Maziarz	Aye Montgomery	Aye Nozzolio
Aye O'Brien	Aye O'Mara	Aye Parker	Aye Peralta
Nay Perkins	Aye Ranzenhofer	Aye Ritchie	Nay Rivera
Aye Robach	Aye Sampson	Aye Sanders	Aye Savino
Nay Serrano	Aye Seward	Aye Skelos	Aye Smith
Aye Squadron	Aye Stavisky	Aye Stewart-Cousins	Nay Tkaczyk
Aye Valesky	Aye Young	Aye Zeldin	