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<sup>+</sup>LL.M. in Estate Planning  
<sup>Δ</sup> Admitted, US Tax Court  
<sup>Φ</sup> Admitted, District of New Jersey  
<sup>Ω</sup> Admitted, Eastern District of New York  
<sup>Ω</sup> Admitted, Southern District of New York

**By FEDEX**

November 25, 2014

Democratic National Committee  
430 South Capitol St. SE  
Washington, DC 20003

New York State Democratic Committee  
750 Third Avenue  
31st Floor  
New York, NY 10017

New York State Democratic Committee  
118a Fulton Street , Box #410  
New York, NY 10038  
Fax: (212) 725-8867  
[nysdc@nydems.org](mailto:nysdc@nydems.org)

New York State Senate Dems  
111 Washington Ave.  
Suite 409  
Albany, NY 12210  
Fax: (518) 462-1082

**Re: Age-Based Discrimination in Staten Island, New York  
Formal Grievance of Staten Island Democrat Robert J. Castro  
Against Party Leader John P. Gulino, Kevin Elkins and the  
Richmond County Democratic Committee**

Dear Sir or Madam:

These offices represent the above-referenced Robert J. Castro ("Mr. Castro"). This letter is a formal grievance based upon the aged-based discrimination suffered by Mr. Castro at the hands of the Democratic Committee of Richmond County ("Richmond

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County Democratic Committee”),<sup>1</sup> its Party Leader John P. Gulino (“Mr. Gulino”)<sup>2</sup> and its former Executive Director Kevin Elkins (Mr. Elkins”).<sup>3</sup> Despite promises that he would be elevated to a position with the Richmond County Democratic Committee as Director of Outreach to the Minority Communities with an *ad hoc* seat on the Executive Board, Mr. Castro was the victim of Mr. Gulino’s broken promise as Mr. Gulino failed to elevate Mr. Castro and terminated Mr. Castro from the Richmond County Democratic Committee Executive Board based on his age.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Castro was not given the courtesy of a meeting or a handshake, as Mr. Castro was mailed an undated letter to that effect drafted by Mr. Elkins, signed by Mr. Gulino and on the letterhead of the Richmond County Democratic Committee (the “Dismissal Letter”).<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Castro has given a lifetime of service to the Democratic Party, culminating with the final eight years as a District Leader for the 61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District prior to his dismissal based upon age-based discrimination. Mr. Castro is an executive with a Fortune 500 Company and a proud Latino. In fact, Mr. Castro was the only Hispanic, bi-lingual district leader in a district that comprises a large Hispanic population.

As you can see, Mr. Castro has delayed in making this Formal Grievance and in seeking further legal action.<sup>6</sup> This is because as a good Democrat, Mr. Castro did not

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<sup>1</sup> The Democratic Committee of Richmond County is a political committee formed under the New York State Election law and is the local Democratic Party entity for Richmond County, New York, under New York State Democratic Party rules.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gulino is the Richmond County Democratic Committee Chairman, the local Democratic Party Leader, and the Treasurer of the New York State Democratic Committee. Mr. Gulino is listed as a member of the party leadership of the New York State Democratic Committee. See <http://nydems.org/party/leadership/biographies/> [last visited November 25, 2014].

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Elkins is the former Executive Director of the Richmond County Democratic Committee and a current employee of the office of New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Gulino made this promise to Mr. Castro on or about May 1, 2013, in a meeting with Mr. Gulino and an undisclosed Democratic Party lobbyist and operative at the Richmond County Democratic Committee Headquarters.

<sup>5</sup> The letter was received on January 16, 2014, and is attached herewith as EXHIBIT “A”.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Castro sent a certified letter dated January 20, 2014, attached herewith as EXHIBIT “B” and another certified letter dated March 29, 2014, (signed for by Mr. Gulino on

want to interfere with the chance for Democratic Party candidates to win in the 2014 election cycle, particularly in the election to take back the seat in New York's Eleventh Congressional District. Mr. Castro left the Richmond County Democratic Committee and its Party Leader to its own devices. In so doing, the world saw the Richmond County Democratic Committee under the leadership of Mr. Gulino suffer an Election Night rout and what will surely become a cautionary tale of epic political blunders, where the Congressional seat could not be taken back against an indicted Republican Candidate, based in large part because of the failures in political due diligence by the Party Leader.<sup>7</sup>

The website for the Democratic National Committee states:

Democrats have a long and proud history of defending Civil Rights and expanding opportunity for all Americans. From the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2009 to including marriage equality in the party platform in 2012, Democrats have fought to end discrimination in all forms—including discrimination based on race, sex, ethnicity or national origin, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability.

