

Center for Judicial Accountability

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WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

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Is My Senate Democratic Conference Losing Its Colors?

You should know that yesterday, when I went to my daily Senate Democratic Conference meeting and sat in my seat and looked around the room, what I saw was a very sad picture.

Our Senate Democratic Conference used to be much more diverse, proudly showing the advancements and achievements of Black and Hispanic leaders who could finally take our rightful place at the table. But yesterday, the room looked very different.

When I sat there at the Democratic Conference meeting and looked around the room, I did not see Senator John Sampson. I didn't see Senator Malcolm Smith. I didn't see Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson. I didn't see Senator James Sanders. I didn't see Senator Jose Peralta. I didn't see Senator Bill Perkins.

Our Black and Hispanic Democratic Senate Members are either losing their interest, or something happened that they did not attend our daily Conference meeting as they usually do.

You should know that we used to be a Democratic Conference where half of our membership was Black and Hispanic. That membership was growing ... we were practically the majority!

Are we losing our fire? Are we ignoring the fact that New York State's Black and Hispanic population is growing and depending upon our leaders to maintain our stamina and represent them at the table?

We must not lose what we have achieved. We must not stop fighting for our fair share, and we must continue the struggle of the leaders who came before us and sacrificed so much. We all need to keep our eyes wide open. We all need to be mindful of all of the changes and underhanded maneuverings that seem to be taking place right in our midst.

I am calling upon my colleagues - especially those who have been under fire and are the topic of conversation, investigation, and speculation to remember that we must not forget our goal.

It is understandable that when anyone is under attack or under investigation, he or she may lose interest in many things, fall into a state of depression, and not want to be seen in public. Political or personal attacks can wear down just about anyone.

However, our common goals and our common interests are bigger than any one of us. No matter what, we cannot allow anyone to stop us or wear us down to the point of being ineffective.

It is important that we continue the struggle to defend and represent our communities. It is essential for us to use every opportunity we can to push forward.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would hate to think that at this time in New York State's history, when we in the New York State Senate have more than the majority of Black and Hispanic members in our Democratic Conference, that our goals and ideals could fade away, and that we would give up and let our people down.

I would like to suggest for my colleagues - especially the Black and Hispanic Senators - to open their eyes and take a look around the room for themselves, and realize that New York State cannot afford to have our Senate Democratic Conference lose its colors.

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