Ted Mann contributed to this article.

attended.

encouraged them to call if they needed help outlining state bureaucracy or navigating agencies, said a Democrat who

After the November election, Mr. Christie invited his Democratic supporters to a breakfast at Drumthwacket. He

brought on Sean Bright, was stripped of the Democratic chairmanship of her town.

Endorsing Mr. Christie posed risks for some Democrats from their own party. Dina Long, mayor of the Jersey Shore

more slate aid.

Anthony Davis, the Democratic council president in Paterson, N.J., said he endorsed Mr. Christie in the hope of receiving

invitations to Drumthwacket, the historic governors residence.

the New Hemisphere Republican State Committee. Their inquiries were delivered in a polite but persistent tone. There were.

Democratic elected officials said they received overtures from Mr. Stepien and Mr. Mowers, now the executive director of

endorse.

stepped forward on their own. He said neither the governor's office nor the campaign pursued Democrats who declined to

Kevin Roberts, Mr. Christie's campaign spokesman said Democrats who endorsed the governor weren't coerced but
Politics News Alert

Broader probe of N.J. traffic scandal launched

Democrats in the New Jersey state Assembly have decided to launch a special investigative committee to question more members of the Christie administration about the bridge closures in Fort Lee, N.J., according to two Democratic aides.

"It will look into a wide variety of issues related to the closures and Gov. Chris Christie's staff," an aide said. "There is a need to focus on a broad array of issues and the Assembly is going to dedicate itself to finding the truth beyond the usual committee process."


For more political news, opinion and analysis, visit Washington Post Politics.
Fort Lee mayor acknowledges discussion about Christie endorsement
Linh Tat
The Record

Mayor Mark Sokolich confirmed Monday that the idea of him endorsing Governor Christie did come up during the governor's bid for reelection.

But the Democratic mayor said he was never asked directly to endorse the Republican politician and he would not disclose who made the overture.

"It got as close as "Is this something you'd consider?" Sokolich said before refusing to answer any more questions.

Though Sokolich stopped short of saying he was officially approached about an endorsement, his remarks seemed to add further credence to theories that the unannounced closure of two access lanes to the George Washington Bridge during morning rush hours for four days in September was political retribution by members of Christie's camp.

The lane closures turned Fort Lee into a virtual parking lot as motorists sat in bumper-to-bumper traffic, keeping first responders from responding to 911 calls in a timely manner and causing students to be late to the first day of school.

Christie said last month he was surprised by the allegations.

"I certainly don't remember getting any briefings at any time from the campaign staff that this was someone who was on our radar screen as a potential endorsement, so that's why none of this makes any sense to me," he said during a December press conference.

At the time, the governor said he had no reason not to believe his two top officials at the Port Authority, who said the lane closures were part of a traffic study to determine if Fort Lee needed three dedicated access lanes to the bridge. Those two officials — former Sen. Bill Baroni and David Wildstein, a high school friend of Christie's — resigned as the agency's deputy executive director and director of interstate projects, respectively, amid the escalating controversy.

And last Wednesday, explosive emails and text messages were released, directly linking a member of Christie's inner circle to the lane closures. Bridget Anne Kelly, the governor's former deputy chief of staff whom he fired last week, appeared to order the lanes closed a month before it occurred.

"Time for some traffic problems in Fort Lee," she emailed Wildstein on Aug. 13.

Wildstein responded: "Got it."

Christie said after the emails became public that he was "misled" into believing that members of his staff weren't involved in what now appears to be a vindictive plot to exact revenge on political adversaries.

In one text message exchange, Wildstein alluded to messages from the Fort Lee mayor complaining that school buses couldn't get through traffic.

"Is it wrong that I'm smiling," the recipient of the message asked. The recipient's identity was redacted from the document.

"No," Wildstein replied.

"I feel badly about the kids," the person wrote. "I guess."

"They are the children of Buono voters," Wildstein responded, referring to Barbara Buono, the Democratic candidate for governor who lost to Christie in a landslide.
Shortly after the emails and text messages were first reported by The Record last week, Sokolich said he believed the theories that the lane closures were politically motivated.

"I've been quiet about this the whole time and I was hoping and praying there was no intentionality involved," he said. "I didn't want to believe it. But now I'm convinced that there is."

- See more
at: http://www.northjersey.com/news/state/Fort_Lee_mayor_acknowledges_discussion_about_Christie_endorsement.html?page=all#sthash.xUJe7mu.dpuf
Bergen Dem mayor reconsiders Christie 2013 endorsement

Mark Bonamo
Pollitzer NJ

The Democratic mayor of a Bergen County township who endorsed Republican Gov. Chris Christie in the 2013 gubernatorial race has reconsidered his endorsement in light of the Bridgegate scandal.

"If it is proven that the governor had knowledge of this, and let it happen, I would in hindsight not have endorsed him," said River Vale Mayor Joseph Blundo, the first Democratic mayor in Bergen County to endorse Christie during the governor's re-election campaign. "I do believe that would be an abuse of power and playing with lives if it is proven. I'm a businessman, and you as a manager control the culture of your people. Even if [the governor] didn't know, did he create a culture that made people think it was OK to do this? I have a problem with that."

Blundo also noted that Matt Mowers, then Christie's regional campaign director and who was named executive director of the New Hampshire Republican Party the day after Christie's Nov. 5 victory, played a key liaison role in finalizing the endorsement.

Blundo endorsed Christie in August 2013, saying that he was impressed with Christie's leadership in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.
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emails crossed

On Mon, Jan 13, 2014 at 11:39 AM, Matt Mowers <matthew.mowers@williams.gop> wrote:
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FYI - you are mentioned. Oy!

Bergen Dem mayor reconsiders Christie 2013 endorsement

By Mark Bonamo | January 13th, 2014 - 11:17am

RIVER VALE - The Democratic mayor of a Bergen County township who endorsed Republican Gov. Chris Christie in the 2013 gubernatorial race has reconsidered his endorsement in light of the Bridgegate scandal.

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Read more at http://www.politickernj.com/70770/bergen-dem-mayor-reconsiders-christie-2013-endorsement#zzz2q1cNCgSQ
or sign up for a free trial of State Street Wire at http://www.politickernj.com/freetrial
Movers
Executive Director
New Hampshire Republican State Committee
10 Water Street
Concord, NH 03301
Office: 603.225.9341
Mobile: [redacted]
Fax: 603.225.7498

Begin forwarded message:

From: John DiStaso <jdistaso@unionleader.com>
Subject: Doing my job
Date: January 13, 2014 1:12:46 PM EST
To: "mowers@nhgop.org" <mowers@nhgop.org>

Matt,

Doing my job here, I have to reach out to you and ask you to call me to comment on the Wall Street Journal's report mentioning you as the person who approached Sokolich indicating an endorsement from him for Gov Christie would be welcome. I have also seen what the mayor told northjersey.com today.

I did speak with Ryan, who would not comment on that direct question, nor would Jennifer Horn.

So, here's an official request for comment, either by calling me at [redacted] or by email

Thanks

John DiStaso
John DiStaso's Granite Status: Report: Top NHGOP staffer approached NJ mayor about backing Christie prior to 'Bridgegate'

MONDAY, JAN. 13: MOWERS, CHRISTIE AND THE MAYOR. On the job just more than two months as the executive director of the New Hampshire Republican Party, 24-year-old Matt Mowers finds himself Monday identified as a player in the prologue to the "Bridgegate" scandal plaguing his old boss, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie.

No reports to date have implicated Mowers in the George Washington Bridge lanes closure scandal that cost a top Christie staffer her job, but The Wall Street Journal identified Mowers Sunday as the Christie campaign staffer who initially "approached" Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich "indicating an endorsement would be welcome.

The Journal cited "a person familiar with the conversations."

Mowers at the time, last spring, was the regional political director of Christie's reelection campaign. He had previously served in Christie's governor's office as a regional director of intergovernmental relations and legislative affairs. In both roles, Fort Lee was part of the Bergen County region he covered.

In the governor's office role, one of Mowers' superiors was Bridget Anne Kelly, the deputy chief of staff fired by Christie last week as the scandal erupted.

Shortly after Christie won reelection, Mowers was named as the top staffer of the New Hampshire GOP. At the time, party officials said Mowers' prior role with Christie would not give Christie an unfair advantage should the governor run for President in 2016 and should Mowers still be in that position during the presidential campaign.

And today, NHGOP chair Jennifer Horn gave Mowers a vote of confidence.

"Matt is an extremely talented young man and he has been a tremendous addition to our team. He is going to continue to make a valuable contribution to our party and help us defeat the Democrats in November and restore fiscal responsibility to our government," she said in a statement.

According to NorthJersey.com, the web site of The Record newspaper, Sokolich confirmed Monday that someone did float the idea of endorsing Christie to him during the New Jersey governor's campaign.
"It got as close as, 'Is this something you'd consider?'' the mayor reportedly said, and then reportedly refused to answer more questions.

Sokolich did not identify Mowers and would not disclose who made the overture. He told NorthJersey.com that he was never "directly" asked to endorse Christie.

Mowers did not return the Granite Status' messages seeking comment.

Monday, a top Democratic state lawmaker in New Jersey said he would begin to issue subpoenas as part of a committee investigation into the bridge lane closures.

It's unclear if Mowers will be called and whether he has retained an attorney.

New Hampshire GOP chair Horn would not address whether Mowers had approached Sokolich regarding a Christie endorsement. Nor would she say what she knows about his role in the matter.

She did say, "I would expect that in the role that he had, he would be seeking support for his candidate from all of the leaders in the region he covered."

A New Hampshire source close to Mowers reiterated Horn's comment, saying that said in his role as regional director, Mowers did ask officials in region he covered, of both political parties, to support Christie.

"He had conversations with hundreds of officials seeking support, because that was the job of a campaign operative," the source said. "He was doing his job."

The source also declined to comment on whether Sokolich was among those hundreds of officials approached by Mowers.

Horn said that even if it is true that Mowers did discuss a possible endorsement of Christie with Sokolich, it would have no effect on his job as the top party staffer.

The state Democratic Party, meanwhile, Monday accused the state Republican Party of "dodging questions" about Mowers.

"The NHGOP and Matt Mowers can't hide from the people of New Hampshire forever," the party said. "Eventually, they will have to come clean about what role Mowers played in the scheme that put people's safety at risk to exact political revenge.

