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# THE NJ NATURAL GAS POWER LIST 2008



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# THE NJ NATURAL GAS POWER LIST 2008



The **POLITICKERNJ.COM POWER LIST 2008** identifies New Jersey's 100 most politically influential personalities. In developing our list, we eliminated anyone who currently holds elected office, as well as the Judiciary. This precludes some people, Assemblyman/Democratic State Chairman Joe Cryan, for example. We also eliminated the living former Governors, United States Senators, and, of course, Bill Gormley: we believe this particular group remains highly influential and well-respected. This is an Insiders List. We looked at policy makers, party leaders, fundraisers, lobbyists, labor unions, businesses, and associations and have assembled the ultimate list of New Jerseyans with clout, with an impact on politics and government in the Garden State. We selected names based on a fairly unscientific curve: we allocated spaces on this list for a dozen different categories within the New Jersey political community -- so #11 on the list of important fundraisers or donors doesn't make the list, but the most influential congressional staffer does. Just remember that our list is purely subjective, and forever changing. Watch for the Power List to be updated frequently. As always, we welcome your comments on this list or anything else on the PolitickerNJ.com website.



1

## **Brad Abelow** (↑3)

Chief of Staff to the Governor

Brad Abelow was a New York resident less than three years ago when Jon Corzine asked him to become the State Treasurer. Now he's the most powerful person in New Jersey politics. The transformation from Wall Street millionaire to state government bureaucrat hasn't been easy: a budget crisis six months into the new administration shut down state government. But a year later, and again this week, Abelow got much of the credit for a budget accord. Politically, he's not especially savvy. But people respect his brains, negotiating skills, fairness – and perhaps most importantly, his unconditional loyalty to Corzine. Abelow has never truly relinquished control of the state budget, expanding his clout beyond the normal scope of a job that is extraordinarily powerful to begin with.



**2 John Mara (↑26)**  
President, New York Giants

#1 on the power list has only lived in New Jersey for three years, and #2 is a New Yorker: John Mara, the President of the Giants football team. Under Mara's control is nearly \$2 billion in construction projects in the Garden State – a new stadium, a corporate headquarters, and a training complex in Florham Park. He has demonstrated considerable success at influencing public policy in North Jersey, ultimately convincing government officials to spend enormous sums of public money on his projects – and without making huge campaign contributions. The political elite love to be around Mara and his team, especially with a Super Bowl championship and a new stadium coming soon.



**3 George Norcross (↓2)**  
South Jersey Democratic leader

The undisputed boss of South Jersey politics – and proud of it – is George Norcross III, a man who holds no official public or party office. In 2007, his machine picked up two State Senate seats (that makes six), and continues to control the State Assembly, where his friend, Joe Roberts, is Speaker. His ability to raise money – quickly and in large denominations – can stop a team of oxen dead in their tracks. Gov. Jon Corzine is infatuated with him. And he endorsed Barack Obama before Hillary Clinton's campaign was over. But he moves from #2 to #3 after failing to win control in Atlantic and Burlington counties in 2007, and for his inability to help U.S. Senate candidate Rob Andrews win any organization lines outside South Jersey.



**4 Josh Margolin (same)**  
Statehouse Reporter, The Star-Ledger

Josh Margolin was part of the Star-Ledger team that won a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of Jim McGreevey's resignation, and continues to dominate political coverage in Trenton for the state's largest newspaper. His power is enhanced by his seemingly telepathic sense of events in the State Senate and at the office of the United States Attorney, and has clearly benefited from former colleague Deborah Howlett's new position as the Governor's communications director. But Margolin's rolodex is only one ingredient to his success – he provides a constant flow of quality reporting, and constantly breaks some of the biggest political stories in the state.

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**5 Chris Christie (same)**  
United States Attorney

As the United States Attorney from New Jersey since 2002, Chris Christie has set records for the prosecution of public officials – and impressively, not one political figure charged by his office has ever won an acquittal. But lately, Christie has lost some of his Teflon coating: he's faced criticism for awarding mega million dollar no-bid federal monitor contracts to ex-Attorney General John Ashcroft and others with political connections – events that have caused the Justice Department to rethink their handling of deferred prosecution agreement, and led to a tough New York Times editorial. Still, in 2007 he ended the political careers of three State Senators and two Assemblymen – something most party bosses only dream of doing.



**6 Anne Milgram (new)**  
Attorney General of New Jersey

The former federal prosecutor-turned-policy wonk worked on Jon Corzine's U.S. Senate staff before joining the N.J. Attorney General's office. When Stuart Rabner became Chief Justice, this 37-year-old Corzine loyalist became the logical choice to become Attorney General. Over the last year, Anne Milgram has shown herself to be fiercely independent, sometimes to the considerable annoyance of the Governor's staff – some consider her to be completely off the reservation. Milgram has forged a close alliance with U.S. Attorney Chris Christie in the war on corruption and has indicted more state officials than her two predecessors did combined. She's highly regarded for her principles, which has given her more than a few enemies in Union County and other places.



