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The Week That Was

04-28-17

1. Bridgegate Survivor

Our Spin:

In this day and age of ideological purity in both political parties, Governor Cuomo just looks for talent! Republican, Democrat, New York, New Jersey, who cares! Fresh from her push to make Governor Christie President, Maria Comella joins Team Cuomo for another try. Perhaps lessons learned will serve the Governor well!

The Story:

Maria Comella, a former top aide to New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is crossing party lines and the Hudson River to become Governor Cuomo's new Chief of Staff. Comella, 36, had worked as an outside consultant for Mr. Cuomo this year, helping to formulate the governor's 2017 agenda. Before joining Cuomo's administration, Comella worked for a number of Republicans as part of presidential campaigns, including a winner — George W. Bush in 2004 — and two unsuccessful campaigns in 2008: those of Rudolph W. Giuliani and Senator John McCain. "Right now, it is important to be an active participant in our democratic process and political party matters less than the things we can accomplish when working together," Comella wrote by email. "At a time of turmoil in Washington, I believe the states can and will play an important role and Governor Cuomo has the ability to find common ground when it's needed and get things done." The hiring comes after two prominent Republican staffers in Albany

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joined Cuomo's team in his second term: Robert Mujica, a former aide to several Republican leaders including State Senate Leader John Flanagan; and Kelly Cummings, the former Director of Communications for the Senate Majority. The Upstate New York native made national headlines in 2016 when she broke with Christie by saying she would support Democrat Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump for President. In her statement this week, she praised Governor Cuomo for being "willing to listen to different viewpoints," something she said voters "should want to see happen more often."

[NY Daily News](#)
[New York Times](#)

2. Show Me The Money

Our Spin:

In a reported reaction to allegations of bid rigging by former top aides to the Cuomo administration at SUNY and its nonprofit affiliates, the Legislature and Comptroller are proposing significant reforms to the procurement process. Not surprisingly Governor Cuomo is not a fan of the effort. Some have suggested perhaps the Legislature's underlying reason for the proposal is the Governor's failure to show them the kwan last fall.

The Story:

Earlier this week, The Senate Finance Committee moved the, "Procurement bill" forward, setting the stage for a vote on the measure in the state Senate. The bill,

sponsored by Republican Deputy Majority Leader John DeFrancisco, would allow the Comptroller's office to audit SUNY and CUNY contracts, a power it had before Cuomo's first budget stripped the office of that power. The legislation would also block contracts from being issued by state-affiliated nonprofits and impose new transparency requirements on vendors. "I want to try to get an agreement on a bill that's the same in both houses so we can move it quickly from that point forward," said DeFrancisco after Tuesday's vote. Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples-Stokes, introduced the bill in the Assembly. If the Legislature passes the bill, that would force the governor to act on it, or perhaps, it could lead Cuomo to the bargaining table. "There's always room for people to talk to one another and discuss their differences, determine if there's any kind of common ground in order to achieve results," said Senator Joe Griffo. "The Governor's always prided himself in saying that's the kind of leadership he wants to exercise, so this is an opportunity now, this is an issue that's important to a number of members, it's important to the state, so I think we'll have ongoing conversations and considerations."

[Times Union](#)
[Politico](#)

3. Riding in Style

Our Spin:

Governor Cuomo managed to combine two of his sincerest passions this week, vintage cars and new bridges! The Governor rolled up with the top down in FDR's 1932 Packard to a beaming crowd filled with labor, contractors, designers and a host of dignitaries. In fact, the Governor was so excited about the opening of the new K Bridge he came back later that evening and flipped the switch to light the big beauty up like the 4th of July. The Governor's bold entrance is going to be tough to

match, but we have a feeling the opening of the new Tappan Zee bridge will be one you don't want to miss.

The Story:

On Thursday, Governor Cuomo held a ceremony to celebrate the opening of a new Kosciuszko Bridge, which carries the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway over Newtown Creek between Brooklyn and Queens. The announcement capped a multi-year, \$555 million replacement effort by the state's Department of Transportation. Erected in 1940, the bridge has long been a traffic choke point because tractor-trailers would slow down as they struggled to climb its span. "The first time I heard my father use expletives was on this bridge," Cuomo said during an afternoon ceremony. Cuomo arrived at the bridge's ribbon cutting ceremony driving Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 Packard, which the governor recently had removed from a state museum and restored. The governor said he wanted to "bring the spirit" of Roosevelt to the new bridge, which his administration is hailing as the first major span built in the city in 53 years. "That spirit is what made New York, New York and that's the spirit that we have to rekindle in this state," he said. Once the existing bridge is removed, the second bridge, intended for Brooklyn-bound traffic, will be constructed in its place. It is projected to open in 2020. Traffic on the new span started flowing at 11:30 p.m. Thursday. It will carry traffic in both directions until the second bridge is constructed.

[NY Daily News](#)
[Politico](#)