"Matt Mowers spent years working under now-disgraced aides of Chris Christie, and we are all left to wonder what dirty tricks they taught him and what plans he has to use them in New Hampshire," said NHDP
spokesman Harrell Kirstein. "Granite Staters deserve to know about Mowers's role in Christie's growing bridge scandal.

"Did he bully the mayor of Fort Lee when he declined to endorse Christie?" Kirstein asked. "Was he a part of the scheme to shut down the George Washington Bridge? Simply put, he and the NHGOP leadership should come clean and answer some basic questions for the people of New Hampshire."

NHGOP chair Horn responded, "Democrats are desperate to distract from the fact that Jeanne Shaheen lied to New Hampshire about the disastrous consequences of ObamaCare. They will do and say anything to avoid a discussion about how Shaheen's deciding vote for ObamaCare forced thousands of New Hampshire families to lose their health insurance and give up their doctors."
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Israel and human rights

Charles Krauthammer's Jan. 10 op-ed column, "How to fight academic bigotry," was an excellent example of the yelling and name-calling that pass for political debate in the United States.

Let me be clear: I am an academic and I oppose boycotts of Israel. I do not believe civil debate or human rights are advanced by engaging one another less. But the loud charges of Mr. Krauthammer (and many others) that boycott supporters are bigots and anti-Semites are equally stifling of civil discourse about human rights, Israeli policy and the U.S. role in both topics.

Read full article >>
Post Partisan: The Insiders: The problem with ‘no-drama Obama’

Members of the president’s own team have made it clear that the president does not like to be in a challenging environment and that he is generally bored. David Axelrod labeled the president “no-drama Obama” during the 2008 campaign, and Valerie Jarrett infamously said that Barack Obama has been “bored to death his whole life.” And now, in an interview with CBS News, former defense secretary Robert Gates -- arguably President Obama’s most experienced Cabinet officer -- tells us that he saw in the president an “absence of passion absence of a conviction of the importance of success.”

Read full article >>

Milbank: Robert Gates waited too long to speak out

The criticism has been coming from all ideological quarters: Robert Gates should have waited longer before airing his differences with President Obama, Vice President Biden, the White House staff and Congress.

Read full article >>

Sargent: Mitch McConnell’s grand, ingenious strategy

Here’s Mitch McConnell, sobbing hot tears in Politico magazine about the long lost days when legislation used to pass the Senate with bipartisan support:

> When you look at the vote tallies for some of the more far-reaching legislation over the past century, for example, the Senate was broadly in agreement.

> Medicare and Medicaid were both approved with the support of about half the members of the minority. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed with the votes of 30 out of 32 members of the Republican minority. Only six senators voted against the Social Security Act. Only eight voted against the Americans With Disabilities Act.

> None of this happened by throwing these bills together in a hank.
room, then sending them to the floor with a stopwatch running. It happened through a laborious process of persuasion and coalition-building. It took time and patience and hard work. Importantly, it also guaranteed that every one of these laws had stability and wouldn’t be endlessly relitigated.

Now compare that to the attitude behind Obamacare. When Democrats couldn’t convince Republicans that this bill was worth supporting as written, they plowed ahead on their own and passed it on a party-line vote.

That’s why the chaos this law has visited on our country is not just tragic, it was entirely predictable. Chaos will always be the result if you approach legislation without regard for the views of the other side.

Rubin: Gates should have waited? Nonsense.

The media, you might remember, praised former White House spokesman Scott McClellan, who left his job in the administration of George W. Bush and then wrote a book. Truth teller! Important for the public to know! The book, as it turned out, was un-enlightening, in large part because McClellan wasn’t a policy person and really didn’t know much about the flashy snippets he used to sell books. But along comes a highly respected senior policy adviser who has served two presidents during critical war years and the media elites chuck — he is disloyal, premature and unfair in writing an important book directly relevant to decisions of war and peace. Go figure.

Rubin: A poverty of ideas

Liberal pundits have deplored for many years the stale or entirely nonexistent GOP policy agenda -- with some justification. Since 2008 the predominant message coming from Republicans at the federal level was anti-government and hostility toward anything that smacked of “compassionate conservatism.” (Perish the thought that Republicans should want to improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable.) But a lot has changed in the last year or so. The GOP’s critics might want to take another look at each party.
Sargent: An odd silence among Senate Dems on Iran

The White House has invited the entire Senate Democratic caucus to meet privately with the president on Wednesday evening, a Dem aide confirms, adding that Dems expect one of the topics to be Iran.

Which raises a question: Where are all the Senate Democrats on the bill to impose sanctions on Iran that is being pushed by Senators Robert Menendez and Chuck Schumer? How many of them are really prepared to support this bill, and how many oppose it? By my count, more than half the Democratic caucus have been mum on where they stand.

Read full article >>

Rubin: Questions about the Iran implementation deal

The administration announced completion of the implementation agreement for an interim nuclear deal (got that?) with Iran. This, however, amounts to much less than meets the eye, despite Secretary of State John Kerry's vapid rhetoric. (“We've taken a critical, significant step towards reaching verifiable resolution that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.”) Kerry's announcement raises a host of questions.

Read full article >>

Wemple: How does Roger Ailes divide the country?

In an extensive interview that aired yesterday on CNN's “Reliable Sources,” journalist Gabriel Sherman, author of the soon-to-be-released biography “The Loudest Voice in the Room: How the Brilliant, Bombastic Roger Ailes Built Fox News--and Divided a Country” discussed several fascinating dimensions of his subject, Fox News chief Roger Ailes. For instance:

Read full article >>
Rubin: Christie gets help

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie is not out of the woods yet, but the worst of the bridge scandal may be behind him. Since his dramatic press conference last week he has been rather fortunate.

Moderates and party insiders, as well as a number of prominent conservative pundits, have praised his performance and/or argued that this won’t knock him out of the 2016 race. On the Sunday talk shows, name Republicans including Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Rudy Giuliani and Republican National Committee chief Reince Priebus stuck by him. The sole exception was the sanctimonious Rick Santorum, who recited the talking point that voters judge a candidate by the people he hires and with whom he associates. (The Clintons, however, don’t seem to have been harmed by the Whitewater, campaign finance and Clinton Foundation scandals in which Clinton friends, operatives, associates and employees fell under scrutiny and, in some cases, were indicted or convicted.)

Read full article >>
Henry A. Kissinger

Ariel Sharon's journey
The former war commander became a visionary for peace in later years.

Michael Gerson

A look inside Team Christie
The bridge scandal amounts to a test of more than crisis management.

Richard Cohen

Israel's growing isolation
Academic boycotts indicate a growing antipathy toward the Jewish state.

Charles Lane

Going nowhere fast
A vision of bullet trains in California runs into the reality of American political and legal gridlock.

Eugene Robinson

Where is the Democrats'
outrage?
As the extension of unemployment benefits languishes in Congress, livelihoods hang in the balance.

Dana Milbank

Gates waited too long
The former secretary of defense should have aired his criticisms of the White House sooner.

Marc A. Thiessen

Enter Ed Gillespie?
Why Mark Warner should worry about his Senate seat.

Tom Toles

Tom Toles Cartoon
Click on the image for the full-size cartoon

Ann Telnaes
Ann Telnaes Animation

Click on the image to watch the animation

Editorials

- A vote for repression
- Dumping the nukes
- Mr. Gray's word games

Opinions blogs

- Happy Hour Roundup
- Enter the Concern Troll
- Keep up the pressure, climate activists
- Marco Rubio, marriage and LGBT families
From: Matt Mowers [matthew.mowers@...]
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 7:47 AM
To: Jennifer Horn; Ryan Williams
Subject: Kathy Sullivan: Chris Christie's bridge scandal will not go away | New Hampshire Columns

http://www.unionleader.com/article/20140114/OPINION02/140119721

Sent from my iPad
Sokololich identifies Mowers as Christie staffer who made phone call

By PolitickerNJ Staff | January 14th, 2014 - 8:45am

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The mayor identified Matt Mowers, a Christie staffer now working as executive director of the New Hampshire Republican Party, as having called the mayor and said the Governor would appreciate an endorsement, according to published reports.

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Read more at http://www.politickernj.com/back_room/sokololich-identifies-mowers-christie-staffer-who-made-phone-call#xz22qNmmuxal
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Where are they getting this from?

On Tue, Jan 14, 2014 at 9:21 AM, Matt Mowers <matthew.mowers@williams.gov> wrote:

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EARLIER ON THE FIX:

How ‘none of these candidates’ won in Nevada

What Chris Christie has already lost

Why the GOP cavalry is not coming to Chris Christie’s rescue

Meet John McCain’s favorite phrase

What today could have meant for Chris Christie (and what it actually means)

It's a big day for New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (R). But probably not in the way he envisioned.

Christie will deliver his annual State of State address this afternoon. It could have been a plum opportunity to solidify his standing atop the probable 2016 GOP field with a policy speech designed to hit all the right notes and catch the attention of a national audience increasingly attuned to the governor.

Instead, Christie's policy rhetoric is sure to be overshadowed by "Bridge-gate," the traffic scandal that has upstaged everything else in his world for the last six days.

Christie, in typical fashion, is going to aim to make the speech a talker. He'll propose a longer school day and year.

"This is a key step to improve student outcomes, and boost our competitiveness. We should do it now," Christie plans to say, according to excerpts of his speech.

Under different circumstances, that would probably be one of the buzziest parts of the address. Instead, what he says (or doesn't say) about a decision by former aides and appointees to target the city of Fort Lee for major traffic issues will be the focal point of Christie's remarks. He's expected to address the scandal in the address, but not at great
length.

It's why this such a rough period for Christie. A large part of dealing with a negative story is absorbing the impact of what actually happened. But the process consequences shouldn't be overlooked. Major scandals like this one tend to follow pols around, trumping just about everything else they say or do. That's certainly been the case with Christie so far, even as he says he had nothing to do with Bridge-gate and there's no evidence that he did.

Effective governance and the utility of collaboration will be a major theme of Christie's speech. He plans to talk about the power of cooperation.

Coming off a landslide victory in which he won about a third of Democratic voters and more recently, a deal on a Dream Act to provide in-state tuition rates for New Jersey students brought into the country illegally as children, Christie knows a thing or two about working with Democrats.

But as he gets set to give his speech, Democrats have quickly grown skeptical of him. A Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press poll released Monday showed Christie's approval rating falling nine points among Democrats since December.

