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Producer Licensing (EX) Task Force  
National Association of Insurance Commissioners  
2301 McGee Street  
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**RE: Public Hearing on Producer Licensing Testing and Examinations**

Attention NAIC Producer Licensing Task Force:

As a member of the New York Assembly's Insurance Committee, I wanted to thank you for holding a hearing on producer licensing exams. This is an issue I have worked on in New York.

In 2008, I sponsored AB 7249, which directed the New York Insurance Department to collect and publish the demographic information and pass rates of those who take New York's various insurance exams. We have now seen two reports published in New York, and the results have been quite startling.

In 2009, White test takers who provided their demographic information passed the exam at a rate of 75 percent. This was compared to 48 percent for African Americans and 41 percent for those identifying as Hispanics. Among the one thousand New York citizens who took the Spanish language exam in New York, less than 12 percent passed.

These numbers are cause for concern. They suggest the New York exam is a barrier to entry for some populations into the insurance profession. It is widely acknowledged there is a disparity in the life insurance industry. Hispanics, African Americans and Asian Americans, as well as middle class Americans in general, are under-served by financial professionals. These are the same communities that are having difficulty passing the exam in New York and other states.

I would urge to examine why we see these disparities and recommend steps that states take so that all test takers experience success on the licensing exam. I pledge I will work in New York to see that the NAIC's recommendations are implemented. It is our duty as elected officials to ensure that the tools necessary to achieve financial security be available to all our constituents and communities.

Sincerely,

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Assembly