



Congressman Pedro R. Pierluisi
Remarks as Prepared for Delivery
The Hope Affair
The American Kidney Fund National Gala
Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, Washington, DC
October 29, 2013

Good evening.

I am honored to be with you tonight as the American Kidney Fund pays tribute to the men, women and children who have inspired us in the fight against kidney disease.

As the representative of the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico in Congress, I am particularly grateful for the assistance that the American Kidney Fund provides to dialysis patients so they can afford the cost of treatment. I also appreciate the efforts that the organization has taken to educate the public about how kidney disease can be prevented.

Tonight, I am here to introduce a remarkable young man, whose story motivates us and whose strength moves us. His name is Jonathan Rivera Gómez, he is 16 years old, and he is from Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. I am proud to call Jonathan my constituent. Jonathan receives treatment three times a week at Puerto Rico's only pediatric dialysis clinic, traveling several hours each way, and he is currently awaiting a kidney transplant. While in the hospital, Jonathan learned about the American Kidney Fund's art contest and submitted a drawing entitled "The Hands of

God Giving Me Kidneys.” Jonathan’s submission won the online vote and, as a result, his drawing will appear on the cover of next year’s American Kidney Fund calendar, which I intend to hang in my congressional office.

There is a photo of Jonathan in your program, and it tells you a lot about his character. Despite the adversity he faces, Jonathan is smiling and his eyes are bright. When asked about his drawing, Jonathan says he hopes that other children with kidney disease will see it, and that it will make them feel happy and hopeful. I know that it will.

Now, if you don’t mind, I would like to say a few words directly to Jonathan in Spanish.

Jonathan, me honra ser tu representante en el Congreso. Jóvenes como tú, llenos de dinamismo y esperanza, son prueba del potencial que tiene el pueblo puertorriqueño de superarse y de tener éxito. Es por gente buena como tú y tu familia que todos los días me levanto con energía para hacer mi trabajo. Te felicito por este logro y por ser ejemplo para nuestra juventud. Te deseo mucha salud y muchas bendiciones.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating Jonathan Rivera Gómez.