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Republican Legislators Call on Democrats to Stop Partisan Political Games, Refocus on Legislative Tasks

Today, several Republican Legislators are calling on their Democrat counterparts to stop shilling for Governor Cuomo and do their jobs. The majority of Democrat Legislators were 'no shows' at the State of the County Address on Thursday evening, many of them the same Legislators that walked out on their obligation to vote for the 2013 County Budget. Their refusal to attend the State of the County address may have been intended as a demonstration of disrespect to County Executive Rob Astorino but Republicans say it was a slap in the face to their constituents. Three Democrats, Legislators, Lyndon Williams (D) Mount Vernon, Ben Boykin (D) White Plains, Scarsdale, West Harrison and Virginia Perez (D) Yonkers, attended the Board of Legislators meeting where the State of the County was delivered.

Minority Leader, Legislator John Testa (R) Cortlandt, Peekskill, Yorktown said the boycott may have been intended as a sleight to the County Executive but it has real effects on the Democrat's work on the Board of Legislators. "In this term under the Board's new leadership, we have heard the mantra of 'bipartisanship' from day one and the Republican caucus has strived every day to live up to that standard but the level of petty, partisan, political games engaged in by some Democrats has not only continued but has ramped up in recent days." Testa added, "They may think it's cute to play games like this because the County Executive is running for Governor but the damage they cause to their working relationships with their fellow Legislators is very real. I hope that these Legislators will grow up and start acting like the leaders their communities elected to them be."

In addition to the boycott of the County Executive's presentation on Thursday, earlier this week, the same Democrats proposed a resolution to the Board of Legislators, calling for a special election for County Executive. The resolution cites the fact that the County

Executive is running for Governor as the reason for a new election and offers the logic that elected officials aren't able to fulfill their duties while campaigning.

Minority Whip, Legislator Gordon Burrows, noted the sad irony that this group of Democrats would propose a resolution that has no chance of passing and that is designed solely as a weapon to hurt the Westchester County Executive and to benefit their friend Governor Andrew Cuomo. "This is going to be a long campaign and I hope that my colleagues on the Board of Legislators are able to refocus on the important issues before this board instead of using their positions and this board's good will and authority to score cheap political points for the Governor. Their jobs here in Westchester are important and whatever their ambitions are for themselves and their party bosses in Albany, they need to get out of the mud and live up to the stature of their elected offices."

This group of Democrats has a long history of attempting political stunts that ultimately backfire on them. When the Board of Legislators met to pass the 2013 budget, eight Democrats walked out of the budget meeting when things weren't going their way. They refused to return for a vote, in fact they turned off the lights and microphones in the Board's chambers and blasted the sound of a bell into the room in a juvenile attempt to disrupt the important business of the Legislature. This action by the Democrats has become the touchstone for petty partisanship and the hallmark of the previous Board leadership's tenure.

Legislator Sheila Marcotte (R) Eastchester, New Rochelle, Tuckahoe lamented the fact that two newly elected Democrats have apparently bought into the flawed logic of their fellow Democrats, using their authority as Legislators to engage in political games like the proposed resolution. "It is sad to see that the good faith and bipartisanship that we have all been aiming for here at the Westchester Board of Legislators is being compromised in an effort to malign the County Executive. We have come to expect many of the Democrats to engage in this kind of silliness but I am particularly concerned that two new legislators are inclined to engage in these antics." Marcotte added, "A resolution by the Board of Legislators is a serious statement that is meant to reflect the will of the board. When people debase their offices by using an official mechanism that is available to us as elected county officials in an effort to embarrass other elected county officials, we erode the confidence that the public has in this legislative body. I hope that not just the two new Legislators will rethink this ill-advised type of political theater but that all of my Democratic colleagues will come to appreciate the gravity of this legislature and their sacred responsibility to uphold the ethics and standards of their own offices."

Legislator Michael Smith (R) Mount Pleasant, North Castle, Pleasantville noted that legislative actions frequently have reactions and unintended consequences. "We have

some very serious issues that we are dealing with at the Board of Legislators and this type of foolishness is a distraction from the work that we've been sent here to do. I would have expected this type of thing in the past but have come to believe my democratic colleagues had chosen leadership and a new game plan that would eschew the type of partisanship that this resolution foments." Legislator Smith added, "I am very embarrassed by their behaviors. The hard-working taxpayers that they allegedly represent are entitled to much greater professionalism from their elected representative. "

The resolution calling for a special election for County Executive has been placed on the agenda for the Monday, May 5th Board of legislators meeting.

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