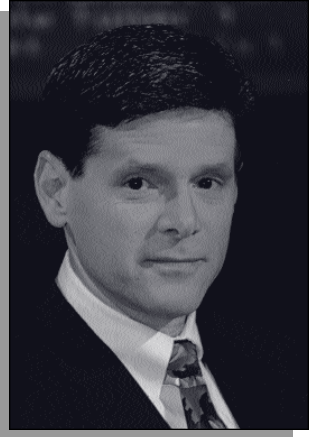


On AIR



THE BRONX TALKS

ON Bronx Talk AM

Host: GARY AXELBANK

ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 7, CONGRESSMAN JOSÉ SERRANO TALKED AT LENGTH ON BRONXTALK A.M. WITH HOST GARY AXELBANK. THEY DISCUSSED BRONX POLITICS, YANKEE STADIUM, THE CONGRESSMAN'S CAREER IN PUBLIC OFFICE, EDUCATION FUNDING, THE PATIENT'S RIGHTS BILL, AND MUCH MORE. HERE ARE EXCERPTS:

Gary Axelbank: Let's start with Yankee Stadium. What should be done? Is it just going to pass through the Giuliani Administration to be handled by the next mayor?

José Serrano: Giuliani is going to try to do something before he goes. I've never disagreed with his desire to keep the Yankees in New York. We all disagree with where to keep them because that's an institution. Congress is a good barometer of how people feel throughout the country about things, and sometimes people who make bad jokes about New York. But, when it comes to the Yankees moving out of the Bronx or moving out of New York, just about every Yankee-hater in the nation says, "No, it's an institution. It's baseball. It's the most American thing we have in sports. You've got to keep them there." I agree with that.

GA: So you think there is the possibility that there could be another stadium?

JS: Exactly, but with the understanding that the first attempt should be to keep the Yankees in the Bronx and to keep them as close to Yankee Stadium as possible. The ideal situation would be to renovate that stadium and then to build a proper housing facility next door. When you're in Washington, you get to see some of the minor league stadiums that they have in Virginia and Maryland and you realize that the Yankees are the most successful sports franchise in the history of sports.

GA: Let's talk a little bit about the Bronx County Organization. Do you feel that Roberto Ramírez has been too heavy-handed? Should that be one of the issues in the campaigns?

JS: I don't think so and it shouldn't be one of the issues. The slate of candidates that the Democratic Party is supporting are people who've earned the right to run, who are talented people. Can anyone question the quality and the talent of Adolfo Carrion? That's a class act, and is someone who is homegrown. We have a slate of other candidates throughout the county that we are supporting, who in one way or another, have earned their stripes to aspire to their certain positions, and others who are still

around. It's been very inclusive. I've been around long enough to remember when there was no consultation at all. I remember the days when I was told as a Democrat what the slate would be.

GA: Assemblyman Peter Rivera was on our show saying that he felt like he was dictated to. People in Riverdale would not agree with you about being included about what's going on in the party.

JS: But my friends in Riverdale should remember that there were times when I was disagreeing with the party and they were very cozy with the party. At that time, they were happy because things were going the way they wanted them to be. One thing I learned 27 years ago when I got elected, and 35 years ago when I got involved in politics, is that politics and politicians and elected officials are the kinds of people in the kind of situation where on any given day someone is going to be upset at what you do.

GA: So, your bottom line is that it's part of the natural order of things and there will be a time that others will feel included.

JS: That's the game. When I talk to Pete Rivera, who's a friend of mine and Jeff Dinowitz, who's a dear friend of mine and who used to oversee the submitting of my petitions, I say, "Okay, this is where we are now. Let's try to move to tomorrow so that we can come together as a party, so we can all work together." Here is a situation that people can't seem to understand at times. When you have a county that's as heavily Democratic as the Bronx, you're going to have what looks like inter-party fights when in fact they're not. It's just the way things are.

GA: Will the bottom line here be who wins? If Adolfo Carrión wins, Pedro Espada wins, June Eisland wins, is that going to be where the next thrust of power in the Bronx is going to go?

JS: It's not who wins, but how that person wins. I can assure you that if Adolfo Carrion wins, he reaches out to other people who may not be happy with his having won at that point. I've spoken to him, and I've made it part of my support for him. I've said, "We always have to bring that party forward."

He agrees with that. The bottom line is not who wins. The bottom line is we now have a Republican in the White House. We have a Congress which is controlled by a small Republican margin of victory. They think they have a million vote margin in the House. If we're not careful, big cities, urban centers, minorities, senior citizens,



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and social security could be in trouble. How do we push forward a party that looks out for all those issues?

GA: You have had a productive career in Washington. Do you have a greatest moment that sticks out in your mind?

JS: When we have 8am meetings, I drive my car onto the Capital grounds rather than park it in the garage under my office. When I see the dome, you get a chill. You get a thrill because you're there and a million thoughts come through your head. Thank you South Bronx folks for sending me to Congress because I am what you made me. Thank you to my parents, who worked their butts off with very little education. Thank you God. I'm here and it's a great thrill. an incredible thing. It was 12 years ago.

GA: It appears that the Bronx has gotten shortchanged in Title I funding? Couldn't that have been forestalled before it happened?

JS: Unfortunately, it did not get stopped when it happened. It was done as soon as the Republicans took over. It's very clear they wanted to take care of a need that Susan Molinari had in Staten Island. They took care of Staten Island at the expense of other counties. That's history. But, the Senate did change. We are now trying to get Democrats in the Senate to support the Engel-Serrano bill to make sure that we either correct that as should be corrected, or create the kind of a situation where we hold harmless--retroactive to a couple of years ago--areas like the Bronx. Hold harmless means that whatever you were getting, you

get at least that amount and not less as we have been doing. That's a big fight. We're not here to say, "Don't worry, we'll take care of it." It's at the center of everything we do these days," convince the Senate to do this.

GA: The Patient Rights Bill was passed by the House. You voted against it.

JS: We were very upset at what happened at the end. We liked the original bill that allowed patients to have their day in court. The Bush Administration claims that we just want to support lawyers. Lawyers, like politicians, are not monsters all the time. This is one of the center issues for the next generation.

GA: So, your point of view is that we passed the bill but it really didn't solve the problem.

JS: Not at all. We brought them kicking and screaming to pass a bill. Now we have to make sure that they eventually agree to the bill we wanted them to pass.

GA: Do you anticipate it could be changed by the time it gets through the Senate?

JS: Absolutely. Thank God for Ted Kennedy. He's still fighting those fights.

GA: The same fight that he and his brothers have been fighting for generations?

JS: Exactly. Which makes my point that I wanted to close with. On his own, my son is a good candidate. Those of you who don't like the idea of a son running, or who don't like Serrano, don't hold that against him. He's good.

He's of this generation. He's 29 years old. He was born in the Bronx.