See [http://www.democrats.org/issues/civil\\_rights](http://www.democrats.org/issues/civil_rights) [last visited November 25, 2014]. Additionally, Article 1, Section 1 (b) of the Rules of the Democratic Party of the State of New York state:

No test for membership in, nor any oath of loyalty to, the Democratic Party of New York shall be required or used that

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April 3, 2014) attached herewith as EXHIBIT "C". To date, Mr. Castro has received no response.

<sup>7</sup> After spending over \$ 5million dollars in the Congressional Race, Mr. Gulino blamed Staten Island voters and would admit no blame for failing to select an electable candidate in the district, failing to build and expand the party base and for his continued failures in political due diligence. Mr. Gulino's statements since the election have been inflammatory to the local community as a whole: "'It's not a black on eye on the party," he said. "It's a black eye on Staten Island.'" The Staten Island Advance Article dated November 5, 2014, is attached herewith as EXHIBIT "D".

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has the effect of requiring prospective or current members of the Democratic Party to acquiesce in, condone, or support discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, disability, or economic status.

In terminating Mr. Castro, age 62, from the Executive Board of the Richmond County Democratic Committee, Mr. Gulino breached the agreement made in May of 2013 and the breach was based upon impermissible age-based discrimination.<sup>8</sup> The Dismissal Letter drafted by Mr. Elkins, signed by Mr. Gulino and on the letterhead of the Richmond County Democratic Committee stated: "If we do not seize the opportunities, energy and ideas that our younger generation offers, we will never thrive as a political organization." **However, Mr. Gulino is over 70 years of age. The Vice Chairman is 75 years old; and an exceedingly large number of the Executive Committee qualify for AARP cards.**<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The termination is against the weight of the credible evidence. Mr. Castro worked tirelessly for the Democratic Party is discharging his duties as District Leader as recently as in 2013, when he served countless hours collecting petition signatures, delivering lawn signs, knocking on doors and doing literature drops for candidates including Bill deBlasio, Leticia James and Debi Rose, all in Staten Island's 61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District, the population of which is exceedingly growing Hispanic. Last year, Mr. Castro, even after his wrongful termination – based on his love for the Democratic Party and its ideals - did the same in collecting petition signatures, delivering lawn signs, knocking on doors and doing literature drops for candidates including Governor Cuomo, Lt. Governor Hochul, State Attorney General Schneiderman and State Comptroller DiNapoli and would have done the same for State Senator Savino and State Assemblyman Titone had those leaders had Election Day opponents.

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Castro believes that we would not even be at this point had the allegation been made that the invidious discrimination was of a different character. Mr. Gulino is not sensitive to the blatant ageism and has made adherence to his position a *de facto* oath of loyalty (in direct contravention of party rules) to the extent that Executive Board members have parroted his statement: "There are many people over the age of 60 years old on the Executive Board." This statement is itself discriminatory. If the allegation were that Mr. Castro were discriminated against because of his race, of course the statement "There are many black people on the Executive Board" or "There are many Hispanic people on the Executive Board" would, in no way shape or form serve as

Mr. Castro has been aggrieved by the actions of Mr. Gulino, Mr. Elkins and the Richmond County Democratic Committee. In addition to the discrimination, Mr. Gulino compounded the matter by referring to Mr. Castro, an executive with a Fortune 500 Company, as someone who tried to “undermine” the Democratic Party.<sup>10</sup> These allegations, published in the local Staten Island Advance smack of libel *per se*, as they affect Mr. Castro’s ability for mobility at his current position and for future employment.<sup>11</sup>

The undersigned writes this letter on behalf of Mr. Castro in the hopes of a resolution of the issues that Mr. Castro has with Mr. Gulino, Mr. Elkins and the Richmond County Democratic Committee. Mr. Castro intends on seeking legal redress in Federal Court. The undersigned has made it known to Mr. Castro that he will have

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justification for the actions of Mr. Gulino and the Richmond County Democratic Committee for removing an individual because Mr. Gulio wanted to make the Executive Committee “whiter”. It would be hard to make the Richmond County Democratic Committee any “whiter” as it reflects a raical makeup of Staten Island in the mid-1980s and does not reflect the near 20% borough-wide Hispanic population. Moreover, it is disgraceful that, in the wake of Ferguson, Missouri, and the Eric Garner tragedy that the Democratic Party Leader is so insensitive to discrimination in all its forms. But then again, this has become expected of the Staten Island Democratic Party Leader. When the entire community marched in solidarity against violence in the wake of death of Eric Garner, Mr. Gulino was nowhere to be found at or around the site of Eric Garner’s death. Instead, he was hop-knobbing with his elite group at an exclusive party fundraiser on the Island’s East Shore.