Instead of bolstering a remarkably strong case among Democrats, Christie will be trying to regain their loyalty.

Things can change in a hurry in politics. Bridge-gate is a stark reminder of that reality. No one in the GOP was hotter than Christie in late 2013.

A high-profile policy speech in early 2014 would have been just the thing for Christie to follow up with to intensify his momentum. But circumstances being what they are, that's no longer in the cards. The best he can hope for is to shift the conversation away from the negativity of Bridge-gate and toward his agenda.

Even that may prove to be a tough climb.

**Fixbits:**

Fewer young adults **are signing up** for health-care via the marketplaces than the Obama administration has said are needed to make Obamacare work.

It's Election Day in Florida's 13th district! Polls close at 7 p.m. We'll have coverage throughout the day.

None of the Republicans running in the Florida primary **would commit** to backing John Boehner (R-Ohio) for speaker.

And soon-to-be Democratic nominee Alex Sink **rejected** carpetbagging charges, saying, "It's not like I moved from Miami."

Christie's dealings with other mayors are **being scrutinized**.

And federal auditors **are looking** at his use of Hurricane Sandy recovery money.

Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) **plans** to retire.
Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) hired the aide who was fired by the Republican Study Committee.

Sen. Mark Pryor (D-Ark.) raised $1.1 million during the fourth quarter of 2013.

Rep. Sean Maloney (D-N.Y.) plans to wed his longtime partner.

Businessman Mike Parrish (D) will run for the seat of retiring Rep. Jim Gerlach (R-Pa.).

**Must-reads:**

"Reid, Boehner face showdows on unemployment benefits, farm bill" -- Paul Kane, Washington Post

"Terry McAuliffe seeks to set a bipartisan tone on first workday as Virginia governor" -- Laura Vozzella, Washington Post
NH Voters Getting Brutal Introduction to NJ Gov. Chris Christie

by Harrell Kirstein on January 14, 2014 in Uncategorized

NH Voters Learning About Christie Team’s Revenge Style Politics In Local Press
Concord -- The fallout from Governor Chris Christie’s bridge scandal is spreading far beyond New Jersey’s borders. In New Hampshire, voters are being introduced to Christie through his former aide Matt Mowers’s — now the NHGOP’s top staffer — involvement in seeking political retribution against the city of Fort Lee by shutting down lanes on the busiest bridge in the world.

Close to a week after news broke about top Christie aide’s scheme to block access to the George Washington Bridge and put people’s safety at risk for political revenge, Granite Staters are still seeking answers. When did Mowers hear about the plan to close lanes on the George Washington Bridge to punish Fort Lee, and was he involved in concocting it? What contact, if any, did Mowers have with employees of the Port Authority, and did others within the Christie campaign have contact with Port Authority employees? And when was the last time Mowers talked to Bridget Kelly and Bill Sepien, his two former bosses who have been forced to resign, and did they discuss the bridge scandal?

Christie and Mowers can run, but they can’t hide. These three simple questions for Governor Christie and Mr. Mowers aren’t going away. Below is some of the local coverage Granite Staters are waking up to in their hometown newspapers:

**Union Leader: NHGOP chair stands by top party staffer following mention in ‘Bridgegate’ report**

John DiStaso
“‘The New Hampshire Republican Party chairwoman stood by her recently-hired 24-year-old party executive director Monday after he was named as a player in the prologue to the “Bridgegate” scandal plaguing his old boss, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie….New Hampshire GOP chair Horn would not address whether Mowers had approached Sokolich regarding a Christie endorsement. Nor would she say what she knows about his role in the matter.’”

**Nashua Telegraph: NH staff member has connection to Christie scandal**

Kevin Landrigan
“Could the executive director of the New Hampshire Republican State Committee be stuck in the middle of New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie’s bridge scandal? …Will Christie interview him? During a two-hour press conference, Christie said he would speak with all senior and campaign staff members with connection to Kelly about their knowledge of the matter.”

**NH Patch: NHGOP Official Has Ties to #Bridgegate Controversy**
Marc Fortier

The Wall Street Journal is reporting that New Hampshire Republican State Committee Executive Director Matt Mowers was the one who asked Fort Lee, New Jersey Mayor Mark Sokolich about endorsing New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. The issue of whether Sokolich was ever asked to endorse Christie has become a key piece of the so-called “Bridgegate” controversy following the revelation that members of Christie’s staff apparently forced traffic jams in retaliation for the Fort Lee mayor’s refusal to endorse the governor.

Editorial: How Much Blame Does Christie Get?

Nashua Telegraph

“As abuses of power go, this one deserves to be a unanimous, first-ballot Political Hall of Shame inductee. If it were the plot of disaster movie, you would dismiss it as too outrageous. Adding to the outrage was the unbridled self-satisfaction and delight exhibited by Christie staffers who were clearly infatuated with their handiwork. Among themselves, they sent text messages mocking Sokolich’s pleas for help in getting students trapped on buses to their schools.”

Mark Halperin: B/c New Hampshire is NH, hounding by @NHDems could actually be 1 of the pressure points that stings @GovChristie
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**Mark Halperin:** B/c New Hampshire is NH, hounding by @NH Dems could actually be 1 of the pressure points that stings @GovChristie LINK
They have nothing more to use, unless you get subpoenaed.

On Tue, Jan 14, 2014 at 2:36 PM, Matt Mowers <matthew.mowers@...> wrote:

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Mark Halperin: B/c New Hampshire is NH, hounding by @NHDems could actually be 1 of the pressure points that stings @GovChristie LINK
Petri: After Christie’s Bridgegate, some tips for avoiding scandal

These days, with the Bridge-Gate exploding everywhere, followed by the What Did You Do With That Sandy Money (also a question people ask when you get back from the beach, according to my Vaudeville Circuit Package o’Jokes), it can be easy to look at all the scandals and think: “Could I be next? Am I the next figure with national ambitions to be felled by the lead weight of scandal?”

Read full article >>
Sargent: Obama’s NSA reforms could create more Snowdens

This morning, a report from The Hill outlined President Obama’s plan to reform the NSA, which will get rolled out in the days ahead. The primary goal, according to the report, is to prevent “future Snowdens.” By clamping down on NSA employees and contractors, the administration hopes to stop unauthorized leaks.

Read full article >>

Post Partisan: The war on economic insecurity

We need to stop talking so much about income inequality and start talking more about economic insecurity. And the reason why was summed up in the arresting photo of Johnetta Thurston on the front page of the Jan. 11 edition of The Post. A single tear runs down the dignified face of an American who went from white-collar security with full-time employment to unending unemployment starting in 2011. Thurston has done a lot to make herself attractive to prospective employers, from getting management certificates to going to graduate school. To no avail. The economic insecurity of millions of Americans plainly and painfully apparent in Thurston’s face is what needs our attention.

Read full article >>

Sargent: Senate Dems put themselves in tough spot over Iran

Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon has been getting a question from constituents: does he support holding a vote on the bill to impose new sanctions on Iran that’s being championed by some Senate Dems and Republicans? The question in part is fueled by lobbying from outside groups on both sides of the issue.

Read full article >>

Rubin: Six reasons for Hillary Clinton to worry
Hillary Clinton is certainly the favorite for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, but she has -- or should have -- plenty to worry about. Here’s a list (she likes lists apparently):

1. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, perhaps Clinton’s most formidable general election opponent, is holding steady in polls nationally and gaining support from Republicans. While Democratic support is down somewhat, unsurprisingly, GOP support is up, the natural result of a rally around a Republican besieged by a hyperventilating media. If the GOP (or Christie himself) doesn’t knock Christie out, is Clinton really the best person to tut-tut his payback politics?

Read full article >>

Rubin: No, we shouldn’t trust Obama on Iran

President Obama’s interim deal with Iran is so bad that he has to keep it secret, No, really. The Los Angeles Times reports: “Key elements of a new nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers are contained in an informal, 30-page text not yet publicly acknowledged by Western officials, Iran’s chief negotiator said Monday.” The implementation deal itself has not been released or shared with members of Congress. (“White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said Monday that the text of the implementing agreement would be released to lawmakers. He said the six parties were weighing how much of the text they could release publicly.”) The LA Times report explains, “The nonpaper deals with such important details as the operation of a joint commission to oversee how the deal is implemented and Iran’s right to continue nuclear research and development during the next several months….” The latter issue is a major sticking point with the Israelis and U.S. members of Congress. The United States says Iranians can do only “paper and pen” research (whatever that is); the Iranians say they can do whatever they please. The text of the agreement remains hidden from view.

Read full article >>

Rubin: Obamacare flops with the young

There is no mystery as to why the Obama administration has been dragging its feet on Obamacare enrollment numbers. The Post reports, “Young adults account for slightly less than one-fourth of the Americans who signed up for health plans during the initial three months of federal and state insurance marketplaces — fewer so far than the government has said will be needed to make the economics of the new exchanges work.” This isn’t going to be enough:

Read full article >>
Sargent: Morning Plum: Obamacare derangement fades among Republicans (a bit)

The news that the demographic mix of Obamacare enrollees is not yet where the law’s proponents had hoped appears to have only reinforced the certainty in some quarters that the law’s epic collapse is underway. This, even though there are still two and a half months to go in the open enrollment period, and there are good reasons not to reach any broad conclusions just yet about the law’s long-term prospects.

Read full article >>

Achenbach: Almost toxic, West Virginia

Parachuted into Charleston, W.Va. this weekend to do a story on the chemical spill. Literally I parachuted, it’s not a metaphor -- tighter budgets in the newspaper industry mean we can only buy those discount airline tickets in which they drop you from a height as they’re flying somewhere else. Here’s my story. I’ll be talking about that this morning on the Diane Rehm show -- link here, look later for the audio -- along with some other guests, including one from industry, one from government and one from the environmental sector.

Read full article >>

Rubin: Don’t forget about Jeb

In terms of a potential presidential run, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush is both hurt and helped by being out of office. Unlike current office holders, Jeb can’t hold the public attention and be credited with carrying the GOP banner in current fights with Democrats. He isn’t in the flow of the rat-tat-tat of political combat. However, that may also be to his benefit. He is not burdened by mistakes, missteps and potential scandals that befall contenders currently in office. He does not have to weigh in on every issue, nor does he have to cast any votes. And unlike the present office holders, Jeb can maintain some presidential reserve, riding above the fray.

