



October 19, 2008

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

As State Senators representing the Bronx, we write to you concerning the issue of impending senior center closures in our borough. We respectfully ask you to rethink a centralization plan that we believe is not attuned to the diverse needs of our constituents. Moreover, we fear massive budget cuts in the guise of reform.

Bronx seniors find themselves in the eye of a perfect storm. The housing crisis continues to squeeze residents in private buildings, and seniors in public housing have experienced both rent hikes and reduced maintenance. Meanwhile, the cost of living continues to rise. A recent City Planning report showed a lack of access to healthy and affordable food in communities with low-income senior populations.

The senior centers in our borough are on the front lines of this crisis, helping to feed seniors, while providing them essential services and programs. The dangers of isolation are real, and we must craft governmental policy that recognizes the implications of economic downturn on a constituency that continues to grow old.

We see no good news in the budget. The New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) has been hit with \$12.6 million in cuts. Insufficient funding also puts in jeopardy the many Bronx senior centers located in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) facilities.

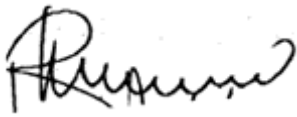
We certainly applaud your focus on accountability and data-driven goals. But let us balance mathematics with logistical needs on the ground. Seniors are not a mobile demographic and are quite reliant on their local centers. This is especially

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true in the Bronx, which is more expansive with a less accessible mass transit infrastructure. Moreover, traveling long distance can mean crossing cultural lines, losing personal connections, and – consequently – feeling discouraged from leaving one’s home.

Let us work together and continue to fight for reform and modernization in a way that is sympathetic to the needs of our seniors, and acknowledges the changing economy and the changing demographics of our city. A one-size-fits-all approach to senior services, compounded by massive budget cuts, will negatively impact seniors throughout the Bronx. Please halt the centralization.

Sincerely,



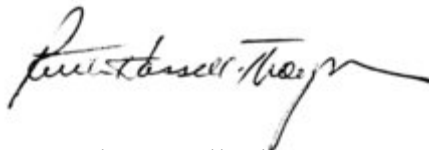
Rubén Díaz  
32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District  
Ranking Member, Aging Committee



José M. Serrano  
28<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
Member, Aging Committee



Efraín Gonzalez, Jr.  
33<sup>rd</sup> Senate District



Ruth Hassell-Thomspon  
36<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Jeff Klein  
34<sup>th</sup> Senate District



Eric Schneiderman  
31<sup>st</sup> Senate District

**cc:** Edwin Méndez-Santiago, DFTA Commissioner