

Cuomo the Puppet Master?

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo devoted a bit of time this morning on Fred Dicker's Talk 1300 radio show to insisting that the powersharing agreement between the Senate Republicans and Independent Senate Democrats has nothing to do with him:

It's not my job to determine who is a committee chairman, who gets the office in the corner, and what political alliances are. My job is to pass legislation that makes a difference for the people of this state.

But there are many in Albany who don't buy Cuomo's claims. You can pretty safely put The Times Union's columnist Fred LeBrun at the top of that list.

In a column titled ["A Puppet Master at Work,"](#) LeBrun seems to take some joy out of what he considers Cuomo's duplicity:

It is thoroughly amusing to watch the governor, whose operatives have orchestrated this goofy arrangement, sit back professorially and say he will judge the coalition only after he sees it in action as far as taking up legislation is concerned, and whether his "progressive" agenda is advanced, and on what it actually passes. Also that he will withhold judgment on the validity of the coalition until then. He even goes so far as to question how it possibly can get anything done, but just maybe.

LeBrun explains that Cuomo was "caught flat-footed" by the Senate Democrat's success at the polls:

This is not the result they anticipated, or could tolerate.

So, thanks to the governor's chief political henchman working feverishly behind the scenes with a dissident bunch of Democrats calling themselves independents and the stunned Republicans, a "a bipartisan governing coalition" was hatched.

But that certainly isn't the story Cuomo is telling. He told Dicker this morning:

A governor's job is not to involve himself or herself in the internal power dynamic or the leadership of the Legislature.

He went on to say:

This is an internal Democratic dispute. Jeff Klein is a Democrat, Sampson is a Democrat, Gianaris is a Democrat. This is among Democrats. This is not really about Republicans. This is a schism within the Democrats.

So, somehow this string of backroom deals that put Republicans back in charge of a chamber that it looks like they numerically should no longer control had nothing to do with Cuomo and also have nothing to do with the Senate Republicans, who Cuomo has worked with so closely to pass his fairly conservative fiscal policy.

Photo of Gov. Andrew Cuomo at a recent cabinet meeting. Photo provided by the Governor's Office.

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