<sup>10</sup> The Staten Island Advance Article dated March 12, 2014, is attached herewith as EXHIBIT “E”.

<sup>11</sup> *Matherson v. Marchello*, 100 A.D.2d 233 (N.Y. App. Div. 2d Dep't 1984)(Titone, J.) (“A plaintiff suing in libel need not plead or prove special damages if the defamatory statement tends to expose the plaintiff to public contempt, ridicule, aversion or disgrace, or induce an evil opinion of him in the minds of right-thinking persons, and to deprive him of their friendly intercourse in society. Thus, unlike the law of slander, in the law of libel the existence of damage is conclusively presumed from the publication itself and a plaintiff may rely on general damages.”)

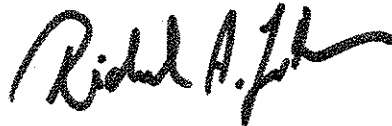
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to seek litigation counsel for this endeavor and that the undersigned will take no part in that litigation.<sup>12</sup>

The above being said, Mr. Castro is a good man and a good Democrat. However, Mr. Castro has been aggrieved by a local Democratic Party and its leadership, and Mr. Castro seeks redress as he well should. I hope that this matter can be resolved prior to legal action. My worry is that Mr. Castro will bring this case to Federal Court either Pro Se or – even worse with litigation counsel with a partisan agenda aimed at hurting the Democratic Party as a whole based on the improper actions of few.

Mr. Castro would like this entire situation fully investigated and the proven offenders to be publicly censured. Mr. Castro would also like to be made whole for the harms suffered based on defamation and invidious discrimination. Please reach out to my offices prior to December 7, 2014, if good faith resolution can be accomplished. Thereafter, “all bets are off” as they say. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my law offices.

Regards,



Richard A. Luthmann, Esq.

CC: Client File  
Hon. Andrew Cuomo  
Hon. Charles Schumer  
Hon. Bill deBlasio  
Hon. David Patterson  
Hon. Sheldon Silver  
Hon. Leticia James

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<sup>12</sup> Mr. Gulino is a fellow attorney. I will not sue another member of the Bar, even if this case is based on harms caused by political activities. I made this promise to on several occasions to several of Mr. Gulino’s representatives because Mr. Gulino does not consider the undersigned “at his level.” Moreover, the undersigned has been threatened in his career and in his business because of his continued representation of Mr. Castro.

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Hon. Scott Stringer  
Hon. Felix Ortiz  
Hon. Diane Savino  
Hon. Debi Rose  
Hon. Matthew Titone  
Hon. Michael Cusick

# **EXHIBIT A**





**DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE**  
*of* **RICHMOND COUNTY**

35 New Dorp Plaza, Staten Island, NY 10306  
718-983-5009 · Fax: 718-983-5541  
E-mail: [sidemocrats@yahoo.com](mailto:sidemocrats@yahoo.com) · [www.sidemocrats.net](http://www.sidemocrats.net)

**JOHN P. GULINO**  
County Chairman

Robert Castro  
50 Beekman Street  
Staten Island, New York, 10302

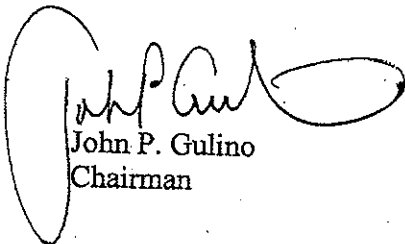
Dear Robert,

In an effort to continue to reach new political heights as a political organization, I believe we must give today's leaders and opportunity to lead as you have done so selflessly over the years. A strong political organization is one that is nimble enough to respond to new challenges and opportunities. That is why I must annually review the membership of the Executive Committee and make some tough choices.

I thank you for all your time and dedication. Now though, I believe we must give others a chance to serve in your stead in order to keep us moving forward. Please know I do not make this decision lightly. It is not an easy or pleasant one. However, if we do not seize the opportunities, energy and ideas our younger generation offers, we will never thrive as a political organization. We must give them a chance to serve. I hope you will continue to remain an active member of the Democratic Party.

