**State Committeeman Report**

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I believe Lindsey Boylan and Charlotte Bennett in their accusations of sexual harassment against Governor Cuomo, and join the calls for an independent investigation into his conduct. I also do not believe that they are the only women to have experienced this behavior from the Governor, and it remains to be seen if others are willing to step forward and tell their stories. I am pleased that Attorney General Tish James has received a request for such an investigation – after Cuomo tried to manipulate the process – and I look forward to the report. Should these complaints stand up to scrutiny (and I have no doubt they will) nothing should be off the table as repercussions for the Governor, including censure, impeachment and resignation. 2021 troubles for Cuomo were compounded with the Governor calling Queens Assemblymember Ron Kim last month and attempting to browbeat him over his comments regarding the obfuscation of the reporting of COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes. In what was the least kept secret in New York, it was apparent that those statistics had been altered to show fewer mortalities, so as to reduce the blame on the Governor for ordering recovering nursing home residents back to their residences after a hospital stay treating them for the virus. At the time, it might have been the best course of action amongst a lot of bad choices – hospitals were overwhelmed, once the patients recovered, they needed to be discharged as quickly as possible to find room for the hordes of people waiting for the next available bed. Many people died waiting for a hospital bed that never came, and perhaps many more would have died if they were not admitted into care if there was further delay in patient discharges. Many nursing home residents were unable to be discharged anywhere but back to their nursing home residence. But as we now know, the recovering patients were still contagious, and that led to high infection rates in nursing homes, and subsequent fatalities. Yet, where else could they – the recovering nursing home patients – go? The issue is the high death rate, but it is also that the Governor attempted to cover it up, that is the crux of the matter. Some of these wounds are self-inflicted: had he owned up to the fact that his decision, possibly the best of many bad outcomes, led to people dying, rather than minimizing the deaths, the political fallout would have been less. If he had not attempted to harass Assemblymember Kim into changing his statement, the political fallout would have been less. There is also another matter at play here. In the Pataki Administration (a few Governors ago, he served from 1994-2006) there was an initiative called the Berger Commission which accelerated the closures and consolidations of hospitals across the state. The common wisdom at the time is the state had “too many beds” and we needed to prune some of the excess in our hospital infrastructure. What started under Pataki continued under Cuomo even after the Commission finished its work in 2005, so that the total number of beds were reduced by over 6,000, and would be half the capacity we would need a decade later. The hospital closures in New York City were disproportionately in Brooklyn and Queens, which would bear the brunt of the pandemic, with 18,000 of the nearly 30,000 deaths in NYC (the end of last month) being recorded in those boroughs. By reducing expenses – and the services and obligation to care for low-income residents in various parts of the city and state – while still maintaining their higher-income clientele in wealthier pockets of the city and state, these healthcare corporations were able to extract greater value from their networks in the name of efficiency. That is perhaps the biggest secret, and shame, of it all.