



October 19, 2008

Governor David A. Paterson
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

We write to you concerning the plight of senior citizens throughout New York City, and particularly in the Bronx, which we represent in the State Senate. The city is moving forward with massive budget cuts to senior centers and doing so under the guise of reform. An impending process will centralize senior centers in a way that is sure to alienate our constituents, and increase the risk of both hunger and isolation.

As such, we ask you to remain particularly sensitive to the needs of seniors as we approach a new round of budget cuts. We also urge the State Office for the Aging (SOFA) to comprehensively review and analyze the city's centralization plan. We consider this plan a one-size-fits-all approach to an issue that requires a deep understanding of diversity – both in terms of the seniors and their needs.

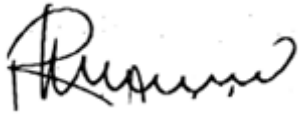
The centralization of senior centers would be particularly painful here in the Bronx, which is more expansive than other parts of the city, and with a less accessible mass transit infrastructure. Seniors are not a mobile demographic, and we know that traveling long distance also means crossing through unfamiliar communities and cultures.

Moreover, a significant number of Bronx senior centers are located in facilities run by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), which has also suffered severe funding shortfalls. We ask SOFA to take this into consideration during its review of the city's plan. In effect, we wish to be partners in continued efforts to modernize senior services, but it must happen in the context of protecting social and community fabric.

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The centralization plan paired with massive budget cuts is bad news for Bronx seniors. Please take this into consideration during the upcoming special session in November, and in discussions with SOFA regarding the oversight role of the state.

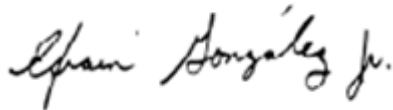
Sincerely,



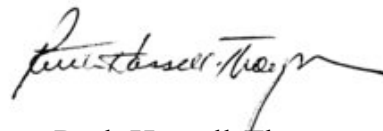
Rubén Díaz
32nd Senate District
Ranking Member, Aging Committee



José M. Serrano
28th Senate District
Member, Aging Committee



Efraín Gonzalez, Jr.
33rd Senate District



Ruth Hassell-Thomspon
36th Senate District



Jeff Klein
34th Senate District



Eric Schneiderman
31st Senate District

cc: Michael J. Burgess, SOFA Director