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WSJ on Spitzer.

Thursday, March 13, 2008, 7:28:27 PM | Blue State Blues

WSJ on Spitzer.

For anyone who was reading New York newspapers in the fall of 2006 the Spitzer candidacy for governor was a virtual press coronation. The accusations of campaign finance irregularity found little traction in New York's adoring media.

New Yorkers were well used to abrasive prosecutorial personalities running for higher office. Perhaps the thought that the elimination of the carting and fish market cartels, the clearing of threatening personalities from the streets and a return of civility had now left room to chase the crimes of bankers and brokers. Why the press would begrudge the former and hail the later remains a mystery.

Yet, Upon Governor Spitzer's inaugural the WSJ lead editorial expresses a grudging admiration and hopeful tone for his upcoming term while at the same time lambasting his predecessor for a seeming torpor in office.

It was hoped by the financial community that Gov. Spitzer would commit his considerable zeal to breaking budgetary deadlock in Albany and investigate the corruption of New York's public sector. Halting abusive financial practices and bringing budgetary restraint. The editorial expressed that if Mr. Spitzer could accomplish these ends then it would be worth enduring the scrutiny that the financial sector had faced. Indeed Mr. Spitzer had promised these changes.

Alas the failure of Mr. Spitzer is not a failure of some tawdry leak and investigation, but the failure of the very hopes expressed in that WSJ editorial. The entire State of New York will be the worse for the abandonment of these goals. The caretaker administration of new Governor David Patterson provides useful examples to the current presidential campaign on what to seek in a number two on the ticket.

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Re: WSJ on Spitzer coverage

Today, March 15, 2008, 8 hours ago | Peggy Little

You can tell from the tone of Shafer's harsh attack on Kimberly Strassel that in fact, her well supported critique hit a nerve -- correctly. His helpful assemblage of articles on former NYAG Spitzer fully support her case. Just as an example, a piece that asserts early on that "There has not been such an affirmation of what's right since Moses and the Ten Commandments" and ends with "Our hero, the "Caped Highway Cop," awaits," which the Time profile does, may fairly be described as favorable, if not fawning. The other press coverage linked in Mr. Shafer's piece fully support her claims. The occasional noted critiques of Spitzer in those pieces do not alter their fundamental positive spin.

In fact, Mr. Shafer's images of mindless press bashing and a bloody burlap bag are disturbing and most unfair. I am at work on a book on the state AGs and after years of research and study of their press coverage, I can knowledgeably affirm Ms. Strassel's careful and fair critique of the press. I would add that Mr. Shafer's own piece devolves into an admission that biases like "reporters' preference for action over inaction" and their uncritical adoption of AG Spitzer's self-canonization as a latter day Teddy Roosevelt permeates the coverage, as pointed out above. His piece only confirms the Strassel conclusions.

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WSJ on Spitzer coverage

Yesterday, March 14, 2008, 11:09:14 AM | westport63

Shafer spends most of the article attacking Strassel's case against the MSM, not on what HE thinks of its performance. At the end we get the sense that Jack is not too happy with Spitzer's press coverage but gives no specifics. He does say that "bias for Spitzer, where it existed, probably grew out of reporters' preference for action over inaction." Sounds like the makings of a pretty big bias to me. The NYT and others fell in love with the "active" style of the Duke prosecutor, while it was up to outsiders such as Stuart Taylor to explain why inaction would have been the better course

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