



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 26, 2020

## Cuomo Got Big Bucks From Groups Lobbying for Killer Nursing-home Order

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, whose order forcing nursing homes to accept COVID-19 patients is likely responsible for thousands of deaths in those facilities, issued the order at the behest of organizations that have contributed millions of dollars to his campaigns.

In fact, an audit of Cuomo's campaign donations by OpenTheBooks.com shows a "systematic pay-to-play culture in Albany," OpenTheBooks.com CEO Adam Andrzejewski [told the New York Post's Miranda Devine](#). The clear connection between campaign contributions and political favors reveals "a legalized money-laundering scheme aimed at monetizing incumbent political power," he added.



AP Images

Since 2014, Cuomo, a Democrat, has received \$6.2 million in contributions from companies who received \$7 billion worth of state contracts.

"Did the governor operate in his own political interest or the public interest?" asked Andrzejewski. "Soliciting state vendors for campaign cash is highly unethical because each instance where a state vendor gave a campaign donation and received a state contract is a potential conflict of interest."

Cuomo has been particularly cozy with healthcare organizations. In 2018, the Greater New York Hospital Association (GNYHA) gave Cuomo's reelection campaign a cool \$1 million "plus other generous in-kind support," wrote Devine. That same year, GNYHA and the healthcare workers' union, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) 1199, spent \$5.9 million lobbying the state government.

What did these groups get for their lavish spending? Devine:

A few days before the 2018 election, Cuomo approved a multibillion-dollar Medicaid rate hike for hospitals and nursing homes, which the association had lobbied for, and which allowed them to settle a pay dispute with the union.

Then, in February 2020, Cuomo appointed association board member and Northwell Health CEO Michael Dowling and union President Dennis Rivera to co-chair the Medicaid Redesign Team.

Dowling and the union contributed a combined \$20,000 to Cuomo just weeks before the appointments. A month later, COVID-19 hit, and GNYHA lobbied the Cuomo administration to force nursing homes to accept coronavirus patients, supposedly because hospitals were being overwhelmed.



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“Despite warnings from doctors that the move represented ‘a clear and present danger’ to other nursing home residents,” noted Devine, “Cuomo issued his directive March 25, while federally provided beds in the Javits Center and USNS Comfort hospital ship mainly lay empty.”

On top of that, Cuomo, again at the urging of GNYHA, signed a law “shielding hospital and nursing home executives from the threat of lawsuits stemming from the coronavirus outbreak,” reported the [Guardian](#).

“The language of the bill and the entire proposal was drafted, submitted, and negotiated into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo and his staff,” claimed Democratic Assemblyman Ron Kim.

GNYHA was so pleased with Cuomo’s handiwork that it “then spent millions on TV advertising that praised Cuomo’s management of the pandemic,” penned Devine.

“You could,” she quipped, “call the ads a quid pro Cuomo.”

How many people died in nursing homes because of Cuomo’s order? The best estimate, according to Devine, is 15,000. The official count, however, has never been made public.

“Here’s one hard truth Cuomo has still yet to tell: how many nursing home residents have died of COVID-19. 9 months into the pandemic, and three months after his health commissioner testified that he was hard at work counting NH deaths, Cuomo has not announced the grim total,” [tweeted Fox News Channel senior meteorologist Janice Dean](#), whose in-laws succumbed to the virus in Empire State assisted-living and nursing homes in March.

Indeed, the Cuomo administration has done everything it can to prevent the truth from coming out. In early May, for example, [it changed the state health department’s methodology for counting nursing-home deaths](#) to make the number appear smaller.

OpenTheBooks.com found many other instances in which Cuomo campaign contributors appear to have received excellent returns on their investments. The accounting, real estate, construction, banking, legal, and telecommunications industries, among others, contributed heavily to Cuomo’s campaigns and received hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of state contracts. (The governor’s office, naturally, denied that there was any connection between the contributions and the contracts.)

As bad as ripping off taxpayers to enrich political cronies is, ordering the deaths of thousands for similar reasons is far worse. But at least Cuomo was kind enough to [supply body bags](#) for the inevitable corpses.



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