

Center for Judicial Accountability

From: Ruben Diaz <diaz@nysenate.gov>
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To: Ruben Diaz
Subject: What You Should Know

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

By Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz
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If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and walks like a duck - then it is probably a duck.

You should know that on August 9, 2013 Ken Lovett's Daily News article, " Gov. Cuomo got \$100,000 from developer, then signed law giving it big tax break" told how two days after Governor Andrew Cuomo's campaign received donations of \$100,000 from Extell Financial Services, the Governor signed a piece of legislation into law giving that developer – and four other developers a huge tax break. Huge!

Mr. Lovett's follow-up column the next day, "Gov. Cuomo's long-time city developer donor got more generous when it stood to get \$35 million in tax breaks" announced how that law signed by New York's Governor saved Extell Financial Services \$35 million dollars on a Manhattan luxury tower.

You should know that Extell's 1,004-foot luxury hotel condo tower has top-floor apartments going for \$90 million dollars each. (Do you remember the crane that snapped during Hurricane Sandy and dangled over West 57th Street for several days? That's the building. They call it One57.)

You should know that before the Governor signed Senate Bill 2320 into law, the financial fate of the investors of that monstrosity may have been teetering as precariously as the hurricane-whipped crane on top of One57. To the rescue, and after a gratuity of a substantial donation by Extell, was the Governor.

My dear reader, can you imagine if I did that kind of thing? Can you imagine if I, Senator Reverend Ruben Diaz, Sr., received \$100,000 from any developer right before I threw my support for a piece of legislation that benefited that developer?

Is there anyone reading this who doesn't think there would be full-scale local, state, and federal investigations claiming that I had accepted a bribe in exchange for a political favor? Is there anyone reading this who doesn't think that every single editorial board would be condemning me as corrupt? I can only imagine the torch and pitchfork crowds descending on my office.

It might be interesting to see how the Moreland Act Commission, created by Governor Andrew Cuomo to investigate public corruption, investigates this case that on its face – at least to me – involves the Governor himself.

Let's see how bold and fearless the Moreland Act Commission is when it pursues compliance with the subpoenas it served on the One57 building management.

Let's see how the Governor's Commission investigates what appears to be corrupt and improper influence by luxury developers.

Let's see if the Commission investigates the role and timing of the \$100K donation to the Governor's political campaign.

Will we see a quiet resolution of these subpoenas with no inquiry into the Extell donations to Governor Andrew Cuomo?

Will we see how a real estate tax break is being offered to one of the world's most exclusive buildings that markets apartments for upwards of \$90 million each?

And will we see how those tax breaks for developers of exclusive luxury buildings could have been used instead to help senior citizens or needy people in New York State?

You should know that when Senate Bill 2320 came to the Senate Floor for a vote, I voted against it. I also stood on the Senate Floor and spoke against it, begging my colleagues to oppose it because this bill only benefits the rich, does nothing to protect tenants, does nothing to prevent landlords from double-dipping, and does nothing to address New York City's ongoing affordable housing crisis.

I invite you to listen to my floor speech on this bill where I stated: "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." For the complete video, click on the following link: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=7TrDsGbXUaE)

Ladies and gentlemen, I encourage you all to pay very close attention to what I believe is a clear case of double standards. Let the investigations begin, because if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and walks like a duck - then it is probably a duck.

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