

## P.E.L. Letters Sent

The much awaited Preferred Eligibility List (PEL) information has been mailed to all staff members who received RIF letter, as promised. The letters were mailed to home addresses. Some were received yesterday, and all should be delivered by Monday at the latest.

Assistant Superintendent Marysol Berrios has indicated that these lists contain information about staff members' status in the position from which they were RIF'd. Thus a Library/Media Specialist's letter will indicate his/her information for that position (their individual number and how many total staff members are in that category).

Bumping rights implementation letters of transfer are being competed now and will be forthcoming.

Berrios has indicated that if you had received a RIF letter and do not receive a PEL letter, you can contact her directly at [MBerrios@paterson.k12.nj.us](mailto:MBerrios@paterson.k12.nj.us).

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**From PolitickerNJ.com**

## **It just keeps getting uglier. Keep the pressure on Democrats. There may be a vote on Monday.**

### **[Democratic caucus misery heading toward Monday](#)**

[By Max Pizarro](#) | July 9th, 2010 - 9:24am  
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TRENTON - Where there wasn't indifference to the whole matter, the off-the-record reports about Wednesday's Assembly Democratic caucus oozed into *PolitickerNJ.com* with more misery than vengeance, more agony than spite.

"I don't know what I'm doing here anymore," said one assemblyperson. "I'm thinking it's time to go make money."

At least two camps collided at first in what sounded like a meaningful policy debate. But the sense of contributing players with ability to make policy rapidly disintegrated as members realized - in spite of Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver's (D-East Orange) resistance to signing her name to a cap agreement with Gov. Chris Christie and Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-West Deptford) before speaking with her caucus - that all the debate would finally add up to an endorsement of a plan already signed.

Indeed, while Democrats haggled over what they thought would be a strategy going forward, a confident Gov. Chris Christie told reporters on a farm in Franklin Twp. in reference to Oliver, "She and I spoke on Saturday, we had a very positive conversation, and for those of you who are skeptical about my characterizations, I think her comments yesterday (to reporters, about agreeing with the plan) back that up - that she feels good about this arrangement and good about the deal."

Not everyone did.

A block of Democratic women led by Assemblywoman Linda Stender (D-Fanwood) and Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttel (D-Englewood) wanted to withhold their support for the 2.0% property tax cap until Christie agreed to back restoration of family planning funding.

Assembly Majority Leader Joe Cryan (D-Union Twp.) didn't support them.

It's not that he was against family planning. He wanted that \$7.5 million back in the budget - maybe as badly as they did - but he didn't support the strategy of tying family planning to the cap.

To do so would mean embracing what Cryan believed was a terrible concept proposed by Christie and Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-West Deptford), which would most unfairly impose spending strictures on cities up against crime and poverty, where on-the-ground conditions might require - at any given time - more money.

No, if the caucus was to dig in and act like a body of Democrats, as Cryan understood the obligation of the party - they should oppose the 2.0% cap already approved by Sweeney until they exacted other exemptions from the cap, including special education and state aid.

In another camp sat Assemblyman Lou Greenwald (D-Voorhees), Assemblyman John Burzichelli (D-Paulsboro) and the South Jersey Democrats. When Sweeney on Saturday announced he was backing the cap with the governor that included exemptions for health care and debt service, the lower house South Jersey Dems warred internally with the desire to break out and firmly endorse the plan ahead of the rest of the caucus.

As Oliver refused to sign on until she spoke to her caucus, Greenstein settled on a statement praising the "right direction" of the agreement.

Here was a marked divide between Greenwald and Burzichelli and the women from North Jersey (mostly Bergen and Union) and Cryan. Self-professed proud fiscal conservatives, Greenwald and co. all along argued that a cap concept to begin with was no novel Christie idea. A dud maybe in terms of his brand of leadership compared to the irrepressibly political and fiery Christie, former Gov. Jon Corzine nonetheless had driven a 4 percent cap to rein in spending. It was Corzine's Democratic initiative, and a success! They argued, which brought average spending in towns statewide from 7 percent to 3.3%. Now Christie had simply presented the cap concept as his own, in the process finally crumbling with the one real piece of reform that was in fact his contribution - the Constitutional cap as opposed to the statutory cap.

Many Democrats off the record hammered Sweeney for nibbling meekly from Christie's proffered hand, but - and here the Greenwald and Burzichelli argument tried to find a mark in disconsolate Democrats - it was Christie who caved to Sweeney's statutory plan.

Democrats were winning, was the gist of it finally.

But few beyond the ranks of South Jersey Dems believed it when they considered the formidable presence of Christie.

As they attempted to maintain the outlook and organizational discipline of a lawmaker who built the South Jersey political structure (former Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts of Camden, with the considerable assistance of George Norcross), Greenwald and his southern ranks represented 9 - maybe 11 - votes on their own in a 47-member caucus.

Still, the power of Norcross and his reach throughout the state - coupled with a sense of increasingly fractured and self-interested Democratic Party fiefdoms everywhere else - made the Southerners again the strong ones in the room.

Cynicism gripped much of the rest of the caucus. They didn't feel invested.

And it was difficult to digest the oratory of Assemblyman John McKeon (D-West Orange), for example, without recognizing that his political fate next year may depend on the largesse of party bosses in Essex whose ally - Oliver - he now strenuously defended. The reassuring tones of Assemblyman John Wisniewski (D-Sayreville) - the State Democratic Party chairman - carried the inevitable reminder that he had no power base in Middlesex County and sat in the state party power chair as a result of a deal negotiated by Norcross. Members who'd feared getting tapped for an "aye" vote on the Republican governor's budget and tried to summon a sense of pride when Oliver - taking one for the team - voted "yes," now grappled in the aftermath, bothered by the governor's restoration of nearly \$20 million to Essex County - where Oliver worked.

Those not already beaten, those still arguing, didn't realize their voices were going nowhere until one of the most persistent family planning women in the caucus room was cut short by Oliver in the middle of an impassioned entreaty. There was an edge.

A few looked to Cryan, the political thinker and strategist and independent voice who had no access to Christie and wasn't allowed in the governor's presence, who wasn't obviously welded to the interests of any one organization - who sat silent and - apparently - resigned to the inevitable.

Maybe it was time to build an independent North Jersey coalition the way Roberts did in the South all those years ago, someone muttered as the caucus broke anti-climatically with only Oliver's public statement about support for the 2.0% cap agreement later signaling a way forward, amid a deepened sense that back room dialogue in the new era was mostly meaningless.

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## Keep those Emails and call going!

The Democrats in the Assembly must be made aware of how much the 2% cap is going to hurt kids, and us.

REMEMBER, without the cap, Paterson lost elementary art, elementary music, elementary world languages, elementary librarians, ALL NON-TENURED STAFF MEMBERS and over 200 other positions.

IMAGINE what we'll lose when expenditures are capped at a 2% increase, not even thinking about the impact the cap will have on staff salaries.

Go to pages 19-24 of your P.E.A. calendar, find the names of your Assembly members and email them (Asm or Asw Last name @njleg.org) all weekend to oppose the 2% cap!

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