



N.Y. Governorship Scandal Hits Again: Paterson Will Not Run

The governor had been steadfast in his determination to capture a full term at the ballot box, despite low poll numbers and growing opposition within his own party. Yet allegations of impropriety in the handling of a criminal case involving an aide proved the last nail in his political coffin. Providing a brief outline of the allegations, Reuters Ellen Wulforst [wrote](#) of reports stating, “he [Paterson] and state police spoke with a woman who last fall accused a top governor’s aide of assault. After speaking with the governor, the woman failed to appear in court and her case was dismissed, said the *New York Times*, which first reported the story. The case raised questions of possible inappropriate intervention by the governor”

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Some may say that Paterson’s exit is yet another example of declining Democrat fortunes since Barack Obama captured the presidency — however, his departure is precisely what his party wanted. Paterson wasn’t elected to the governorship — having ascended to it from the lieutenant governor’s position after ex-governor Eliot Spitzer resigned in the wake of a prostitution scandal — and had plainly become a political liability. Paterson’s [approval rating](#) had dropped from a high point of 75 percent to a low of 17 percent just last autumn and has remained in the doldrums since. Thus had the Democrat establishment been pressuring him to withdraw from the race, throwing its support behind Andrew Cuomo, son of former governor Mario Cuomo. In fact, Barack Obama himself had [asked Paterson](#) to relinquish his ambitions just last September (it didn’t help that Paterson had officially, albeit tepidly, supported Hillary Clinton in the 2008 Democrat primary). Even the *New York Times* — which normally treats liberal fellow travelers with kid gloves — found exposés on the governor fit to print.

Yet, of all Paterson’s enemies, one of the worst was himself. Struggling with a budget deficit, he alienated voters with [proposals](#) such as an “obesity tax,” a 15-percent levy on non-diet drinks (which would have sent this Coke-addict commentator across the border into Connecticut for his bubbly). Then there was his penchant for playing the race card, such as when he attributed the [opposition](#) to his election bid to the “racist media” — you know, the one that propelled Barack Obama to the White House. And his most recent comment in this regard spoke volumes and seemed to vindicate the criticism that he isn’t up to the task of leading the Empire State. While on the Don Imus show in early February, Paterson, who is legally blind, addressed the incessant attacks by his critics and [said](#), “I’m black, I’m blind and I’m still alive . . . Now how much better do they want me to be?”

Perhaps, Mr. Paterson, good enough to govern. Expecting affirmative action from the voters is a lot to ask, even in New York.

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Photo of Gov. Paterson: AP Images