Thank you again for all you have done.

Yours Truly,



John P. Gulino  
Chairman

# **EXHIBIT B**

Robert J. Castro  
50 Beekman Street  
Staten Island, NY 10302  
(347) 680-0810  
[robertcastro942@gmail.com](mailto:robertcastro942@gmail.com)

**By Certified US Mail and Facsimile**

January 20, 2014

Hon. John P. Gulino, County Chairman  
Democratic Committee of Richmond County  
35 New Dorp Plaza  
Staten Island, NY 10306  
Fax: (718) 983-5541

**Re: Your undated Letter received January 16, 2014**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am in receipt of the above-referenced letter. I am saddened by your decision and the direction in which you have chosen to take Staten Island's Democratic Party.

I have been a loyal soldier for the party since the great Hon. John Lavelle came to my home and asked me to serve. I will never forget his warm smile and his hug and handshake when he told me that the Democratic Party needed me, as a loyal party member, a District Leader, and the only bi-lingual member of the Executive Board doing outreach to build our voter base on the North Shore. It is quizzical as to how I cannot be of help in that capacity. I can only come to the conclusion that your administration does not care about the Hispanic Community or Hispanic voters, as you have no plan of voter growth and outreach in my community—the Hispanic community.

In your letter, you said:

“[I]f we do not seize the opportunities, energy and ideas our younger generation offers, we will never thrive as a political organization. We must give them a chance to serve.”

Your foresight is myopic on many levels. It is sad that I write this letter on the day we honor the life of the great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was a champion of equality and whose tireless teachings and spirit have started us down a road to achieving the dream of anti-bias and anti-discrimination in our society and in our institutions.

Based on your conduct as Chairman and the standards set in your letter, many changes must be made in the Staten Island Democratic Party to become an institution that acts in accordance with Dr. King's dream.

You letter dismisses me based upon my age. You cite "opportunities, energy and ideas" as a reason why I should be cast aside. You discount my experience, relationships, knowledge and wisdom gleaned from years of tireless work of building our party, particularly within the Hispanic community. People of all ages should be welcomed into the Party and thanked for their service. The Staten Island Democratic Party should not throw out its members like an old pair of shoes after they have walked so many miles, knocked on so many doors and performed such tireless work for the Democratic Party and on behalf of its Chairman.

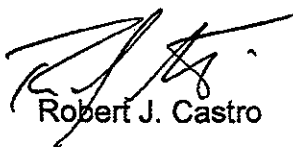
Moreover, I am 63 years of age. They say "60 is the new 40". Are you really dismissing those in their sixties and beyond as lacking in the ability to seize upon "opportunities, energy and ideas?" By your measure, great Democrats like John Sollazzo, Mark Herrman, Dennis Brown, Joann Olbrich, Rosemarie Cavanaugh, and even you yourself should be phased out "in order to keep us moving forward." You seek to "youth-enize" the Richmond County Democratic Party by "euthanizing" the political careers of individuals, not based on the content of their character or on their will to help and succeed, but rather by the arbitrary and discriminatory standards of one man with an agenda—decisions which are shrouded in pretext.

Your letter also dismisses me as the only bi-lingual Hispanic member of the Executive Board. It is quite apparent that in discounting me, you discount the entire Hispanic community. You have no one to fill the position and no one who is a bi-lingual foot soldier with my experience and years of service who can help to broaden the base of the Democratic Party, door by door and block by block. I love my community and I love the Democratic Party. I view your failure to broaden the party's base among Hispanic voters a clear dereliction of duty.

Moreover, the County Committee that you have hand-picked represents a racial make-up of a Democratic Party in a Staten Island of the 1980s. There must be more diversity on the County Committee to account for the changing demographics on Staten Island, especially with respect to the Hispanic Population (which now represents 20% of Richmond County and are becoming the most exceedingly important voting bloc in Staten Island Democratic Party politics). If you are too myopic to see these transformations occurring all around you, maybe it is time for another to "seize the opportunities, energy and ideas" that Staten Island Democrats have to offer as a new County Chairman.

My door is always open to you if you truly want to build the Democratic Party.

