



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruben Diaz

## An Open Letter to Chancellor Merryl H. Tisch

RUBEN DIAZ July 2, 2014

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION**

### **OPEN LETTER**

July 2, 2014

Chancellor Merryl H. Tisch

New York State Education Department

89 Washington Avenue

Board of Regents, Room 110 EB

Albany, New York 12234

Dear Chancellor Tisch:

This letter is to inquire why the Board of Regents limited students, in the thematic essay, to not use *Brown vs. Board of Education*, as they could use other important Supreme Court decisions, during the June 2014 United States History and Government Regents.

United States History and Government / Content-Specific Rubric

Thematic Essay / June 2014

Theme: Change —The Supreme Court

Throughout United States history, the Supreme Court has dealt with many controversial issues. The Court's decisions in these cases have had a significant impact on the United States and/or on American society

Task: Select two United States Supreme Court decisions that have had a significant impact on American society and for each

- Describe the historical circumstances surrounding the case
- Explain the Court's decision in the case
- Discuss the impact of the decision on the United States and/or on American society

You may use any Supreme Court decision from your study of United States history. Some suggestions you might wish to consider include *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857), *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), *Schenck v. United States* (1919), *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966), *New York Times v. United States* (1971), *Roe v. Wade* (1973), and *United States v. Nixon* (1974).

You are not limited to these suggestions.

Do not use Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka as one of your Supreme Court decisions.

We all know that this year, the United States celebrated the 60th Anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, ruling that segregated schools for black and white children were unconstitutional. We also know that for the past 60 years, segregation in enrollment is not legally enforced in New York City - but by virtue of economics and the allocation of resources, segregation in New York City's public schools for Black and Hispanic children remains a harsh reality of separate and unequal education.

As a New York State Senator representing the South Bronx - the poorest community in the nation - I believe that in one of the last tests our high school children take before graduating, they should focus on and be inspired by the promise of the Brown vs Board of Education decision - not told to exclude it. Clearly, our youth will have to devote themselves to furthering and fulfilling that promise and for the generations of those to come. I cannot appreciate nor understand why your History and Government Regents has so dampened this inspirational decision.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I await your earliest reply.

Sincerely,

Senator Rev. Ruben Diaz