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The Week That Was

03-03-17

1. And the Winner is?

Our Spin:

What do City & State and The Oscars have in common...PWC. According to our sources there is a high probability that City & State hired PWC to count the ballots when it awarded the top honor in its New York City Power 100 to Senator Schumer. Since when is a Minority Leader of the United States Senate more powerful than the President, the Governor and the Mayor?

The Story:

President Donald Trump may be a native New Yorker, but he doesn't necessarily wield the most power in the five boroughs, according to a new ranking. City & State magazine's annual New York City Power 100 list was published this week and to the surprise of many, gave the top spot for most powerful politician in New York City to Senator Chuck Schumer, the Senate minority leader. City & State writes, "The Democratic Party is floundering nationally – Republicans control a majority of governorships and state legislatures, and the prospects of flipping the House or Senate in 2018 appear to be slim. Under these circumstances, Schumer's U.S. Senate minority is the last bastion

of actual Democratic power. How he wields that power remains to be seen, but millions of Americans – and New Yorkers – will be watching and waiting." Governor Andrew M. Cuomo came in second place due to his policy flexibility which allows him to exert more influence than Mayor Bill de Blasio according to the report. The Mayor came in third, followed by Trump. The magazine says the president's scope is too broad for him to have much power over city issues. Rounding out the top five was U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara.

[City & State](#)
[NY Daily News](#)

2. Uncertainty in the Trump Era

Our Spin:

Perhaps Leader Flanagan and Speaker Heastie know something the Governor doesn't, or it could be a classic case of fuzzy math. The Senate and Assembly released their economic and revenue forecasts this week and both houses project there will be more revenues than what the Governor has predicted. Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie said Tuesday that although it's hard to say what the state budget contingency plan for repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would be, "if our worst

fears come to happen, I believe at some point we'll have to come back before the end of the year to deal with that." That same day when asked about what budget plan B is if the ACA is repealed, Governor Cuomo questioned how the state could develop an alternate budget plan for "an event that you can't even conceive of."

The Story:

One of the big concerns for New Yorkers heading into the climax of budget season is the unpredictability of President Trump and his administration. There is uncertainty over federal action on the ACA and the impact of Trump policies on the overall revenue in New York State. Before state legislators can agree on a budget they have to agree how much money they'll have to spend. In order to do that, they'll have to estimate how many jobs will be created in the state, how the stock market will perform and exactly what policy changes will emerge from Washington. Experts from the public and private sector met Wednesday morning at the Capitol in an attempt to answer some of these lingering questions and to allow Governor Andrew Cuomo to start negotiating with legislative leaders. Democrats who have the majority in the Assembly said there will be an additional \$1.385 billion to spend in the end of this fiscal year which begins April 1, while Republicans who control the Senate along with the Independent Democratic Conference projected an additional \$503 million. As Hugh Johnson, an Albany-based economist put it;

"The problem you're going to have this year is ... what is going to happen to the national economy? What is going to happen to the financial markets? How much of Trump are we going to get? We just don't know."

[Capitol Confidential](#)
[State of Politics](#)

3. Nostalgia For Pork

Our Spin:

Member items, member items, member items. Where for art thou my love, and who in the heck is handing you out these days. Let's find out.

The Story:

Members of the state Assembly's economic development committee voted to advance a bill that would bring more disclosure to one of Governor Andrew Cuomo's signature economic development programs. Since 2011, New York's regional economic development councils have awarded several billion taxpayer dollars for projects across the state, even as some legislators grumbled the councils technically didn't exist in state statute. The bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Tom Abinanti, would subject members of the state's 10 regional economic development councils to the same financial disclosure requirements as legislators, board members and executive branch policy makers. "Everyone involved in spending the taxpayers' money should make full disclosure to ensure there's no possible conflict of interest — intentional or unintentional," said Abinanti, a Democrat from Westchester. "We've learned to not just rely on the governor's judgment." The Cuomo administration has said the bill would drive people away from serving on the volunteer councils, which develop strategic plans and have a say in distributing roughly \$750 million a year in various state subsidies. Members of both the Finger Lakes and Western New York Regional Councils sent letters to the Legislature this week, voicing their concerns about the bill. They said REDC members, who are volunteers, mostly from the business and academic communities, follow extensive rules to avoid conflicts of interest. While Speaker Carl Heastie wouldn't say if it would come to the floor for a full vote, he did express tacit support for it. "I think we're in a place where many people including the governor and all of you and the government groups have screamed for transparency, so this isn't any different," Heastie said.

[Spectrum News](#)
[Buffalo News](#)