Read full article >>
News Alert

'Mistakes were clearly made,' Christie admits in speech

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie on Tuesday vowed in a high-profile speech to take steps to ensure the "breach of trust" that led a turbulent political scandal that has rocked his office will not happen again. "The last week has certainly tested this administration," Christie said. "Mistakes were clearly made. And as a result, we let down the people we are entrusted to serve. I know our citizens deserve better. Much better."

Christie made his remarks at the top of his annual State of the State address as questions swirled about a traffic incident involving top aides and appointees. What could have been a plum opportunity to solidify his standing atop the probable 2016 GOP field was instead the latest chapter in an unfolding political drama.

Read more at:
http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/scandal-upstages-christies-state-of-the-state-speech/2014/01/14/6754ba1ea-7d31-11e3-93c1-0e888170b723_story.html
Rachel Maddow

In praise of the watchdogs
The New Jersey bridge scandal proves that our democracy depends on dogged local journalism.

Jonetta Rose Barras

Apologies and other empty words
Mayor Gray has to do a lot more to regain D.C. voters' trust.

David Ignatius

The U.S. energy boom
Market forces are helping drive up production of oil, gas and alternative energy, even as demand is falling.

George F. Will

Doubts about Common Core
Opponents have every right to be skeptical about a measure whose nature and purpose remain murky.

E.J. Dionne Jr.

George Miller's unwavering
example
Congress needs more liberals who can be tough but negotiate at the same time.

Dana Milbank

Obama is off-message on unemployment
The president missed an opportunity to help keep jobless benefits in the spotlight.

Frederick Mark Gedicks

Protect the 'contraception mandate'
Exemptions would threaten religious liberty.

Matt Miller

Inequality riddles
A few facts about U.S. wealth distribution.

Tom Toles

Tom Toles Cartoon

Click on the image for the full-size cartoon
Ann Telnaes Animation

Click on the image to watch the animation

Editorials

- Milking the federal government
- Turning point in Thailand
- The people's choice

Opinions blogs

- Happy Hour Roundup
- Nope, Richard Black, just because 'she's in a nightie' does not mean you have consent
- Push for Iran sanctions bill losing momentum?
- LGBT split-screen: Oklahoma and Nigeria
EARLIER ON THE FIX:

The best number for Chris Christie in the NBC/Marist poll

Alex Sink and the art of the family commercial

For Clinton, Benghazi report has some good, mostly bad — but no ugly

The 6 must-see pictures from the Miami Heat’s visit to the White House

House members are running for the exits. Why it’s nothing new.

Are you smarter than the Fix?

Wendy Davis raised $12 million. That means less than you think.

Where abortion opponents—and backers—rule, in five maps

Bruce Springsteen and Jimmy Fallon skewer Chris Christie in song (VIDEO)

How Chris Christie can still be the front-runner for the 2016 Republican nomination

The calendar won’t turn to 2016 for another 715 days. But, people like us are already handicapping what the race might look like — and even declaring New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie as the front-runner for the Republican nomination despite his recent traffic troubles.

Charlie Cook, a preeminent political handicapper and the man who gave me my first job in Washington, took issue with the idea that Christie — either pre or post Bridge-gate — should be described as the front-runner in the race. Here’s a piece of Charlie’s take (the whole thing is worth reading):
Christie, the front-runner? Again — really? Christie indeed sat at the top of some of the polls that lay out a long laundry list of every imaginable contender (as well as some who are harder to imagine), but does that make him the front-runner? I think not.

Think for a moment who makes up the Republican Party, and most specifically the part of the GOP base that dominates the presidential nomination process. Think about the people they seriously considered for their party's presidential nomination last time around. Think Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain, Rick Santorum, Rick Perry, and Newt Gingrich. Now, quickly, think Christie. Now think Sesame Street: "One of these things is not like the others; one of these things just doesn't belong." It's laughable that the party that has previously seriously considered some fairly inconceivable candidates as worthy of the GOP nomination would suddenly reverse course and head over to a center-right candidate such as Christie.

Charlie has a good point. In fact, the undertold story of bridge-gate is how Christie is being squeezed from the left (Democrats who loathe/fear him) and the right (conservatives who still blame him for President Obama's reelection victory in 2012). While Christie's rise to national prominence was fueled by tea party support, that energy was built on Christie's tone, not his policies. (Christie is rightly placed on the ideological spectrum to the right of Rudy Giuliani but to the left of Ted Cruz.) The Obama incident -- Christie greeted the president warmly during a visit to New Jersey in the wake of Hurricane Sandy and praised his work to help the state's residents -- triggered a lessening of tea party/conservative enthusiasm toward Christie that has lingered even as the governor was ringing up a historic election victory last November.

"Prior to this bridge stuff, Christie had about a 10 percent chance at the nomination," said one GOP consultant aligned with another candidate eyeing the 2016 race. "No more than that. It's just a fact. Primary voters do not like him. And I'm talking about much higher levels of 'do not like' than Mitt [Romney] ever faced."

That said, let me play a bit of the devil's advocate here. Charlie is absolutely right that Bachmann, Cain, Santorum, Perry, Newt and even (gag) Donald Trump had their moments in the sun during the 2012 GOP race -- thanks to a desire from some conservatives to be with someone (anyone) other than Romney. But, none of those people won the nomination or, really, came all that close. (Santorum was the runner-up to Romney, but was there ever a point where you thought the former Pennsylvania senator would wind up as the GOP standard-bearer?) Ditto 2008 when conservative energy was most definitely not behind John McCain and yet he wound up as the party's nominee. In fact, with the exception of Ronald Reagan in 1980 and, to some extent, George W. Bush in 2000, the conservatives' top choice has rarely won the nomination in recent years.

Context, of course, matters. The 2012 Republican field was notoriously weak -- particularly once Texas Gov. Rick Perry, hailed as the conservative savior, proved something well short of that. There were plenty of conservatives in the field -- see the list above -- but none of them were able to cross the threshold of credibility that would allow them to coalesce a large portion of the GOP base behind them.

That field frailty almost certainly won't be the case in 2016. Among the candidates likely to cast themselves as credible conservatives: Scott Walker, Bobby Jindal and Marco Rubio. If Jeb Bush decides to run, he cuts to the front of that credible conservative line. So, in theory,
Christie would be exposed as insufficiently conservative by this group in a way that Romney never was.

But, Christie isn't Romney, either. He doesn't have the flip flops on things like gay marriage and abortion that made conservatives question the former Massachusetts governor's commitment to their cause. Christie is a Catholic, not a Mormon. And he is a markedly better communicator than Romney ever was. And although the 2016 field is without doubt stronger than the 2012 edition, none of the "credible conservatives" are without potential weaknesses in the eyes of conservatives. Take Rubio and Bush, for example, both of whom have voiced support for immigration reform that puts them far to the left of where Romney was in 2012 (self deportation!) and where the GOP base is at the moment.

Our case for Christie as front-runner -- or, maybe, more accurately first among almost-equals -- is built around the idea that there is no perfect/electable conservative in the race and that Christie has a decent chance of beating out Jindal, Rubio and Walker in the battle to be the establishment candidate. (There is a whole other primary -- where Rand Paul is the front-runner -- that will pick the outsider candidate to battle the establishment pick.) Of that quartet of credible establishment conservatives, Christie is the one who, at first glance, could most easily put together the tens (and probably hundreds) of millions of dollars needed to run real operations in a series of states in short order.

Christie has been -- and remains -- the pick of the Wall Street/business crowd (Home Depot founder Ken Langone is hosting an event for him this weekend in Florida), and has spent his entire governorship building relationships with that powerful New York money crowd. (Another fight, with an as-yet-to-be-determined winner, is for the Texas GOP money set.) Money isn't everything in the race. (Right, President Giuliani?) But, the way that Romney and, ultimately, McCain won the 2012 and 2008 nominations, respectively, was to bleed dry their underfunded challengers. Being the fundraising front-runner allows you the chance to slip and recover -- something candidates with less money simply can't do.

Christie also would seem to have the most obvious early win of those four candidates. (As Giuliani's doomed 2008 bid proved, you have to win one of the first three states -- Iowa, New Hampshire or South Carolina -- to realistically have a chance at the nomination.) None of the four is a natural fit for the social conservatives of Iowa, but Christie's fiscal conservatism and brashness would seem to be a perfect fit for the New Hampshire primary. (Christie, tonally, reminds us of McCain, who won the New Hampshire primaries in each of his two presidential bids.)

Using the "money + a likely (possible?) early state win = good" equation, Christie comes out ahead of the other establishment types he is going to be competing with. Is it a wide edge? No way. Could questions about his true conservative credentials or worries about his style (is he brash or a bully?) doom him? Absolutely. But he won't be running against the perfect GOP candidate. He'll be running against a bunch of candidates who have their own sets of issues to overcome. And given that reality, there's no reason to think he isn't in the top tier or even at the top of that top tier at this moment in time.

**Fixbits:**

A $1.1 trillion spending bill easily passed the House.

Reps. Jim Moran (D-Va.) and Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) will retire.
Former defense secretary Robert Gates said Obama's decision to set a "red line" on Syria’s use of chemical weapons was a "serious mistake."

The NRCC has blacklisted Jamestown Associates.

A new poll shows very little rise in support of legalizing marijuana.

Former Republican senator Scott Brown’s Web site is attracting attention. Meanwhile, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) had a productive fundraising period, pulling in $1.1 million during the final three months of 2013. She has $3.4 million in the bank.

Florida state Rep. Kathleen Peters (R) was not ready to endorse David Jolly (R) a day after she lost to him in Florida’s 13th District primary.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said she once came face to face with a drone.

Must-reads:

"Obama fighting perception that administration is out of time to make progress on priorities" -- Zachary A. Goldfarb, Washington Post

"Blue Dog Democrats, whittled down in number, are trying to regroup" -- Paul Kane, Washington Post

Follow The Fix:
From: Ryan Williams [rwilliams.gop]
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2014 4:28 PM
To: Matt Mowers

ABC News Politics @ABCPolitics

JUST IN: Subpoenas for 17 individuals and 3 “organizations” issued by NJ bridge scandal investigative committee -
From: Matt Mowers [matthew.mowers@...]
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2014 5:47 PM
To: Jennifer Horn; Ryan Williams
Subject: Fwd: New MMS Alert - New Hampshire GOP - WMUR-MAN (ABC)

----
Matt Mowers
Executive Director
New Hampshire Republican State Committee

10 Water Street
Concord, NH 03301
Office: 603.225.9341
Mobile: [redacted]
Fax: 603.225.7498

Begin forwarded message:

From: Results@TVEyes-Alerts.com
Subject: New MMS Alert - New Hampshire GOP - WMUR-MAN (ABC)
Date: January 16, 2014 5:34:02 PM EST
To: mowers@nhgop.org

Media Alert From TVEyes Media Monitoring Suite

New Hampshire GOP on WMUR-MAN (ABC) - Manchester, NH
01/16/2014 17:33:36
News 9 at Five (News)
... controversy surrounding christie. we do not know yet whether one of
the targets is the brand-new new hampshire gop executive director. new
jersey lawmakers are investigating whether a massive traffic jam new the --
near the new jersey bridge last september was actually political payback
meant as revenge against the local mayor, who refused to endorse christie's
election campaign. ...

