

## Cuomo's behavior and Pat Foye's re GWB fracas

I have just read your article on Cuomo and Foye. I think there are issues that could be clarified and perhaps some misunderstandings suggested by the article.

1. Your article treats Cuomo too favorably. In fact the GWB fracas is the result not only of Christie's aggressive approach to controlling the PA and diverting its funds to aid his political causes, but also of Cuomo's failure to back up the Port Authority's efforts to carry out its mission -- which is to improve transportation in the bi-state area. Cuomo's "hands-off" stance while CC filled the PA with 50+ patronage hires meant that the NY commissioners felt they had no support from him and so were passive as the hiring and related mischief went on. For example, Wildstein's role was seen by lower-level PA staff as monitoring their actions and plans and reporting any that didn't help Christie; those who lived in NY were subject to the same atmosphere and pressure. And the ability of Pat Foye to provide leadership as the PA faces the many challenges in carrying out complex transportation projects was undercut, as the recent Samson and Wildstein emails illustrate. At their invitation, I met with all the PA commissioners in the fall of 2011 and expressed these concerns. In response, David Samson (the PA chair then and now) said that he disagreed and that the role of the commissioners was to do whatever the appointing governor wanted. Some of the NY commissioners said they were concerned but thought that without active Cuomo involvement, they couldn't resist CC machinations.

2. You seem to misunderstand the role of the PA's executive director, who is responsible for ensuring that the PA's programs (keeping the airports operating, the bridges and tunnels in good repair, etc., including developing new plans) are carried out efficiently. When he learned of the Wildstein caper at the GWB, Foye would not have needed to check with anyone before ordering the lanes reopened. After that, he may have contacted Cuomo's office, but previous history would suggest that Cuomo would not be highly supportive; Cuomo has pretty much been asleep when it comes to the PA and its troubles, many of them due to Baroni, Wildstein, and Christie's other minions.

As you probably know, the PA commissioners are appointed for fixed 6-year terms, signaling that they should be independent of the short-term whims of the appointing governor. The model was the Federal Reserve Board; independent judgment, not necessarily what the governor thought would aid his or her short-run political needs, was to be the standard. Commissioners have often, during the past 90 years, resisted what they believed were unwise efforts by either governor. The current problems are a sad result of one governor's belief that he can use the PA and all other means to advance his personal agenda, and the other governor's failure to help the PA retain its valued independence.

Perhaps you can clarify these issues in a later article.

Best wishes –

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