

NASW-NYS Political Post

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History in the Making - In a highly publicized event at the States Capitol on Monday, March 17th, former Lieutenant Governor David Paterson was sworn in as New York's first black governor before a crowd in the Assembly chamber that was overflowing with legislators, distinguished guests and an extraordinary amount of goodwill, revealed through a two-minute long standing ovation as he took to the podium. When the chamber finally quieted, the newly anointed Governor gave his first address that has since been hailed as "rousing, eloquent, and even humorous" but above all defining. Although never mentioning his predecessor and the turbulent relationships that former Governor Spitzer often had with many members of the legislature, Paterson's remarks clearly defined his approach to be one of team building as he stated... "Let us right here and now grab the unusual opportunities that circumstance has handed us today, and put personal politics, party advantage and power struggles aside in favor of service, in the interests of the people." He further iterated his hope of bipartisanship by recalling the words of New York's late senator, Robert F. Kennedy who, in an address given in 1964 stated "No matter how talented an individual may be, no matter how much energy he might possess, regardless of how much integrity and honesty he or she may have, if that person is alone, they can accomplish very little." No doubt, our new Governor is hoping such a statement becomes words to live by as the legislature attempts to construct a budget in little more than a week!

Speaking of the Budget Process - After a week of haggling, members of the legislature have reportedly returned to their districts for the long holiday weekend without having come to an agreement on available dollars for the 2008-09 fiscal year. While many legislators are still publicly hoping for an on-time budget, the chances of such are diminishing with each passing day.

Musical Chairs? - Although in most instances it is expected to be nothing more than a formality, Governor David Paterson has asked all commissioners, directors and top staff to submit their resignations. Paterson spokesman Errol Cockfield Jr., noted to media sources that "This is a typical step in the transition of one administration to another... not a signal there will be mass departures throughout the administration."

Campaign Chatter - Senator Clinton's hopes for new primaries in Michigan and Florida were dashed this week as Democrats in each state signaled little willingness to hold "do-overs." Senator Obama continued to deal with the fall-out of remarks made by his pastor, Jeremiah Wright, and Senator McCain came under attack for suggesting that "Members of Al-Qaeda in Iraq were slipping into neighboring Iran and receiving training there before returning to the war-torn country to wreak havoc," an assertion the current administration has never made.