

**TRANSCRIPT OF NEW YORK STATE SENATE PROCEEDINGS
RECOGNIZING THE NEW YORK CITY URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE AND
THE BRONX SCHOOL FOR LAW, GOVERNMENT AND JUSTICE'S
DEBATE TEAM**

<http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/transcript/regular-session-02-12-2013>

SENATOR LIBOUS: I believe there's a resolution at the desk by Senator Rivera, Resolution 429. May we have the resolution read in its entirety, and we'll move for its immediate adoption.

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: The Secretary will read.

THE SECRETARY: Legislative Resolution Number 429, by Senator Rivera, honoring the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice upon the occasion of its designation as recipient of the 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award for debate.

"WHEREAS, A great state is only as great as those individuals who perform exemplary service on behalf of their community, whether through unique achievement in professional or other endeavors, or simply through a lifetime of good citizenship; and

"WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice upon the occasion of its designation as recipient of the 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award for debate; and

"WHEREAS, The Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice received this auspicious award for their after-school debate team. In addition to the award, First Lady Michelle Obama made a special visit to the school and met with the four members of the debate team, which was started by history teacher Eric Fogel, who, along with other volunteer teachers and staff, started the New York City Urban Debate League, which is comprised of 400 students and 40 schools; and

"WHEREAS, Starr Arroyo, Yaira Brito, Ashley Meija, and Stephanie Nyame are the members of the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice debate team, and Sophomore Starr Arroyo was selected to speak in front of the First Lady; and

"WHEREAS, It is the practice of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, it is appropriate to publicly proclaim and commend those individuals for the edification and emulation of others; and

"WHEREAS, Such service, which is truly the lifeblood of the community and the state, so often goes unrecognized and unheralded; now, therefore, be it

"RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice upon the occasion of its designation as recipient of the 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award for debate; and be it further

"RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice."

ACTING PRESIDENT GRIFFO: Senator Rivera.

SENATOR RIVERA: Thank you, Mr. President.

As we do often in this chamber, we not only do legislation in this chamber, we take a second to recognize folks that have served the state, much like we did with Senator Gold. We recognize the diversity of the state, much like when we did when we're talking either about our Albanian visitors or our Dominican visitors. But we also take some time to talk about the folks that might be joining us down here on this floor potentially in the future.

We have four of these students with us today. I must take a second to say that the school, the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice, is not in my district, it is in Senator Serrano's district, and that he -- well, it is your district. Don't shake your head, it is.

And that we have a couple of constituents here that are my constituents, and I wanted to take a second to honor them.

Now, they are again the Bronx School for Law, government and Justice, and it was founded in 1997. And the group of folks that are here today, what they did is that they won the 2012 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award. And it's not a small thing. Not only does it give them -- they were only one of 12 teams to receive this award nationally.

They also got the chance to speak in front of the First Lady. And I'm going to ask them about that, since I've only had the chance to meet her

once and I just spoke to her for like five seconds. So it's probably that most of you spoke to her more than I did.

We wanted to make sure that we take a second to say these are the folks that we want to make sure we honor, we talk about what their successes are, and hopefully, again, you might be joining us one day down here.

And I'll say it again, we have four folks -- well, five folks joining us today. The students, Starr Arroyo -- Starr, if you could stand. That lady right there had the chance to speak to the First Lady. I'm going to ask her how that went. We also have Yaira Brito -- Yaira, please stand -- Ashley Meija, and Stephanie Nyame.

These four students, along with their chaperone, Kimberly Felder, are part of the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice, and they were the recipients of this award.

So today I say to you congratulations on your success so far. And again, I hope that the debating skills that you practiced by receiving this prize help you a little bit. Because let me tell you, some of the folks down here, myself included, could certainly use some pointers sometimes on how to debate our colleagues. So thank you so much for joining us today.

And I would ask my colleagues if you'd take a second to honor them and just give them a hand, if we could.

(Applause.)