

Spitzer–Bruno Feud Will Have Lingering Effect

Every day that the childish feud between Governor Eliot Spitzer and state Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno continues, the more certain it is that if the governor is not successful in ending Bruno's reign in next year's elections, the Albany government apparatus will be stalemated for the next three years, at a minimum.

The name-calling and physical threats have already affected the normal functions of government as the senate has refused to hold confirmation hearings on two Spitzer appointments.

Besides that, Bruno has flatly refused to meet with the governor, who had asked that a meeting be held in Albany yesterday perhaps to start untangling his and Bruno's differences and put the vicious feud behind them.

When asked when Bruno might be ready to sit down and talk with the chief executive, a Bruno spokesman responded: "[The governor's representatives] can hold their breath as far as we're concerned. [Bruno has] told the governor he's not going to meet privately with him."

Not even Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver has had any luck trying to mediate the dispute between Spitzer and Bruno his equal partners in running the state government.

Bruno's position has hardened under an onslaught of alleged threats both physical and political by the governor against the 78-year-old, 31-year veteran upstate public official.

Bruno, a one-time amateur boxer, has expertly counterpunched and defended himself against the governor's insults and appears to have gained public sympathy from the battle with Spitzer.

Amid all the brickbats being flung by both sides, Mayor Michael Bloomberg assured Bruno and the Republican majority in the senate last week that his recent with-

drawal from the Republican Party to become a registered independent voter would in no way affect his support for Bruno and the GOP controlled senate.

Although the mayor declared war against the Republican senators last year as part of his strategy to get them to vote for New York City school funding, last week a Bloomberg spokesman stated, "Time after time over the last six years, the state senate has been extraordinarily helpful to us," explaining why the mayor promised continued future support.

A major reason for the mayor's assurances of support at this juncture is that Bruno and the GOP-controlled senate are backing his controversial congestion pricing plan and may bring it up for a vote when the senate reconvenes next Monday in Albany.

However, it is not known whether Silver will call the Democrat-controlled Assembly back into session. From all appearances, it seems unlikely that Silver and the Democrats will vote to approve the mayor's plan without major changes, and may not vote on it anyway, even if the mayor agrees to the changes.

MAYOR PROMISES PADAVAN CONTINUED SUPPORT: Even before Bloomberg reassured Republican state senators of his future support, he had reached out to Senator Frank Padavan (R-C, Bellerose) to promise his backing in future elections as he had in the past.

Padavan, who will probably get a strong challenge next year as the Democrats try to take control of the senate, said the mayor had called him several days after the legislative session ended several weeks ago and offered his future support.

In his election challenge in 2006 Padavan revealed, the mayor had sent out letters of support for the Northeast Queens

veteran incumbent and also recorded phone messages backing him. The mayor's efforts, he said, were "enormously helpful".

WEINER SETS 'LIBERTY' FIGHT PLAN: Congressman Anthony Weiner will introduce legislation this week that would require the National Park Service to allow visitors to have access to the Statue of Liberty's crown. The crown has been closed since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Since access to the crown was closed, Weiner (D-Queens/Brooklyn) has maintained that the reopening was necessary to show the world that America had survived the attacks and was back to normal.

The lawmaker said last week that the reopening was "symbolic of America and American values" and that it would bring back the visitors New York City had lost since the 9/11 attack forced the closing of the statue.

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Queens GOP Honors Good Samaritan



Queens County Republican Party Chairman Phil Ragusa presents Fresh Meadows resident Jagmohan Dilawri with the Party's Award for Outstanding Citizenship on July 2. Dilawri defended a Francis Lewis H.S. student being beaten by a group of teens, who apparently retaliated by vandalizing his car the following night. In recognition of Dilawri's courage and plight, the Queens County GOP presented him with this award and a donation towards the repair of his vehicle. Pictured here from left to right is a guest, Queens County Republican Party Director Daniel Egers, Ragusa, Dilawri, Executive Director Gloria Piekarski and Vice Chairman Vince Tabone.



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