Regards,



Robert J. Castro

# EXHIBIT C

| SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION  | COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired.</li><li>■ Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you.</li><li>■ Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits.</li></ul> | <p>A. Signature <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agent<br/><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addressee</p> <p>B. Received by <i>Printed Name</i><br/><i>J. Gulino</i></p> <p>C. Date of Delivery<br/><i>4-3-14</i></p>  |
| <p>1. Article Addressed to:</p> <p><i>Hon. John P. Gulino, County<br/>Chairman Democratic Committee<br/>of Richmond County<br/>35 New Dorp Plaza<br/>Staten Island NY 10306</i></p>  | <p>D. Is delivery address different from item 1? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes<br/>if YES, enter delivery address below: <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>3. Service Type<br/><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail® <input type="checkbox"/> Priority Mail Express™<br/><input type="checkbox"/> Registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt for Merchandise<br/><input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Collect on Delivery</p> <p>4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> |
| <p>2. Article Number<br/>(Transfer) <i>7012 2920 0002 0830 8437</i></p>  |  |

PS Form 3811, July 2013

Domestic Return Receipt

Robert J. Castro  
50 Beekman Street  
Staten Island, NY 10302  
(347) 680-0810  
[robertcastro942@gmail.com](mailto:robertcastro942@gmail.com)

**By Certified US Mail and Facsimile**

March 29, 2014

Hon. John P. Gulino, County Chairman  
Democratic Committee of Richmond County  
35 New Dorp Plaza  
Staten Island, NY 10306  
Fax: (718) 983-5541

**Re: Your Discriminatory Actions  
Formal Request for Bylaws  
Formal Demand for Reinstatement  
Formal Demand for Public Apology**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Attached herewith is your undated letter that I received on January 16, 2014. The black-letter of that correspondence is clear and unabashed ageism. You dismissed me from the position that you promised to me as an At-Large member of the Executive Committee after we agreed in a meeting on or about May 1, 2013 (with Jon Del Giorno present). At that meeting, you said that if I would not run for District Leader of the 61<sup>st</sup> Assembly District in September 2013, I would be promoted to the Director of Outreach for the Hispanic and Minority Community for all of Staten Island. You said that you wanted Danny Lavelle to take the place as the Elected District Leader (and Danny was present at County Headquarters that day and met with you and Jon Del Giorno right after we met). Though Danny did not run for the position because it may have put his overtime at the Board of Elections in a Citywide election year in jeopardy, we still had an agreement. You filled the position with someone who you handpicked.

Mr. Chairman, you must be held to your promises. In your letter that I received on January 16, 2014, you broke your promise to me and said that I was dismissed because of my age. However, when questioned by Tom Wroblewski of the Staten Island Advance on the issue with respect to the published March 12, 2014 article, you said that the charges of ageism were "blatantly false" and "patently false." You went on to say:

Serving as a member of the executive committee is a privilege for individuals who have worked tirelessly to strengthen the party...When an individual does not meet that

standard, but tries to undermine the Democratic Party and its values, they are relieved from their position.

You remind all that will listen to you that you have been in the political business "for a long time." You have been a lawyer for a long time as well, and you know about libel and libel *per se*. You knowingly made statements to a reporter to be disseminated to the press and the masses that were false and harmful to my business reputation. I am an executive in a major business organization. Your statements have created the false perception that I may seek to undermine my current employer and/or any future employers. You have defamed and libeled me and your statements go directly to my business reputation. And the injury is permanent because of the Internet. "A plaintiff suing in libel need not plead or prove special damages if the defamatory statement tends to expose the plaintiff to public contempt, ridicule, aversion or disgrace, or induce an evil opinion of him in the minds of right-thinking persons, and to deprive him of their friendly intercourse in society. Thus, unlike the law of slander, in the law of libel the existence of damage is conclusively presumed from the publication itself and a plaintiff may rely on general damages." Matherson v. Marchello, 100 A.D.2d 233 (N.Y. App. Div. 2d Dep't 1984)(Titone, J.).

I have documentation of work done for Bill de Blasio, Leticia James and Debi Rose's campaigns in 2013, making calls, knocking on doors, putting out signs and handing out literature. These facts are undeniable and occurred after my elected term expired. How can this be considered trying to "undermine the Democratic Party and its values?" I kept and continue to keep up my end of the bargain.

You are also a Local Official under the New York Public Officer's law and engaged in age discrimination directly related to your position, as per your letter that I received on January 16, 2014. You have violated the Section 1983 of Title 42 of the United States Code. I have been harmed by your discriminatory actions made on the basis of my age and have been deprived of the equal protections of the law. See McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green, 411 U.S. 792, 93 S.Ct. 1817, 36 L.Ed.2d 668 (1973).

I sent you a certified letter on January 20, 2014. You did not respond to that letter. In that January 20, 2014 letter, I sought answers. Now I seek answers once again.

