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Karin Moran, MSW

Jeremy Darman, MSW, MA

Just “Hanging Out” is how one of New York’s State Senators recently characterized the Legislature’s work (or lack thereof) these days. With only four weeks left in the 2008 regular legislative session, media outlets across the state are reporting on the unusually slow pace of a Legislature that is typically bustling at this time of the year. Speculation as to why the slowdown has occurred centers around the belief that a number of delicate issues such as shaving the budget yet again and legislative pay raises are better left until the end of the year; which coincidentally will be after Election Day.

Note to All Millionaires – Upon his return to work this week, Governor David Paterson reportedly met with Assembly Democrats with another call for “fiscal restraint.” And though he spoke of the State’s potential \$21.5 billion three-year deficit, he was said to have clearly denounced the idea of a tax hike on the rich. As reported in the Daily News Paterson noted...“There are a number of belt-tightening maneuvers that we have to show the public that we’ve engaged in before we can go to the nearest business and nearest millionaire and ask them for more money.

End of an Era ? - Based on comments made in an interview earlier this week, several media outlets are speculating on the political future of Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno (R-Brunswick). When asked whether he would run for re-election this fall, Bruno responded: “I am where I am today. Here I am with you, having this delightful conversation and we’ll see what life looks like.” When asked if he still enjoyed working in the Legislature, Bruno said: “It’s more fun than it was six months ago. I have better feelings about it,” adding, “but, I’ll tell you, being in government these days, it’s a pretty heavy burden, and it takes a toll too.”

Campaign Chatter –According to the Associated Press, a new poll shows Senator Barack Obama is competitive against Senator John McCain with key voters. Meanwhile, President George W. Bush has been fundraising with and for Senator John McCain, a move that a number of media outlets and political pundits are characterizing as “risky” in light of the president’s low approval ratings (which may take another hit this week with the release of former Press Secretary Scott McClellan’s memoir that reportedly blasts the president on his handling of the Iraq war, the CIA leak case and a number of other issues).