

Spirit-Filled Pastor Running for Congress Against AOC—Could He Win?

Could a charismatic pastor be the one to oust far-left Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from Congress?

Fernando Cabrera, councilman for The Bronx, recently announced his campaign to represent New York's 14th Congressional District. Cabrera, a self-proclaimed centrist, says that a socialist agenda—like the one Ocasio-Cortez ascribes to—could cause major problems for America if gone unchecked.

But Cabrera is more than a politician. He's a pastor who has been in ministry for 32 years. Cabrera is a Spirit-filled Christian but tells Religion News Service that he prefers the term "nondenominational" over "Pentecostal." His passion for ministry goes back to an encounter he had with God when he was 17 years old.

He tells *Charisma* that he started a church in the Bronx in 1998 called New Life Church and has been working with young people with "life-controlling problems for families."

After years of pastoring, though, Cabrera realized he needed to help make a difference at a higher governmental level. His district had the highest unemployment rate in all of New York City and the crime rate was skyrocketing. But after he became councilman, he says, he and his team were able to bring unemployment down from 23.5% to 5.7%. The crime rate also decreased by 60%.

But New York City isn't the only city with problems. Ocasio-Cortez played a major role in stopping Amazon from opening a location in New York City. This move cost the city around 25,000 jobs and potentially \$27 billion worth of tax revenue.

This set off a red flag in the Bronx, Cabrera says.

"We began to say, 'Wait a second. You haven't brought anything to the district. You haven't passed one bill. You haven't brought one job into this district. Quality of life is starting to go down in her area,'" Cabrera says. "... The District number 14 is actually a moderate to the right district. It is not this extreme left that she portrays herself to be. She's not representative of the district."

On the contrary, Cabrera says the traditional and biblical values that drive his campaign represent the majority of people in New York's 14th District.

"That district is about family, that district is about faith and that district is all about community—the three things that Ocasio-Cortez has definitely ignored and at times has come against," he says. "In that district, you'll also find a hard-working middle class, you'll find the working class who are very concerned about socialism."

Cabrera has his own concerns about socialism. Cabrera—who is half Puerto Rican and half Dominican—says his grandmother moved to Venezuela when she remarried. At that time, Venezuela was still a prosperous country. But when socialism swept in, Cabrera says, the nation lost 10% of its population because 3 million people left. Venezuelans have lost an average of 24 pounds because of lack of food.

If America doesn't take a stand against the socialist agenda, could a similar destructive spiral happen here?

"We are at a crossroads," Cabrera says. "And I think every Spirit-filled Christian knows that. And from a pastor who is here baptized with the Holy Spirit, who has been serving Christ since the age of 17, now 55 years later, I'm calling on the church of Jesus Christ to put their hands to the plow with me."

I'm so grateful a Spirit-led pastor like Cabrera is running for Congress. I hope more men and women like him will rise up and take a stand for biblical values in our nation. To learn more about Cabrera's campaign, visit .

To hear Cabrera share his vision for his district, listen to this interview! {eoa}