1. What was the basis of your dishonoring of our agreement to be made the Director of Outreach for the Hispanic and Minority Community for all of Staten Island and my dismissal from the Democratic Party Executive Committee? In other words were you lying when you said that I was too old as per your letter that I received on January 16, 2014, or did you lie to the Staten Island Advance when you said that I was dismissed because I tried to undermine the Democratic Party and its values? So what is it, age-based discrimination, libel or both?
2. Was your decision to dishonor our agreement and dismiss me solely your decision, or was the decision made in conjunction with others and/or the



Richmond County Democratic Party Bylaws? I formally demand that you send me a copy of the Bylaws, or at least post the same on the Richmond County Democratic Party website for all to see.

3. Will you reinstate me as a member of the Executive Committee, or do I have to go to Federal Court to protect my rights?
4. Will you make a formal and public apology clearing up all the harm you have done to my business reputation?
5. Will you undergo sensitivity training so that you do not discriminate against the elderly or any other persons or groups in our party and our community?

Mr. Chairman, you can no longer remain silent in the face of what you have done and the promises that you have broken. If you are a man, you will sit down with me and my attorneys before the situation gets ugly. This is my last attempt at a brokered resolution to these issues.

Please be governed accordingly.



Robert J. Castro

CC: File

# EXHIBIT D

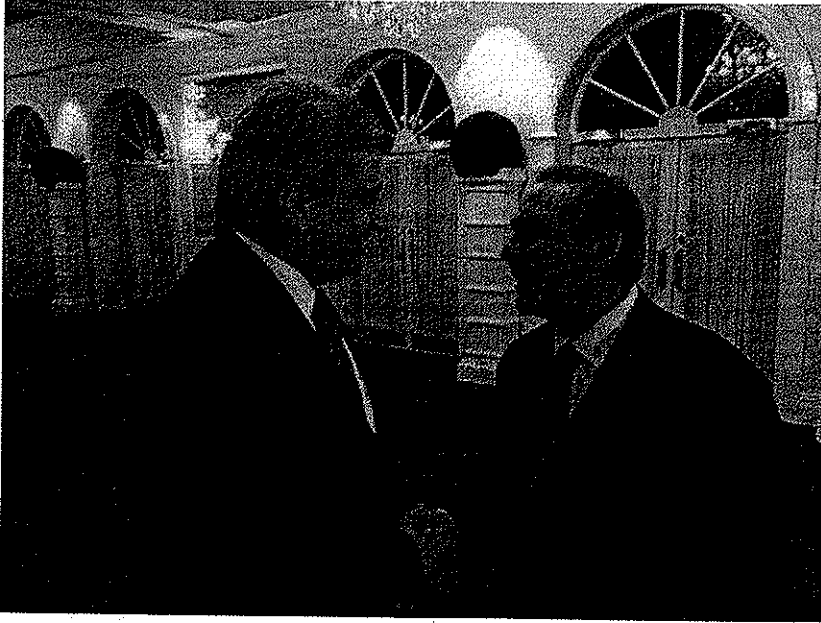
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http://ads.silive.com/RealMedia/ads/click\_ix.ads/www.silive.com/news/2014/11/will\_recchia\_loss\_trigger\_chal.html/1944175211/Tower/SILIVE/default/empty.gif/596 (http://www.silive.com/)

14 comments

# Will Recchia loss trigger challenge to leadership of Dem chairman John Gulino?



Borough Democratic Party chairman John Gulino, right, said he does not see a threat to his leadership in the wake of House loss by Domenic M. Recchia Jr. (Advance file photo)

Print ([http://blog.silive.com/latest\\_news/print.html?entry=2014/11/will\\_recchia\\_loss\\_trigger\\_chal.html](http://blog.silive.com/latest_news/print.html?entry=2014/11/will_recchia_loss_trigger_chal.html))  
(<http://connect.silive.com/user/twrobles/index.html>) By Tom Wroblewski | [wroblewski@siadvance.com](mailto:wroblewski@siadvance.com)  
(<http://connect.silive.com/user/twrobles/posts.html>)  
Follow on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/TomWroblewski>)  
on November 05, 2014 at 4:11 PM, updated November 05, 2014 at 4:12 PM

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STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. - What now, Staten Island Democrats?