**7 Joe Ferriero (same)**  
Bergen County Democratic Chairman

Republicans can't win New Jersey without carrying Bergen County, and Joe Ferriero has turned this onetime GOP stronghold into a virtual Democratic empire. Even critics can't deny that Ferriero, a prodigious fundraiser and forceful leader, isn't the man responsible for his party's resurgence. He won re-election with 86% of the vote this month against a candidate backed (though not officially endorsed) by his biggest rival, Loretta Weinberg. He eased State Sen. Joe Coniglio out of the race amidst a federal probe. But Ferriero has become a bit arrogant with his power, and has had a few setbacks: he couldn't oust Gerald Cardinale and failed to install Paul Sarlo as Senate Majority Leader. Now a onetime ally and business partner, Dennis Oury, faces a federal probe.



**8** **Jim Gearhart (new)**  
NJ 101.5 Radio Host

No one on the Power List has a higher name ID with real New Jerseyans than the NJ 101.5 FM morning radio personality. He pays much attention to state and local issues and government officials, and his audience includes some of the most powerful political insiders in New Jersey. Frankly, no one likes to be on his bad side because he's taken so seriously by the people who listen to his show every day. He is indeed the "Watchdog for the People." Gearhart also benefits from the departure of Craig Carton, which makes "The Jersey Guys" a little less influential than they once were.



**9** **Bill Castner (↑12)**  
Executive Director, New Jersey State Assembly Majority Staff

The only legislative staffer to make the top ten, Bill Castner is widely viewed as a brilliant tactician and lawyer who has the ear of Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts and South Jersey Democratic leader George Norcross. He's assembled a strong Majority Office staff, and rarely has problems getting the votes for any bill his leadership wants approved. Castner has been mentioned as a possible candidate for Rob Andrews' seat in Congress, and he could wind up in the cabinet if Jon Corzine gets a second term as Governor.



**10** **Orin Kramer (↑35)**  
Chairman, New Jersey Investment Council

Orin Kramer catapults from #35 to #10 after taking a leading and early fundraising role for Barack Obama's presidential campaign. The former White House aide (Carter administration) is the guy who helped talk Jon Corzine into running for office; as Chairman of the New Jersey State Investment Council, he helps decide where billions of dollars of N.J. money is invested. If Obama wins the presidency, Kramer could be on the short list for Secretary of the Treasury or another high profile post.



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**11 Steve Aduato, Sr. (↓8)**  
Executive Director, North Ward Cultural Center

The veteran Newark political leader is, at age 75, still enormously influential – though slightly less powerful than last year. He’s close to leaders of both parties, including Jon Corzine and Chris Christie, and his endorsement of Hillary Clinton was viewed as so important that an influential Washington, D.C. publication actually picked up the story. He pretty much has four votes in the State Senate, including Teresa Ruiz, an ally who won a Newark Senate seat last year. But his relationship with Newark Mayor Cory Booker is waning, and his endorsement didn’t really help Rob Andrews in the U.S. Senate race.

**12 Carla Katz (↓10)**  
President, CWA Local 1034

As President of CWA Local 1034, Carla Katz runs the state’s largest public employee union – one of the largest CWA locals in the nation. In political circles, she’s famous because she was once Jon Corzine’s girlfriend, but frankly, Katz wielded extraordinary political power before she met Corzine and continues to do so now. She is immensely loyal to her constituency and won’t let anyone stand in the way of her commitment to her union members. That’s what keeps getting her re-elected by people who don’t really care what she said in an e-mail.

**13 Charlotte DeFilippo (↓11)**  
Union County Democratic Chair

Her alliance with Raymond Lesniak, the powerful State Senator from Union County, and Assemblyman Joseph Cryan, the Democratic State Chairman, makes her one of New Jersey’s most powerful party leaders. Her organization hasn’t lost a countywide election since 1995, but subpoenas to the Union County Improvement Authority, where she is Executive Director, brings her down a couple of notches.

**14 Ray Pocino (same)**  
Vice President, Laborers International Union of North America;  
Commissioner, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

The well-liked state boss and national vice president of the laborers union has power that extends up and down New Jersey, across the Hudson River, and in Washington, D.C. He also serves as a Port Authority Commissioner. His support of Rob Andrews in the Democratic Senate primary isn’t likely to hurt him at all.

**15 Kris Kolluri (same)**  
Commissioner of Transportation

The state’s most powerful Asian Indian American, he is one of Jon Corzine’s favorite cabinet members. Over the last two years, he’s accumulated considerable power with control of Turnpike, Parkway, N.J. Transit and the South Jersey Transportation Authority. His clout expanded with the departure of E.D. Mike Lapolla, and he could wind up running statewide next year as a candidate for Lt. Governor.