Click here to deactivate e-mail alerting for this term.
This is an Automated Alert Message - Please do not reply
Questions or Comments?

CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT REQUESTED
"Matt is an extremely talented worker and a valued member of our team. He has not been accused of any wrongdoing and there is zero indication he is in anyway responsible for [connected to] the bridge closure.

"Partisan hacks will try to shamelessly exploit this issue to distract from the Jeanne Shaheen's disastrous deciding vote for ObamaCare. But it will do nothing to help the thousands of Granite State families who have lost their health insurance because Shaheen's blind support for the failed Obama health care agenda.

"Matt has my full support and confidence, and I look forward to his continued service to our party."

Gov. Chris Christie's chief of staff is among the list of officials who Assembly lawmakers subpoenaed in the ongoing George Washington Bridge controversy, according to a source.

Kevin O'Dowd, who Christie tapped to serve as Attorney General, is one of the about 17 people and three organizations the Assembly committee subpoenaed, according to a source close to the investigation.

The list also includes David Samson, the chairman of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and Charlie McKenna, who serves as Christie's chief counsel.

PolitickerNJ has confirmed the following individuals are among those the Assembly panel charged with investigating the controversy subpoenaed for either documents or testimony:

Kevin O'Dowd
David Samson
Bridget Anne Kelly
Bill Stepien
Charlie McKenna
Regina Egea
Michael Drewniak
Nicole Davidman Drewniak
Bill Baroni
Patrick Foye
Maria Comella
Collin Reed

Matt Mowers

The investigative committee also issued a subpoena for documents from the Christie for Governor campaign, according to the source.

Read more at http://www.politickernj.com/70928/source-o-dowd-comella-drewniak-among-those-subpoenaed#Uthsy2CuEqU.twitter#ixzz2qblD0SkY
or sign up for a free trial of State Street Wire at http://www.politickernj.com/freetrial
FYI

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: <desk@myfoxboston.com>
Date: Jan 16, 2014 7:49 PM
Subject: Fox 25 News Boston / Matt Mowers?
To: <jennifer@nhgop.org>
Cc: "desk" <desk@myfoxboston.com>, "Sharman Sacchetti" <sharman.sacchetti@foxtv.com>

Hi this email is for Jennifer Horn, NHGOP chair. My name is Bill Sheerin, Assignment Editor at WFXT Fox 25 News in Boston. I am emailing you to see if you could provide a statement please regards executive director Matt Mowers apparently being issued a subpoena in relation to the NJ / Chris Christie / George Washington Bridge investigation. I have attached an article from WMUR TV in NH below.

Thank you in advance for any assistance!

Bill Sheerin
Assignment Editor
WFXT Fox 25 News
Boston MA 02027
desk@myfoxboston.com

Top NH GOP staffer subpoenaed in NJ bridge scandal
NH party chair says no wrongdoing
UPDATED 7:41 PM EST Jan 16, 2014

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Matt Mowers, the NHGOP's executive director, worked on Christie's campaign last fall and was in charge of Bergen County. The Wall Street Journal reports that Mowers was the one who asked Ft. Lee's mayor, a Democrat, to endorse Republican Christie. The working theory is that when the mayor did not, aides for Christie decided to close Ft. Lee's access lanes to the bridge.

When reached for comment on the subpoenas Thursday, Mowers didn't have a comment. NHGOP chair Jennifer Horn, however, did issue a statement.

"Matt is an extremely talented worker and a valued member of our team. He has not been accused of
any wrongdoing and there is zero indication that he is in anyway connected to the decision to close
the bridge lanes," Horn said. "Matt has my full support and confidence, and I look forward to his
continued service to our party."

New Hampshire Democrats said the public deserves answers.

"Matt Mowers spent years working directly under now-disgraced aides of Chris Christie, and we are
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Hampshire," said New Hampshire Democratic Party spokesman Harrell Kirstein. "It has been more
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deserve to know about Mowers's role in Christie's growing bridge scandal. Did he bully the mayor of
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George Washington Bridge? Simply put, he and the NHGOP leadership should come clean and
answer some basic questions for the people of New Hampshire."

(Full disclosure: This reporter formerly worked for the man at the center of the scandal, former Port
Authority executive David Wildstein, when he owned a political news website.)

Read more: http://www.wmur.com/political-scoop/top-nh-gop-staffer-subpoenaed-in-nj-bridge-scandal/-
/16254890/23968216/-/llyd68z/-/index.html#ixzz2qc0ORiIl
From: Ryan Williams [williams.gop]
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2014 8:32 PM
To: Jennifer Horn
Cc: Matt Mowers
Subject: Re: Fox 25 News Boston / Matt Mowers?

Got it

On Thu, Jan 16, 2014 at 8:04 PM, Jennifer Horn <jenniferhornnh@<redacted>> wrote:

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Read more: http://www.wmur.com/political-scoop/top-nh-gop-staffer-subpoenaed-in-nj-bridge-scandal/-/16254890/23988216/-/llyd68z/-/index.html#ixzz2qc0ORiIL
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Sent from my iPhone

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From: nwilliams.gop
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2014 9:09 PM
To: Matt Mowers
Subject: Re: Fox 25 News Boston / Matt Mowers?

I already sent her statement so you can ignore.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 16, 2014, at 8:55 PM, Matt Mowers <matthew.mowers@ [redacted]> wrote:

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We should send out a memo on how to pronounce my last name.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Results@TVEyes-Alerts.com
Subject: New MMS Alert - Matt Mowers - WBZ-BOS (CBS)
Date: January 17, 2014 5:51:15 AM EST
To: mowers@nhgop.org

Media Alert From TVEyes Media Monitoring Suite

Matt Mowers on WBZ-BOS (CBS) - Boston, MA
01/17/2014 05:50:46
WBZ News (News)
... those being subpoenaed in the investigation into a political payback scheme in New Jersey, Matt Mowers is currently the executive director of the New Hampshire GOP, but previously he worked on Chris Christie's re-election campaign, the administration is accused of causing massive gridlock after the mayor of Fort Lee, New Jersey, refused to endorse ...

Click here to deactivate e-mail alerting for this term,

This is an Automated Alert Message - Please do not reply
Questions or Comments?
From: Matt Mowers (matthew.mowers@...)
Sent: Friday, January 17, 2014 6:58 AM
To: Ben DeMarzo
Subject: Fwd: New MMS Alert - Matt Mowers - WVIT-HFD (NBC)

Begin forwarded message:

From: Results@TVEyes-Alerts.com
Subject: New MMS Alert - Matt Mowers - WVIT-HFD (NBC)
Date: January 17, 2014 6:45:07 AM EST
To: mowers@nhgop.org

Media Alert From TVEyes Media Monitoring Suite

Matt Mowers on WVIT-HFD (NBC) - Hartford-New Haven, CT
01/17/2014 06:44:46
NBC CT News Today at 6:30am (News)
... first to the "chris christie bridge scandal." the "new jersey governor's
former re-election campaign director".. is now being subpoenaed.. in the
investigation. according to the a- p. "matt mowers".. people.. and
organizations.. to be subpoenaed yesterday.. as part of the investigation.
mowers' subpoena, seeks any emails.. and "text messages".. he exchanged..
regarding a plot.. to shut down lanes.. to the "george washington bridge"..
that created "traffic gridlock".. near fort lee. more subpoenas.. ...

Click here to deactivate e-mail alerting for this term.

This is an Automated Alert Message - Please do not reply
Questions or Comments?
Begin forwarded message:

From: Results@TVEyes-Alerts.com  
Subject: New MMS Alert - New Hampshire Republican Party - WMUR-MAN (ABC)  
Date: January 17, 2014 5:35:45 AM EST  
To: mowers@nhgop.org

Media Alert From TVEyes Media Monitoring Suite

[ ]
(click thumbnail to play)

New Hampshire Republican Party on WMUR-MAN (ABC) - Manchester, NH  
01/17/2014 05:34:56  
News 9 Daybreak (News)

... reporting live in northfield, ray brewer, "news 9 daybreak. >> the executive director of the new hampshire republican party has been subpoenaed in connection with the chris christie bridge scandal. not mowers - - matt mowers is a former christie aide, he was one of the first two reached out to the mayor of fort lee, new jersey for a christie endorsement. ...

Click here to deactivate e-mail alerting for this term.

This is an Automated Alert Message - Please do not reply
Questions or Comments?
this one grates me a bit

Begin forwarded message:

From: Results@TVEyes-Alerts.com
Subject: New MMS Alert - Matt Mowers - WCVB-BOS (ABC)
Date: January 17, 2014 6:09:43 AM EST
To: mowers@nhgop.org

Media Alert From TVEyes Media Monitoring Suite

Matt Mowers on WCVB-BOS (ABC) - Boston, MA
01/17/2014 06:08:10
Newscenter 5 Eyopener (News)

... the executive director of New Hampshire's Republican Party has been subpoenaed. Matt Mowers worked on Governor Chris Christie's re-election campaign last year. Mowers reportedly approached Fort Lee's mayor about New Hampshire's political waters. ...
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To: mowers@nhgop.org

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WBZ News (News)
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Click here to deactivate e-mail alerting for this term.

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Questions or Comments?
Matt Mowers,
Here's what's trending on Twitter this week.

Kasie Hunt @kasic
Who in Christieland approached Ft Lee mayor for endorsement?
Matt Mowers, per @WSJ - same one now working for NH GOP
online.wsj.com/news/articles/…

Traffic scandal puts spotlight on tactics of Gov. Chris Christie's aides with local officials in N.J.
New Jersey Republican Gov. Chris Christie's ability to secure
Democratic endorsements supported his overwhelming re-election
last year and helped establish him as a 2016 presidential contender,
but now...