The party on Tuesday saw its House candidate, Domenic M. Recchia Jr., **take a drubbing at the hands of Rep. Michael Grimm (R- Staten Island/Brooklyn).**

## RACE FOR CONGRESS 2014

- The Hill lists Domenic Recchia among top 10 worst candidates of 2014**  
([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/the\\_hill\\_lists\\_domenic\\_recchia\\_among\\_top\\_10\\_worst\\_candidates\\_of\\_2014](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/the_hill_lists_domenic_recchia_among_top_10_worst_candidates_of_2014))
- Rep. Michael Grimm took 3 of 4 Assembly districts in defeat of Domenic Recchia**  
([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/rep\\_michael\\_grimm\\_took\\_3\\_of\\_4\\_assembly\\_districts\\_in\\_defeat\\_of\\_domenic\\_recchia](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/rep_michael_grimm_took_3_of_4_assembly_districts_in_defeat_of_domenic_recchia))
- Staten Island Democrats: We will work with Michael Grimm**  
([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/staten\\_island\\_democrats\\_we\\_will\\_work\\_with\\_michael\\_grimm](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/staten_island_democrats_we_will_work_with_michael_grimm))
- WATCH: Domenic Recchia's full concession speech**  
([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/watch\\_domenic\\_recchia\\_s\\_full\\_concession\\_speech](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/watch_domenic_recchia_s_full_concession_speech))
- WATCH: Michael Grimm's full victory speech**  
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Recchia, who outraised Grimm and had national Republicans pour additional millions into the race, got just 42 percent of the vote. That's worse than Democrat Mark Murphy did in 2012 (46 percent) with far fewer resources at his disposal.

Some Dems are already saying that the blowout loss should trigger a deeper look at the party, including at the leadership of chairman John Gulino.

"People are not happy with Gulino," said one top party member. "There's a feeling that the leadership has to go."

"We have to look at the party itself," said another. "The apparatus. How we make decisions about who we run for top offices. We have to look at leadership."

This Dem said, "I don't know if there is a threat, but it's certainly a vulnerable situation for the leadership."

Gulino, who has been chairman since 2007, said he intends to stand for re-election next year.

He said the party "has never been stronger" and that he didn't think there would be a challenge to his leadership next year.

"I doubt it," he said when asked of the possibility.

He said it was "a complete fallacy" to blame the Recchia loss on the borough party organization.

"It's not a black on eye on the party," he said. "It's a black eye on Staten Island."

Said Gulino, "The constituency has spoken. I still think I had the better man for the job. We did everything in our power."

The Dems' registration edge here didn't help them in the congressional race.

"Certain people think that an indictment doesn't mean anything," Gulino said, referring to Grimm's legal woes. "It's a reflection on Staten Island, in a way. It was like, 'that's all nonsense.'"

A Dem said that it's tough to take out a chairman, and that Gulino had been savvy in placing loyalists on the party county committee, which votes on who holds the gavel.

"You have to be able to get the votes," this Dem said. "And you can't do it quietly. It will be interesting to see after the dust settles if this really germinates or if it fades into the woodwork."

Assemblyman Matthew Titone (D-North Shore) called Gulino a "very good leader" and that he supported him continuing in the job.

"Had what happened on Staten Island on Tuesday happened only on Staten Island, there would be some concern," he said. "But what happened was nationwide. It's not John Gulino's fault."

But Titone did say that Democrats here need to do some soul searching.

"What Democrats need to do is look at ourselves critically," he said. "What's our message? Is it resonating? My guess is no. And that's on the electeds, on leadership, on all Democrats."

Gulino said that one change he may look to make is "grooming candidates well ahead of races."

A Gulino supporter said that the local party couldn't be blamed for the Recchia implosion, and that Gulino and the local party had marshaled forces on Recchia's behalf.

"Every metric was there," this Dem said. "Money, volunteers, support. What was missing? The message. And that's something only the candidate can deliver on."

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How does he keep his job? He put up this guy? He is responsible for the screening process and clearlyyyy none was done here. In mafia terms it's like vouching for a rat.

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Desideratta (http://connect.silive.com/user/Desideratta/index.html)

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Recchia, who outzased Grimm and had national Republicans pour additional millions into the race,"

Since when do REPUBLICANS pour money into races for Democrats?

Gulino could have run a ROCK in place of Recchia and the rock would have been a better candidate.

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Pigeon-Reader (http://connect.silive.com/user/sedna2/index.html)

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We want Scott Sciarra for Gen. Chair. He brings a special essence of crudeness to the Party!

