

The Westchester Crusader

With *the* acuity



Of *A Terrier*

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Attorney General Spitzer Can't Find Any Documents From Spencer Complaint

By Dan Murphy

Almost one year ago, former Yonkers Mayor John Spencer sent a complaint to State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer alleging widespread election fraud. Since last summer our papers have been waiting for a response from Spitzer.

On May 4, we sent a FOIL to the Attorney General asking for "any records regarding the complaint submitted by former Mayor of Yonkers, John Spencer."

On May 14, we received an acknowledgement of our request by Stacey Rowland, Assistant Attorney General. Rowland's letter states that a "substantive response to your inquiry will be forwarded within approximately 30 days."

To date, we have received nothing from the Attorney General's office. Last week we called Spitzer's office to follow up on the status of the FOIL.

We spoke to Rowland who told us that no records have been found and that they would continue to search and contact us if anything was found.

It's hard to believe that the Attorney General's office has nothing, not even the original complaint, filed by the Mayor of the 4th largest City in New York State!!

What does Spitzer's office do with complaints from elected officials and residents? It appears that someone in his office took Spencer's complaint and threw it in the garbage.

Spitzer has been stonewalling Spencer's complaint because it is a political hotcake. Spencer's complaint was accurate and named names. It mentions:

1 - Zehy Jereis - "There have been several Board of Elections employees who continue to work there notwithstanding having been convicted of election fraud."

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2 - Dennis Wedra and Philip Werbel - "During the trial it came out that Werbel and Wedra had concentrated their efforts on registering Hispanic residents to vote, enrolling them in a minor party, and duping them into voting for Werbel by absentee ballot."

3 - Senator Nick Spano - who employed both Mangone and Wedra, won the Green Party primary because of these fraudulent practices. There was no investigation to expose the roles of either Mangone or Spano. Spano was never even questioned.

4 - Anthony Mangone admitted to tampering with ballots on behalf of his boss, Senator Spano. No action taken.

5 - DA Jeanine Pirro - "After agreeing to let Werbel off from the more serious crimes, Pirro had Werbel wear a wire to secretly tape Wedra. Pirro also made a deal with Anthony Mangone to testify against Wedra. There was ample evidence to initiate an investigation of the role that Senator Nick Spano played in directing his campaign manager, and Chief of Staff Mangone)illegal activities, which was never undertaken. Instead, Pirro prevented any such investigation by not charging Mangone with any of his crimes. Instead of using Mangone to uncover the role played by Senator Nick Spano, she used him unsuccessfully to attempt to get Wedra."

6 - The Non Aggression Pact - "The three incumbents [Andy Spano, Len Spano, Jeanine Pirro] agreed to secretly support and help each other. Each agrees that they would steer their political party to put up weak candidates. Andy Spano's Chief of Staff, acted on his behalf. Schwartz unethically and illegally compelled county employees and others to collect signatures for all three people."

7 - Nick Spano's Re-Election 2002 - "A Democrat, Oswaldo Ramos, was running against him. Ramos filed petitions to get on the ballot. The petitions were challenged by Democrats who work for Spano on the public payroll. Judge Cowhey ruled against Ramos but it took until October 11, 2002. Ramos could not find a lawyer to properly represent him, while an attorney Charles Wood, who also worked for the State Legislature (Senator Nicholas Spano) represented the objectors. What needs to be investigated is how is it that employees on a state payroll such as the objectors and the attorney (Wood), engage in such partisan political activity? Also what if any outside influences were there on Judge Cowhey for him to rule as he did?"

8 - Conservative Party Reorganization - "In an attempt to control the Conservative line, Senator Spano began a campaign to replace Vincent Natrella with Aurricchio as County Chair. Aurricchio works for State Senator Nick Spano. During the Party's re-organizational meeting, Natrella recessed the meeting to convene elsewhere. The Aurricchio faction stayed and elected themselves. A court proceeding followed. The Judge assigned was Supreme Court Justice Orazio Bellantoni. Justice Bellantoni's wife works for Nick Spano's father, County Clerk Leonard Spano. Justice Bellantoni could not possibly be neutral and objective in a matter so vital to Senator Nick Spano. There is a direct conflict when his wife works for Spano's father and when he needs both Spano's support so that his son, Rory, would get the endorsement to run for the County Court."

Eliot Spitzer is already running for Governor in 2006. He is running the AG's office for politics, instead of enforcing the law.

Spitzer's office now has the case of Jack Gaffney, who milked the taxpayers for over \$100,000 in vacations as State Bridge Authority Director.

Ulster County DA Don Williams was considering filing serious charges against Gaffney. But the case was transferred to Spitzer's office and we await what action, if any, will now be taken against Gaffney.

It's time for another honest politician to take up Spencer's cause and follow through on this complaint. Maybe that person is Democrat Andrea Stewart-Cousins. Cousins is running against State Senator Nick Spano.

Spano was mentioned frequently in Spencer's complaint. Cousins should use Spencer's complaint and Nick Spano's inappropriate conduct as a campaign issue.

The residents in the 35th District are fed up with Nick Spano's shenanigans and his flip-flopping on almost every issue. We know that Cousins and Spitzer are both Democrats, and Cousins may not want to step on any political toes.

But all Democrats need to be held accountable in this race, including the highest ranking elected Democrat - Eliot Spitzer. Democrats need to come out and actively campaign for Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and we will hold those Democrats, who are not working hard to defeat Nick Spano, accountable.