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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Rubén Díaz Says Ethics Reform Should ‘Begin in the Governor’s Mansion’

By Colin Campbell 2:00pm

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(Photo: Getty)

The State Legislature is set to look at tightening New York’s infamously loose campaign finance rules in the wake of a recent slate of corruption scandals, but State Sen. Rubén Díaz believes legislative attention should instead be focused on Governor Andrew Cuomo.

“I would like to recommend that ethics reform in New York State begin in the Governor’s mansion,” Mr. Díaz declared today in one of his regular “What You Should Know” statements.

“While we consider how to restrict Senate campaign donations that are used to pay for meals, I would like my readers to know that many of my colleagues are routinely invited to the Governor’s mansion to eat his food and drink his wine with no oversight to who pays those bills.”

This is not the first time Mr. Díaz has deflected the news of State Senator Malcolm Smith’s arrest—along with other officials in the State Assembly and City Council—to other topics. Indeed, earlier this month, he reminded his readers that both Mr. Cuomo Mayor Michael Bloomberg have also used money in pursuit of their various legislative and electoral goals, although through legal channels.

Today, Mr. Díaz, an outspoken reverend and constant critic of Mr. Cuomo’s, paid particular attention to the Committee to Save New York, an organization that has spent millions supporting Mr. Cuomo’s policy agenda.

“We should be more concerned with stopping big money influence of corporations, groups and people that are getting access to meetings with Governors and others by contributing big donations,” the senator continued. “Amen.”

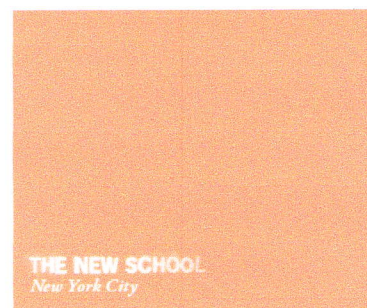
View Mr. Díaz’s full missive below:

You should know that today the New York State Senate will begin a public push to limit how Senate campaign funds can be spent. These campaign funds are donations from individuals and organizations given with the understanding that the candidate will use them as they see fit – like renting a car and paying for meals.

You should also know that while this effort to turn up the heat on Senators has begun, there is still no effort underway to restrict what Governor Cuomo does with resources he raises, and no demand for a complete disclosure of the names of the donors from the Committee to Save New York – his ally – a private lobbying committee not subject to state campaign finance law. The names of many of their donors remain in the shadows.

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The Committee to Save New York has been lockstep with Governor Cuomo’s agenda and has spent more money on lobbying activities in 2012 than any other group.

You should know that the billionaires and business leaders who support Governor Cuomo’s Committee to Save New York have won billions in government bailouts. Now they insists upon “fiscal responsibility” for the rest of New York.

I would like to recommend to my colleagues that instead of going after each other and restricting how much money we spend from our donors to rent cars and pay for dinners for our campaigns, that we focus our attention on reviewing policy payoffs that impact our ability to legislate on behalf of our constituents – instead of on behalf of the groups who lobby and profit from their participation of the Committee to Save New York.

I would like to recommend that ethics reform in New York State begin in the Governor’s mansion.

While we consider how to restrict Senate campaign donations that are used to pay for meals, I would like my readers to know that many of my colleagues are routinely invited to the Governor’s mansion to eat his food and drink his wine with no oversight to who pays those bills.

While we consider how to restrict Senate campaign donations that are used to rent cars, I would like my readers to know that this past Thursday JCOPE quietly posted on their website on state ethics ruling that Governor Cuomo can bring Sandra Lee, his girlfriend and Food Network star who lives with him in Westchester County, along with his daughters on the state aircraft with him when he’s on official business.

While we consider how to restrict Senate campaign donations that are used for our cell phones, You should know that the millions of dollars raised by the Committee to Save New York to expand casino gambling needs should be investigated.

You should know that corruption in New York State needs to be thoroughly investigated, and is far more important that the way we spend money donated to us from our supporters – who donate with the full knowledge that we decide how to spend it.

We should be more concerned with stopping big money influence of corporations, groups and people that are getting access to meetings with Governors and others by contributing big donations and by the conflict of interest of legislators serving as of-counsels and those that are board members of institutions whose leaders contribute big money. Amen.

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

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