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Truthyness69 (http://connect.silive.com/user/Truthyness69/index.html)

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I wish the Democratic Party had a leader that could fix the Judicial System from the ground up, instead of case by case.

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genx123 (http://connect.silive.com/user/genx123/index.html)

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(http://connect.silive.com/user/genx123/index.html)  
Well it certainly is a back eye for Staten Island no question. I was watching C SPAN coverage when they announced Grimm the winner, and the boring, mundane commentators laughed rolling their eyes as a result. I mean we're a National Joke.

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20 comments

# Staten Island Democrat, 62, says he lost party post because of age, work on insurgent campaign

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PORT RICHMOND - A North Shore Democrat alleges that he lost a party post because of age discrimination and because he worked on an insurgent borough presidential campaign last year.

Borough Democratic Party chairman John Gulino called the accusation "blatantly false."

Robert Castro, 62, of Port Richmond, said that Gulino in early 2013 asked him to step aside as a North Shore district leader so that someone else could have the slot.



Port Richmond Democrat Robert Castro said he was singled out because of his age and work on Democrat Richard Luthmann's 2013 Borough Hall campaign.

Photo courtesy of Richard Luthmann

Castro said that Gulino in exchange offered Castro a role on the party's governing executive committee as Hispanic outreach coordinator. Castro said he agreed, but that the promised slot on the executive committee never materialized.

The reasons, according to Castro: His age, plus the fact that he worked on the 2013 borough presidential campaign of friend and attorney Richard Luthmann.

Luthmann looked to run against party pick Lou Liedy in a campaign that **left hard feelings**

([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2013/06/in\\_email\\_staten\\_island\\_borough.html](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2013/06/in_email_staten_island_borough.html))

between Luthmann and the party organization in its wake.

Castro said that Gulino wrote him a letter in January of this year that said someone else would be asked to serve instead because "if we do not seize the opportunities, energy and ideas our younger generation offers, we will never thrive as a political organization."

"This is a total vendetta," Castro said. "I was told I was too old because they need young ideas. They isolated me."

He added that his work on the Luthmann campaign was "absolutely" another reason why he didn't get the promised slot on the executive committee.

"I'm really fed up with the Democratic Party," Castro said.

Luthmann is helping Castro in his effort against the party, which included an automated phone call on Monday evening to North Shore Democratic households laying out Castro's accusations.

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- 2 No charges for Officer Darren Wilson in shooting death of Michael Brown ([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/michael\\_b\\_comments](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/michael_b_comments)) (433 comments)
- 3 Democrats' Orwellian over-reach into the voting booth (commentary) ([http://www.silive.com/opinion/columns/index.ssf/2014/1/reach.html#incart\\_most-comments](http://www.silive.com/opinion/columns/index.ssf/2014/1/reach.html#incart_most-comments)) (1 comments)
- 4 Heroin report on crisis in Great Kills ignites flood of reaction ([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/heroin\\_re\\_comments](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/11/heroin_re_comments)) (21 comments)

"We want them to take a hard line," said Luthmann. "Mr. Castro is looking for an explanation from the chairman."

Gulino said Castro's allegations "are patently false and lack factual basis."

"Serving as a member of the executive committee is a privilege for individuals who have worked tirelessly to strengthen the party," he said. "When an individual does not meet that standard, but tries to undermine the Democratic Party and its values, they are relieved from their position."

The party said that Castro made no contribution in his new role, and that 65 percent of the executive committee is the same age as Castro or older, including Gulino.

Luthmann said that Castro was not officially notified that he had been kept on as an at-large member, nor was he formally told he was the Hispanic coordinator. But he said that Castro did act in both capacities by doing outreach and campaign work in the community during 2013.

The party said that Castro was told in January 2013 that he would be promoted to serve as a Hispanic outreach coordinator and would serve as at-large member. His term as district leader ended in September 2013.

Silver Lake Democrat Mark Herman, a 53-year veteran of the party's county committee, got the automated call on Monday and said it was "outrageous."

"It's clearly an attempt to undercut John's leadership," he said. "It's going to go nowhere."

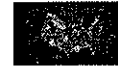
Luthmann caught flack during the 2013 campaign after he sent a letter that Democrats claimed suggested that Liedy, who has a prosthetic leg, was not physically up to the rigors of the campaign. Luthmann denied the accusation.

He was eventually **bounced from the ballot**

(http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2013/08/state\_court\_of\_appeals\_deals after the courts ruled he didn't gather enough nominating petition signatures.

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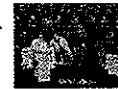
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