

NASW-NYS Political Post

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Just in Case you Left the Planet for a Few Days - Eliot Spitzer's reign has come to a close as he resigned his post effective Monday, March 17, amidst allegations that he has been utilizing the services of a New Jersey based call-girl service known as the Emperor's Club. The allegations sent shock waves through the State on Monday when local and national media outlets screamed scandalous headlines and salacious quips regarding the Governor's ties to the international prostitution ring. Almost immediately, the front lawn of the Capitol was littered with media trucks who camped out until late Wednesday evening with many expected to return on Monday as Lieutenant Governor David Paterson is sworn in as New York's first black Governor. And while most Capitol Hill crawlers have been consumed with each and every detail of the scandal as it unfolded, most are now focusing attention on the potential impact a new Governor and his administration may have on the immediate and long-term future of the budget and legislative process; although early chatter from legislators and lobbyists alike has been positive, as most describe the new Governor as a "Team Player." Who will be on his team is another question bouncing around the halls of the Capitol, as speculation grows regarding which Spitzer appointees will stay and who will go. "The times they are a changing."

In Other News - Over the last two weeks our Veterans Mental Health Initiative bill (S.6799A / A. 10069A) moved through the Senate and Assembly Committees on Mental Health, as have our bills to amend Timothy's Law to include coverage for PTSD.

On the National Front - By a vote of 268-148 the House passed its version of a (federal) mental health parity bill last week. The Patrick Kennedy (D- Rhode Island) sponsored initiative, however, differs from his father's (Edward Kennedy - D Mass) Senate version and does not have the President's support; hence, the two houses are attempting to reach a compromise on the issue, yet again.

Campaign Chatter - Senator Barack Obama won the Wyoming caucuses earlier in the week, however the victory was overshadowed by a controversy heating up between the Obama and Clinton camps over remarks made by supporters of each. Both Rev. Jeremiah Wright Jr. and Geraldine Ferraro made racially charged comments that left the candidates scrambling to distance themselves from such remarks. For the whole story, log onto <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/03/13/the-wright-controversy/>