



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## The Tragedy of Gabriela Rosa - and Many Others

RUBEN DIAZ June 30, 2014

What You Should Know

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The Tragedy of Gabriela Rosa - and Many Others

You should know that in November, 2012, Gabriela Rosa became the first Dominican-born woman in the history of the New York State Assembly. She represented Upper Manhattan. For all of the time that I have known Gabriela, I have seen her functioning in a most professional manner. To me, she has been one of the more serious elected officials I have met - even to the point that I was looking forward to her becoming the standard bearer of New York State's Dominican community.

You should know that since her election, every time I would walk into the Assembly Chamber, I would see Gabriela in her seat - even while her colleagues were mulling about or nowhere to be found. To me, it was impressive to not only see Gabriela seated and ready to work, but her mother was often seated by her side. This indicated to me a special dedication

Gabriela had to her mother, and how much she appreciated that bond of maternal love that her mother had for her.

You should also know that on Friday, June 27th, Gabriela Rosa resigned from her Assembly seat as part of her plea agreement with United States Attorney Preet Bharara. In 1996, many years before she was elected, Gabriela paid a United States citizen \$8,000 to enter into a marriage to regularize her immigration status and become an American citizen.

It is important for you and for the entire community to know that the desire of thousands and thousands of people to become U.S. citizens often ends in tragedy. In their pursuit for American citizenship - and to obtain the American Dream - people cross oceans risking their lives. They cross deserts, mountains, rivers, and do all kinds of things just to get into this country. Once here, many enter into agreements with other people - and even businesses who match people - just so they can become American citizens.

This pursuit of the American Dream has been the downfall of Gabriela, a tragedy for New York Hispanics, and a great loss of a good public servant for our community. I was very fond of Gabriela and I assure you that her leadership will be missed.

On the other hand, it is important for everyone to know that I do not condone illegal acts. That said, it is also important to know that illegal acts to attain citizenship is nothing new. There are thousands and thousands of other people who try this, too. If the United States Attorney Preet Bharara goes after those who commit the same act as Gabriela, I am afraid New York will be an empty town.

And even though I am not condoning what Gabriela did, it is important to recognize that she did not abuse her office nor her staff. She did not abuse her power. She did not partake in bribery. And she did not get rich. Gabriela's mistake is only one variety of many examples of

the way people can act in pursuit of American citizenship and the American Dream throughout our nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, I assure you that Gabriela's tragedy will not end with her, thousands of illegal or undocumented citizens are facing or will face the same problems that Gabriela is facing. The hot pursuit of the American Dream and the violation of the immigration laws to obtain such will only end when the President of the United States and the American Congress seriously deal with the situations of more than 12 million undocumented citizens.

I am afraid that for many living in this country trying to become American Citizens, their desperation, anxiety and mental agony will become a tragedy.

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