Matt Katz @mattkatz00
Editorial page editor of state's largest paper on Team Christie.
MT @tomamoran: These guys don't believe in democracy
nymag.com/daily/intellig...

The Time Chris Christie Shut Down a Public Television Station That Did a Tough Story on Him
"He put 150 long-time state employees out of work, in a way that
was nasty and just like, 'Forget it, good-bye.'"

Peter Hamby @PeterHambyCNN
I spent some quality time in Iowa talking to Democrats about
Hillary. High poll #s belie a more complicated reality >
cnn.com/2014/01/14/pol…
Hillary Clinton's Iowa problem
Beneath the surface in Iowa, familiar pitfalls might await Hillary Clinton should she decide to run in 2016

Brit Hume @brithume
Hollywood mogul and big Obama backer says he'll make film that will make NRA "wish they weren't alive when I'm done." washingtontimes.com/news/2014/jan/...

MILLER: Harvey Weinstein and Meryl Streep making movie attacking NRA
Movie producer Harvey Weinstein announced for the first time on Howard Stern's radio show that he is making a full feature drums to try to destroy the National Rifle Association.

Hunter Walker @hunterw
In college, Chris Christie was overjoyed when a bridge was kept open preventing traffic problems at his graduation pic.twitter.com/ou5ERyKWq9

Rich Eisen @rieisen
Incredible. RT @Earth_Pics: Shadows of Chicago over frozen Lake Michigan, USA pic.twitter.com/UZSIDU8qbN

CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT REQUESTED
Peter Hamby @PeterHambyCNN
Sent this Snapchat to SenatorRandPaul. He called me 30 minutes later. pic.twitter.com/EvpPfehODe

16 Jan

Branstad-Reynolds @iowasTeam
Iowa...We're in! #BuildingIowasFuture #IAgov @TerryBranstad @KimReynoldsIA pic.twitter.com/kjGT7WPqaj

16 Jan

Don't miss out. Stay up to date on what's happening.

Forgot your Twitter password? Get instructions on how to reset it.
You can also unsubscribe from these emails or change your notification settings. Need help?
If you received this message in error and did not sign up for Twitter, click not my account.
Twitter, Inc. 1355 Market St., Suite 900 San Francisco, CA 94103
Just sent to duhaime. So much for my buddy Dennehy who bought me lunch two weeks ago.

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Please make sure your folks see this so that there is no possible way Dennehy gets hired for Christie in 16.

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From: Ryan Williams <rwilliams.gop@blokemail.com>
Date: Fri, Jan 17, 2014 at 6:14 PM
Subject: 
To: Jennifer Horn <jenniferhorn@blokemail.com>, Matt Mowers <matt.mowers@blokemail.com>

can't do your job matt. you're not being transparent

he's always been a snake

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From: Todd Cheewing [todd.cheewing@nhgop.org]; Jennifer Horn; jp@nhgop.org; Matt Mowers; Pete Silva; robert@nhgop.org; Ryan Williams
To: NHGOP CLIPS Sat., January 18, 2014

NHGOP CLIPS January 18, 2014

Matt Mowers
The Nashua Telegraph via The Associated Press
Angela Delli Santi & Geoff Mulvihill

NII GOP strategist among 20 subpoenas issued in NJ traffic scandal

TRENTON, N.J. – A special legislative panel investigating an apparent political payback scheme involving Gov. Chris Christie’s aides issued 20 new subpoenas Thursday, including New Hampshire GOP strategist Matt Mowers.

The plot to jam traffic on the George Washington Bridge was apparently hatched by Christie’s aides as a political vendetta, possibly because Fort Lee’s Democratic mayor wouldn’t endorse the Republican governor’s re-election.

Mowers was the regional political director for Christie’s re-election campaign.

Assemblyman John Wisniewski, who is leading the primary legislative probe, said the new subpoenas seek documents from 17 people and three organizations.

The recipients of the subpoenas won’t be named until the documents are served.
But the New Hampshire GOP, with which Mowers recently started work as executive director, released a statement confirming Mowers had been subpoenaed and offering support for him.

Christie, meanwhile, announced the hiring of a legal team to help his administration deal with multiple investigations into a scandal that won’t be put to rest quickly.

At a news conference last week, Christie said he would continue interviewing his senior staff to determine whether there is any other information he needs to know and if he needs to take any further action.

Christie didn’t address the scandal directly Thursday when he made his first public speech outside the Statehouse in the eight days since the scandal broke wide open.

The governor’s legal team, to be led by former federal prosecutor Randy Mastro, will “review best practices for office operations and information flow, and assist with document retention and production,” the administration said in a brief written statement.

A spokesman wouldn’t say how much the lawyers would cost taxpayers.

The inquiries seek to learn what happened in September when lanes to the George Washington Bridge from the town of Fort Lee were shut down for four days, causing massive gridlock.

The likely targets are people who worked for Christie or who are or were part of his inner circle, such as Bridget Anne Kelly, the fired aide who suggested in an email, “Time for some traffic problems in Fort Lee.”

Another likely target is Bill Stepien, Christie’s two-time campaign manager, who appeared to gloat over the traffic chaos.

On Thursday, Christie didn’t mention the bridge scandal directly, but he seemed to refer to it when he joked about how many more video cameras – more than 20 – were trained on him than normal.
“I am focused as completely this morning as I was when I woke up on the morning of Oct. 30, 2012, and nothing will distract me from getting the job done,” he said. “Nothing.”

Christie was also resuming his public duties as chairman of the Republican Governors Association with a scheduled trip to Florida on Friday. He’s headlining private fundraisers for Gov. Rick Scott, who is considered one of the most vulnerable Republican governors facing re-election this fall.

As Christie works to assure top Republican donors that he has taken the appropriate steps to address the New Jersey controversy, he’ll face dissent.

Democratic National Committee Chairwoman Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, a Florida congresswoman, plans to hold at least two Christie-focused news conferences in cities where Christie is set to appear.

###

**National Security/Surveillance**

**The New Hampshire Union Leader via The Washington Post**

Ellen Nakashima, Greg Miller, William Branigin

Obama dialing back on the NSA

President Obama ordered an end to the government’s bulk collection of Americans’ phone records on Friday as part of a broad restructuring of surveillance programs that swept up data on millions of U.S. citizens in secret until they were exposed last year by former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden.

President Obama ordered an end to the government’s bulk collection of Americans’ phone records on Friday as part of a broad restructuring of surveillance programs that swept up data on millions of U.S. citizens in secret until they were exposed last year by former intelligence contractor Edward Snowden.
Citing the “danger of government overreach,” Obama called for the National Security Agency to give up control of a massive database of phone records, the expansion of court oversight of surveillance programs, and a halt to eavesdropping on foreign leaders considered close U.S. allies.

The changes mark the first significant constraints imposed on surveillance programs that expanded dramatically in the decade after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. But many of the changes could take months if not longer to implement, and Obama preserved the vast majority of intelligence programs and capabilities that came to light over the past six months in a deluge of reports based on leaked documents.

Even the most controversial capability — the government’s access to bulk telephone records — may well be preserved, although with tighter controls. Obama recognized that others have raised alternatives, such as the records being held instead by phone companies or a new entity that would serve as an independent custodian — and that such plans face significant logistical and political hurdles.

In a speech at the Justice Department, Obama called for a “new approach” and declared that he would “end the ...bulk metadata program as it currently exists and establish a mechanism that preserves the capabilities we need without the government holding this bulk metadata.”

Even so, he warned “this will not be simple,” and gave subordinates including Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. until March 28 to develop a plan to “transition” the bulk data out of the possession of that government. Existing authorities for the metadata program are set to expire on that date, requiring a reauthorization by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court.

“Today’s announced reforms to our government’s surveillance programs are both welcome and long overdue,” U.S. Rep. Ann McLane Kuster, D-N.H., said in a statement. “The NSA is clearly in need of significant reform, and the initiatives unveiled today by the President represent a significant step forward in better safeguarding our constitutionally-protected right to privacy while continuing to keep our country safe.”

“Senator Shaheen believes we need to reform the way the government collects and classifies data in the interest of transparency, but not in a way that puts our national security at risk,” said her spokesman, Nick Brown. He said Shaheen has introduced bipartisan legislation that “would implement necessary reforms, save taxpayers money, boost transparency, and make our classification policies more efficient.”

“The recent string of stories about the National Security Agency collecting massive amounts of information on law-abiding Americans has been shocking, and this bulk collection of data needs reform,” U.S. Rep. Carol Shea-Porter, D-N.H., said in a statement. “I look forward to hearing more from President Obama about exactly how he will implement the changes he outlined today.”
“We must ensure that our intelligence community has the tools it needs to prevent terrorist attacks and save American lives, while also protecting Americans’ constitutional rights,” U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., said in a statement. “With that in mind, I will carefully review the president’s proposed changes to our nation’s intelligence programs.

Both in his speech and in the specifics of his plan, Obama straddled competing security and civil liberties imperatives. His proposals are aimed at containing a public backlash triggered by Snowden, but also preserving capabilities that U.S. intelligence officials consider critical to preventing another terrorist attack.

“In our rush to respond to very real and novel threats, the risks of government overreach — the possibility that we lose some of our core liberties in pursuit of security — became more pronounced,” Obama said. “This is particularly true when surveillance technology and our reliance on digital information is evolving much faster than our laws.”

Obama said the transition from the existing program would proceed in two steps. “Effective immediately, we will only pursue phone calls that are two steps removed from a number associated with a terrorist organization instead of three,” he said. “And I have directed the attorney general to work with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court so that during this transition period, the database can be queried only after a judicial finding, or in a true emergency.”

Obama also called on Congress to establish a panel of public advocates who can represent privacy interests before the FISC, which hears government applications for surveillance in secret.

Obama has instructed Holder to reform the use of national security letters — a form of administrative subpoena used to obtain business and other records — so that the traditional gag order that accompanies them does not remain in place indefinitely. But he did not, as has been recommended by a White House review panel, require judicial approval for issuance of the letters.

The President also addressed another major NSA surveillance program, which involves collection of e-mail and phone calls of foreign targets located overseas, including when they are in contact with U.S. citizens or residents.

He acknowledged that the information has been valuable but directed Holder and Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr. to develop new protections, including the duration of time the government can
hold foreigners’ data and restrictions on its use — essentially extending to foreigners some of the protections currently given to Americans.

