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The Week That Was

03-23-18

1. Off to the Races

Our Spin:

'Sex and the City' star and progressive activist Cynthia Nixon officially announced plans to challenge Governor Cuomo in a Democratic primary this year, setting up a race to shore up the left-leaning wing of Democratic voters. Even with a brand new pair of sneakers, running *that* left of Ms. Nixon will be no easy feat. Courting the state's Working Families Party will require promises for progressive policies and pledges for Democratic unity that we have not seen in some time. Similar to Syracuse's 2-3 zone defense, this is going to be great to watch...and exhausting!

The Story:

On Monday, actress and activist Cynthia Nixon took to Twitter to formally declare her candidacy for governor of New York, following several weeks of speculation that she would challenge two-term incumbent Governor, Andrew Cuomo, in a primary race this fall. In a short video accompanying the announcement, Nixon claimed that New York is the most unequal state in the country, having both extreme poverty and substantial wealth. The progressive candidate continued with several assertions without making direct reference to Governor Cuomo.

The announcement set the stage for what would be a week of headlines as Nixon began her underdog fight as a candidate in the Democratic primary against Cuomo with a speech in front of a small crowd inside the Bethesda Healing Center, a small Pentecostal church in Brownsville, Brooklyn. From behind a lectern, Nixon held nothing back

as she attacked the Cuomo administration on several fronts. Governor Cuomo has declined to directly engage with his new primary challenger, stating instead during a Wednesday morning storm briefing that he was choosing to focus on his job. Cuomo brushed aside the primary challenge by stating: "This is the political silly season at an especially bizarre time in politics. We're a democracy; anybody can run, anybody can say anything, but we have some real work to do."

An early test for Nixon as she attempts to build momentum amongst progressives in her left-flank challenge to the current Governor will come with the Working Families Party, who could provide her with a general election ballot line. WFP officials have said that Cuomo's team has already begun reaching out to members of their state committee, but some skepticism remains amongst activists who make up the WFP base. WFP labor leaders have indicated that they will support Governor Cuomo as he seeks reelection considering the strides he has made with regard to advocating for and securing wage increases and additional benefits for New York's working families. The Working Families Party convention in May will surely be a key battleground between Cuomo and Nixon.

[Politico](#)

2. Big Shoes

Our Spin:

The devastating loss of trailblazing Congresswoman Louise Slaughter has stunned not just her beloved district

but the entire political establishment. Any successor will have very big shoes to fill. However, the difficult path to replacement requires an honorable respect for the loss many feel and the reality of an incredibly condensed political calendar.

The Story:

The late United States Congresswoman Louise Slaughter's life and legacy is being honored today at her funeral in Rochester, New York. Ms. Slaughter passed away last Friday, March 16, 2018. While the focus remains on Slaughter's trailblazing accomplishments during her three-decade congressional career, potential candidates for New York's 25th Congressional District seat do not have much time to make their decisions as petitions for the June 26th federal primary have to be filed by April 12th.

The late Congresswoman's district has existed entirely within Monroe County and includes all of the city of Rochester. Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Morelle, representing the 136th Assembly District, which includes eastern portions of the City of Rochester and the Monroe County suburbs of Irondequoit and Brighton, has gently indicated that he is considering a run to succeed Slaughter. Speaking in an interview on Tuesday, the leader stated "Obviously, the timing is challenging for us. At some point over the weekend, I'm going to sit down with friends and family and make a decision. I have to make it quickly."

Also among those weighing in on a run for the Congressional seat is New York State Senator Joe Robach. Robach represents the 56th District of the New York State Senate, which is comprised entirely in the County of Monroe, and includes parts of the City of Rochester. The Senator has acknowledged hearing from those who want him to enter the race, but has conceded that prudence is a necessity as a razor-thin divide exists within the state Senate, where a one-vote majority is maintained with the help of Democrat Simcha Felder.

According to state Board of Elections data, the 25th Congressional District has a democratic edge with 180,280 enrolled Democrats and 121,928 enrolled Republicans. 104,383 active voters are not enrolled in a party. All of the

congressional districts in New York will be on the ballot this coming November for a full, two year term which will begin in January.

[Democrat & Chronicle](#)

3. Can't Get Enough of Your Love

Our Spin:

Judge Valerie Caproni, fresh off the eight week corruption trial of Joe Percoco, is getting ready to start the corruption retrial of former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. It seems doubtful that Judge Caproni will be choosing Albany for a vacation destination anytime soon.

The Story:

Former New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's bid to dismiss his indictment on corruption charges was rejected on Tuesday in Manhattan by United States District Judge Valerie Caproni. Silver, who in January of 2015 was arrested on federal corruption charges related to receiving payments from a law firm that specialized in seeking reductions of New York City real-estate taxes, had his conviction and twelve year prison sentence overturned last July by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. That decision was informed by a recent United States Supreme Court decision narrowing public corruption law after the reversal of former Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell's public corruption charges.

The appeals court, however, rejected the argument by Silver's attorneys that the prosecution failed to prove the seven counts against him and instead asserted that prosecutors had "sufficient" evidence to convict the former Speaker. Currently free on bail, the former Speaker remains set for a retrial in Manhattan Federal court which will begin on Monday, April 16th.

[Reuters](#)