The President said he also wants to see whether there are greater protections that can be placed on the information collected from foreign targets about U.S. citizens, with respect to the way analysts gain access to and use that data.

Obama said the new directive he issued Friday “will clearly prescribe what we do, and do not do.” He said the United States would use signals intelligence only “for legitimate national security purposes, and not for the purpose of indiscriminately reviewing the e-mails or phone calls of ordinary people.” The United States, he added, will not “collect intelligence to suppress criticism or dissent” or to give U.S. companies a competitive advantage.

Unless there is a compelling national security purpose, Obama said, “we will not monitor the communications of heads of state and government of our close friends and allies.” Friendly leaders “deserve to know that if I want to learn what they think about an issue, I will pick up the phone and call them, rather than turning to surveillance,” he said.

Obama’s directive applies to NSA bulk collection and spells out that it should be used only for countering terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and cyberthreats, for combating transnational crime and to protect the U.S. military and allied forces.

As he made the case for reforms, Obama also cautioned that “we cannot unilaterally disarm our intelligence agencies.” And he caustically criticized foreign intelligence services that “feign surprise” over disclosures of U.S. surveillance while “constantly probing our government and private sector networks and accelerating programs to listen to our conversations, intercept our e-mails or compromise our systems.”

He noted that some countries that “have loudly criticized the NSA privately acknowledge that America has special responsibilities as the world’s only superpower . . . and that they themselves have relied on the information we obtain to protect their own people.”

Expressing frustration at those who “assume the worst motives by our government,” Obama said at another point in his speech: “No one expects China to have an open debate about their surveillance programs, or Russia to take privacy concerns of citizens in other places into account.”
But he said the United States is held to a higher standard "precisely because we have been at the forefront in defending personal privacy and human dignity."

"Together, let us chart a way forward that secures the life of our nation, while preserving the liberties that make our nation worth fighting for," Obama concluded.

The President’s speech comes after months of revelations about the breadth and secrecy of the NSA’s surveillance activities, based on hundreds of thousands of documents stolen by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. U.S. officials have said Snowden stole up to 1.7 million documents, many of which he has turned over to reporters. New revelations based on the document are expected to continue this year.

The NSA’s harvesting of phone data began after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and was placed under court supervision in 2006. The program collects metadata, or phone numbers dialed and call lengths and times, but not call content. Analysts are supposed to access the data only for the purpose of seeking leads in counterterrorism investigations.

Obama said in Friday’s speech that the phone-records collection program grew out of a need to fill a "gap" identified after the Sept. 11 attacks. One hijacker made a phone call from San Diego to a known al-Qaeda safe house in Yemen, but the NSA, which saw that call, could not tell that it was coming from someone already in the United States, Obama said.

He stressed that there has been "no indication that this database has been intentionally abused." Yet, he added, "critics are right to point out that without proper safeguards, this type of program could be used to yield more information about our private lives and open the door to more intrusive, bulk collection programs." Moreover, he said, the program "has never been subject to vigorous public debate."

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**Governor Maggie Hassan**

**The New Hampshire Union Leader**

**Hunter McGee**

Hassan will speak at substance abuse conference at Pinkerton
Gov. Maggie Hassan is scheduled to speak during a substance abuse conference Wednesday at Pinkerton Academy.

DERRY — Gov. Maggie Hassan is scheduled to speak during a substance abuse conference Wednesday at Pinkerton Academy.

The conference, Substance Misuse Treatment and Trends, will run from 9 a.m. to noon in the high school’s Stockbridge Theatre. Registration begins at 8:15 a.m. The Center for Life Management will host the event with funding provided by the N.H. Bureau of Behavioral Health.

Celia Felsenberg, the center’s director of adult and emergency services, said Friday that the conference is geared to professionals, including mental health specialists, guidance counselors, school nurses, medical professionals, law enforcement and others.

Felsenberg and Nicholas Pfeifer, also of the Center for Life Management, discussed some of the topics that will be covered in the conference. They also mentioned some of the trends they are seeing with substance abuse in the state.

“The biggest reason for doing this is just to bring all of these providers together to respond to a pretty prevalent issue in the state,” Felsenberg said. “And we are trying to do what we can to move things in a more positive direction with resources and collaboration.”

Pfeifer said substance abuse professionals are seeing an increase in the abuse of prescription medications, such as pain killers, along with heroin use. He said there has been a significant increase in heroin use by people in the age range of 18 to 25 in Rockingham County.

Pfeifer and Felsenberg said more information and statistics would be provided on these trends at the conference.

Also scheduled to speak are: Joseph Harding, director, N.H. Bureau of Drug & Alcohol Services; and Dr. Thomas Andrew, state of N.H. medical examiner.
A panel discussion will follow with community experts representing school guidance, law enforcement, emergency medicine, mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Anyone who would like to attend the conference is asked to preregister at www.centerforlifemanagement.org. There is no admission charge.

For questions or more information, call 965-0733 or email jsantos@clmnh.org.

###

**N.H. Marijuana Use**

**The New Hampshire Union Leader**

**Staff**

Report says marijuana use high among young in NH

CONCORD — Nearly 10 percent of 12 to 17 year olds in New Hampshire regularly use marijuana while more than one in four 18 to 25 years olds report using it at least once in the past month, the fifth highest rate in the nation, according to a national survey.

"This is a disturbing finding," said Joe Harding, director of the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services, of the youth statistics. "It is an alarming rate and well above the U.S. average of 7.6 percent of 12 to 17 year olds nationally reporting regular marijuana use. This underscores the need for us to collaborate with not only our partners in the field, but also businesses, law enforcement, the medical field and schools to implement proven strategies to prevent youth use of marijuana."

About one in 10 adolescents or 9.6 percent reported regular marijuana use, according to the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). More than one in four 18 to 25 year olds in the state — 26 percent — report using marijuana at least once in the prior month, the NSDUH reports. Other states in the top ten for young adult marijuana use include other northern New England states as well as Colorado and Washington, the first two states to legalize recreational use of the drug.
The findings come as the state Legislature debates a bill to legalize possession of up to one ounce of marijuana for recreational use. The bill got initial approval Wednesday when the House voted 170-162 to send it to the Ways and Means for review of its proposed 15 percent sales tax on marijuana sales through a licensed retailer.

The committee will send it back to the House for another vote. If approved, it will go the Senate, where passage is uncertain. Gov. Maggie Hassan promised to veto it if it comes to her desk. The governor came under pressure this week from advocates of marijuana legalization to change her stance.

Colorado and Washington are the only two states that have legalized recreational use of marijuana.

"Young people hear about our state debating this issue and may think that marijuana is safe," said Shannon Bresaw, director of the Capital Area Regional Public Health Network. "Research shows when people don't perceive an action as risky they are more likely to engage in that risky behavior."


###

**Medicaid**

**The Concord Monitor**

**Letter to the Editor**

**Look at Medicaid with fresh eyes, lawmakers**

As we begin this New Year, Medicaid expansion is on the minds of our legislators. We appreciate the willingness of legislators to look with fresh eyes at this extraordinary opportunity endorsed by business leaders, the provider community, health and human service organizations and especially those who would directly benefit by the expansion of health care coverage.
This important decision will affect family members, friends and the people we interact with daily in nearly every industry: 19- to 64-year-old women and men who earn up to $15,856 a year. They earn too much to qualify for Medicaid as the law currently allows and too little to qualify for the federal health insurance subsidies.

Bi-State Primary Care Association and the Community Health Centers strongly encourage legislators to expand health insurance coverage to those who will be ineligible otherwise. We support it for public health and economic reasons. Our state would receive $2.5 billion over the next seven years to expand health care coverage. The program would be fully funded by the federal government over the next three years. The Lewin Group projected that our state would forfeit $340 million by delaying implementation by a year.

I believe our elected officials want to act quickly to protect and provide for the people of New Hampshire and will take the time to consider the wide-ranging impact of this critical decision.

This is an opportunity to say “yes” to the 58,000 people waiting for better access to health care coverage. Our families, friends, and neighbors deserve this.

TESS STACK KUENNING

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(The writer is president and CEO of the Bi-STate Primary Care Association.)
Balancing Constitutional Rights

This week, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments challenging a 2007 Massachusetts law that created a 35-foot, protest-free buffer zone around the entrance to facilities where abortions are performed.

Past court decisions have upheld the right to impose modest restrictions on the exercise of free speech rights for reasons of public safety, but the court under Chief Justice John Roberts has yet to hear such a case. That worries people who want to safeguard the constitutional right of women to receive health-care services, including abortion, without having to run a physical and emotional gauntlet of protesters to do so. It should. The new court’s majority could see the balance between First Amendment rights and the right to health-care services free from harassment differently.

Striking that balance isn’t easy, particularly for those who, like us, consider First Amendment rights to be first among rights. No inhibition, let alone prohibition, of speech must be permitted for any but the worthiest reasons, and it must be as minimal as possible. The Massachusetts law meets that test.

The court’s decision will be important to the Concord Feminist Health Center and similar facilities. It’s been a few years since shouting, sign-wielding demonstrators waved rubber fetuses at women entering New Hampshire clinics, but the protests, and the national campaign to outlaw abortion, haven’t ended. At times, abortion protesters and women’s rights proponents clash. A Massachusetts-style law, should New Hampshire or its communities adopt one, would apply to all. No one, whether pro or con, could remain within the buffer zone to “counsel” patients, but anyone would be free to linger and engage in conversation outside the zone.

The law is neutral as to the content of speech within the zone and, unlike unreasonable requirements designed to keep protesters far from those they seek to address, does not prevent speech. Signs can be read and voices heard inside the buffer zone, but intimidating nose-to-nose confrontations are prevented.

Last summer, a petition signed by nearly 50 people, including volunteers who escort women past protesters and into the Concord Feminist Health Center, asked the Concord City Council to create a 35-foot buffer zone around the center’s entrance. City Attorney Jim Kennedy wisely advised the council to see how the high court ruled before acting on the request. Kennedy also suggested that, should the court uphold the Massachusetts law, it might be better for the Legislature to act. We agree. It would avoid the confusion created when different cities adopt different restrictions.
Buffer zones have passed legal muster when the restrictions are minimal, the limit on speech neutral as to content and the government’s interest — in this case the protection of public safety — legitimate. To prevent voter intimidation, for example, electioneering is prohibited within a 10-foot-wide corridor leading to the entrance to polling places. A 2007 New Hampshire law designed to protect the sanctity of funeral services bans protests within 150 feet of the funeral location during, and for one hour before or after, the services, along with noisemaking that disturbs the peace during the funeral. A federal law sponsored by then-U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass, does the same for military funerals, but sets an overly broad 500-foot buffer that deserves to be challenged.

The Massachusetts law regulates free speech around health-care facilities in a time, place and manner that is reasonable. Should the high court agree, the New Hampshire Legislature should adopt its own version of the law.

Concord Monitor

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CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT REQUESTED
Executive Council Primary

The New Hampshire Union Leader

Staff

GOP side of ballot to be determined in Executive Council District 1 primary Tuesday

Voters in Executive Council District 1, from the Lakes Region to the Canadian border, will head to the polls on Tuesday in a three-way Republican primary to decide who will square off against the only declared Democratic candidate in the March general election.

The GOP primary features a diverse field, with a former state senator, a former county commissioner and a retired congressional aide hoping to win the Executive Council seat left vacant by the death of longtime Republican Councilor Ray Burton.

Mark Aldrich, 64, of Lebanon was the state director for both U.S. Sens. Gordon Humphrey and Bob Smith for a combined 20 years. Although he has not previously held elected state office, Aldrich told the Union Leader his work as a congressional aide involved extensive constituent service, economic development projects in the North Country, and serving as a liaison between North Country residents and their elected officials.

After leaving Smith's staff, Aldrich worked as a government relations consultant for two years before taking the job as Claremont economic development director in 2002. He worked as a business consultant before retiring in 2010.
"The work of an executive councilor is not dissimilar to the work I did as a congressional aide," he said. "I did a lot of economic development work in the North Country."

Aldrich told the Littleton Courier on Jan. 15 that he opposes the Northern Pass as proposed and believes the lines should be buried wherever they would cause aesthetic problems. "I have an unending allegiance to keeping our northern New Hampshire natural resources beautiful," he said.

Aldrich has a bachelor's degree from University of New Hampshire and a master's degree in business administration from Southern New Hampshire University.

Former Belknap County commissioner Christopher Boothby, 47, of Meredith, served as an intern for Burton when he was in graduate school at UNH.

"I carry the lessons learned from the internship with me today, and they still influence my approach to work, politics, and non-profit activities," Boothby writes on his website. His career has been primarily with health care organizations. He was executive director at the New Hampshire Brain Injury Association, director of outpatient services at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital in Concord and director of marketing at the Hunt Community in Nashua.

He also served as director of community affairs, philanthropy and outpatient services at LRG Healthcare.

He and his wife founded Boothby Therapy Services, a company that provides speech and occupational therapy, as well as vision and psychological services, to schools throughout New Hampshire and Vermont.

In 1998, he was elected a Belknap County commissioner, a position he held until 2010. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Maine and a master's degree in public administration from the University of New Hampshire.

Boothby also opposes the Northern Pass.
"As we create our economic future, we must safeguard what makes New Hampshire beautiful and unique," he said. "Rather than compromise our natural resources, we must respect and protect them, knowing that they are an integral part of our economic success."

Former state Sen. Joe Kenney, 53, of Wakefield, has the most experience of the three candidates in elective office, and promotes the fact in his campaign slogan: "Because State House Experience Matters."

Kenney served in the New Hampshire House for four terms from 1994 to 2002, and in the state Senate for three terms from 2002 to 2008. He was the Republican standard-bearer in the 2008 campaign against then-Gov. John Lynch, garnering less than 30 percent of the statewide vote.

A colonel with 30 years in the Marine Corps, Kenney is an Afghanistan and Iraq war veteran. He has an "A" rating with the National Rifle Association and on Jan. 16 was endorsed by the New Hampshire Right To Life Political Action Committee.

He is opposed to the Northern Pass, and said if elected he would strive to provide constituent service "in the tradition of Ray Burton."

The winner of the primary will face Democratic candidate and longtime Grafton County Commissioner Michael Cryans of Hanover in the March election to represent the sprawling Executive Council district that embraces the northern portion of the state, with 108 towns and four cities.

###

**Congressional Candidate Marilinda Garcia**

**The Nashua Telegraph & PolitiFact.com**

**Kevin Landrigan**

PolitiFactNH: State Rep. Marilinda Garcia says she's "cut spending" as a legislator
The cornerstone for any Republican seeking to be the next U.S. Representative for New Hampshire’s Second Congressional District is to come across as an authentic, fiscal conservative. And soon after Salem Republican state Rep. Marilinda Garcia announced that she would enter the Second District race, she touted her cost-cutting chops.

“I cut spending while serving in the state Legislature and will take that much-needed experience to Washington,” Garcia, 30, declared in one of her first post-announcement statements on her Twitter account.

The Telegraph and PolitiFact New Hampshire sought to determine the accuracy of that statement.

State budget votes

Garcia was first elected to the New Hampshire House in 2006 and was a backbencher when Democrats took control of the 400-member body for the first time in nearly a century. Garcia lost her reelection bid in 2008, but quickly won her seat back in a 2009 special election.

Initially, Garcia served on the House Children and Family Law Committee, the panel that oversees divorce, adoption and custody but has essentially no direct impact on state spending matters.

Claiming to cut spending is a pretty broad statement, but we’ll start with the major vote New Hampshire legislators take to increase or cut spending – consideration of the state’s biennial budget.

When Garcia was sworn in on Jan. 3, 2007, the state budget set by her fellow Republicans was $9.3 billion. The subsequent $9.7 billion budget, called for a 4 percent increase for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 was written primarily by Democrats. Garcia voted against it.

The next $11.5 billion budget, also written by Democrats, called for a hefty 19 percent increase in spending for fiscal years 2010 and 2011. Garcia also voted against that.

And the next state budget, crafted by conservative Republicans, including Garcia, after the GOP took over the chamber, cut back spending by more than a billion dollars to $10.3 billion. That budget plan was the first reduction in absolute dollars since World War II. Garcia voted in favor of that budget.
Finally, the most recent $11 billion budget, covering fiscal years 2013 and 2014 and written by a Democratic majority, restored some of the cuts made in the previous budget. Garcia again voted no, though she said he didn’t mind restoring cuts to higher education, public safety and programs for troubled children.

“I thought with existing recovery of revenues we could add back some of those items,” Garcia said in response to our inquiry about her record of cutting spending. Instead, she said she voted against it because of the removal of the Certificate of Need program that approves all construction projects for hospitals.

“I wanted to see those health care reforms in place, but they got taken out, so that’s why I voted against it,” Garcia said.

Still, her budget votes while in the House are fairly consistent: She’s voted against every budget that called for an increase in spending and supported the one that cut spending.

Other spending

Reviewing Garcia’s entire, seven-year voting record and the bills she sponsored, Garcia consistently supported policies that would cut spending and taxes.

In 2011, she voted to cut the taxes on hotel room rentals and meals and tobacco. She endorsed making it easier for local governments to adopt spending caps and supported banning higher-education spending on New Hampshire Public Television. Last year she opposed raising state taxes on gasoline and tobacco.

In addition, in 2011, Garcia voted for a bill to require agencies propose every two years how they would live with 10 percent cut in state spending. And in 2012, Garcia voted in favor of business tax breaks totaling more than $10 million a year.

She did vote in favor of one bill that could have increased spending at the local level. She voted for House Bill 1305 in 2012 that would have reinstated an exemption from property taxes for telephone and communication company poles and conduits. Critics said this could have led to raising local property taxes $5 million to $6 million statewide to make up the difference. The GOP-led House killed the bill 166-133, with Garcia on the losing end.
Does she deserve credit for cutting spending?

When politicians claim credit for something that happens on their watch, we consider whether that credit is justified before we give the statement a Truth-O-Meter rating. In Garcia’s case, she is a legislator, not an executive, so she can’t unilaterally cut spending. And much of the time, she has been in the minority.

However, during the one session in which she served in the majority, she can make a plausible claim for deserving credit for lower spending. In April 2011, then-House Speaker William O’Brien, a Republican, appointed Garcia to the House Finance Committee. She served on the committee when the state faced an $800 million budgetary hole caused by overly optimistic revenue projections. “We solved it not by raising taxes but by cutting in a responsible way,” Garcia said.

At least one fellow Republican agrees. Former House Chief of Staff Gregory Moore said that “when it comes to budgets, there are three kinds of legislators: Those who believe in smaller government, those who believe in more government and those who are pragmatic on the question from issue to issue. From the outset, Marilinda Garcia came from the first camp.”

Our ruling

Garcia said, “I cut spending while serving in the state Legislature.”

Her voting record on the state budget show that García voted against every budget that increased spending and voted in favor of the O’Brien budget that cut state spending for the first time since World War II.

We found two minor asterisks. Even though she voted against the most recent state budget, she didn’t oppose it because it increased spending – she opposed it because of how it treated a program that governs hospital construction and expansion.

And she supported a bill on telephone and communication company poles and conduits that would have had the effect of raising taxes. Still, there are few, if any, votes she’s taken that would have increased spending or increased the size of government.
On balance, we rate her statement Mostly True.

###

**Congressional Candidate Dan Innis**

**The Nashua Telegraph via The Associated Press**

**Steve Peoples**

NIH's Innis one of three gay Republicans facing long odds in House campaigns

MANCHESTER (AP) - Dan Innis' husband persuaded him to run for the U.S. House.

It didn't matter that Innis, a former business school dean, faced an aggressive Democratic incumbent, GOP colleagues who oppose his right to marry, and history - no Republican ever has been openly gay when first elected to Congress.

"He said, 'You've got to do this,'" recalls Innis, running in the 1st Congressional District, which covers most of eastern New Hampshire. "He said, 'You need to take this opportunity and see if you can make a difference.'"

Innis plays down his sexuality as a campaign issue, but acknowledges the historic undertones. He is among three openly gay Republicans nationwide expected to run in this year's midterm elections. None has an easy path to Washington.

Each ultimately must unseat a Democratic incumbent, overcome brushes with hate and confront passionate divisions within the GOP about the way they live their lives. The Republican Party is trying to soften its tone on divisive social issues, but many religious conservatives see homosexuality as immoral.

Innis is married to a man, as is former state Sen. Richard Tisei, R-Mass., who is expected to run again for the northeastern Massachusetts congressional seat he narrowly lost in 2012 to Democratic Rep. John Tierney.