**16 Tom Shea (↓6)**  
Former Chief of Staff to the Governor

He’s no longer the Governor’s Chief of Staff – a job he didn’t particularly enjoy and swears he’ll never return to – but he’s still one of Jon Corzine’s most trusted advisors and friends. He’ll be calling the shots when Corzine seeks re-election in 2009.

**17 Elnardo Webster (↑21)**  
Democratic fundraiser

Not every former NFL player winds up on ESPN. The former Pittsburgh Steeler is Cory Booker's best friend and ex-law partner, and a favorite of Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy. He's also a player in Barack Obama's presidential campaign. With a base of Newark and Hudson County, he's making a ton of money, accumulating a tremendous number of chits, and if his guys – Booker, Healy and Obama – win, he'll keep moving up on this list.

**18 Anthony Coscia (↑29)**  
Chairman, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

The Port Authority Chairman is serving under his sixth Governor – three from New Jersey and three from New York – and his influence keeps going up. The PANYNJ is building a new tunnel under the Hudson and redeveloping the World Trade Center site – which means this Windell Marx partner is handling more public contracts than the Governor of Delaware.

**19 Donald Trump (↑20)**  
Developer/Casino owner

Not everyone can attack the Governor with impunity in the style of this casino owner/developer, who can get anyone to take his calls – though not necessarily accede to his demands. He's a player in Atlantic City and Jersey City right now and who knows if he will revisit Encap.

## NEW JERSEY: GARDEN STATE OR LAWSUIT STATE?

Plaintiffs from other states are increasingly bringing abusive lawsuits to New Jersey because they get more than their fair share in our courts.

- New Jersey is “one of the worst places to get sued in America”  
– *Forbes Magazine (April 2008)*
- Atlantic County is one of six “judicial hellholes” in the entire country  
– *American Tort Reform Association (December 2007)*
- New Jersey's tort system is at the bottom of the barrel, ranking 49th among the states  
– *Pacific Research Institute (April 2008)*
- 89% of New Jersey employers say lawsuits drive up the cost of doing business  
– *Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University (December 2007)*



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*WE NEED TO GET NEW JERSEY BACK ON TRACK.*

**20 Carl Goldberg (↓16)**  
Chairman, New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority

The developer/Democratic fundraiser is the Chairman of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority. In that post, he oversees New Jersey's largest projects – Giants Stadium and Xanadu. Legislators return his calls quickly – remember, he's the guy who can get them good seats.

**21 Steven Goldstein (↑27)**  
Chairman, Garden State Equality

The savvy ex-operative now runs New Jersey's largest and most powerful gay rights organization, and played a key role in getting an election year Legislature to pass a civil union law. Now his sights are set on marriage equality, and he's closing in on enough votes in both houses to pass it. Few activists are as passionate about their cause, and he's become an effective fundraiser too.

**22 Mike DuHaime (↑25)**  
Senior Advisor for Political Operations, Republican National Committee

Rudy Giuliani's former campaign manager is so highly regarded in national political circles that John McCain quickly gave him a seat at the table in his campaign. Many of his allies at the RNC (he served as Political Director in 2006) and in the Giuliani campaign now occupy senior positions in the McCain campaign – a testament to his clout and abilities.

**23 A.J. Sabath (↑24)**  
Chief of Staff to the Senate President

The ex-state Labor Commissioner now heads up the political shop for Senate President Dick Codey. He has the popular Codey's ear, and legislators and lobbyists wishing consideration of their pet projects have to go through Adam.

**24 Reginald Jackson (↓23)**  
Executive Director, New Jersey Council of Black Ministers

The go-to guy for Democrats who want support from the African American community, and a man no candidate wants to see criticizing them at a press conference the week before an election. He drops down one notch for backing Hillary Clinton over Barack Obama, and he's not likely to have a national power base in an Obama administration. But he's still on the speed dial of the N.J. political elite.

**25 Charles Wowkanech (↓22)**  
President, New Jersey AFL-CIO

Even a feud with South Jersey Democrats, the Assembly Speaker, a few losses in key '07 State Senate races, and an inability to deliver a Democratic primary endorsement to an incumbent U.S. Senator doesn't pull the AFL-CIO chief out of the top 25. On the plus side: the Legislature passed the family leave law – a huge accomplishment for the labor leader.

**26 Bill Matsikoudis (↑74)**  
Corporation Counsel, Jersey City

One of the most meteoric rises in power this year comes from Jersey City Corporation Counsel, who calls most of the shots behind the scenes in the state's largest and most economically thriving city. He is Jerramiah Healy's lawyer, with that comes tremendous power over the top movers and shakers of New Jersey politics. Healy's ascension as Hudson County Democratic Chairman and his support of Barack Obama only helps increase his clout.

**27 Fran Dauth (↑33)**  
Editorial Page Editor, The Star-Ledger

She is in charge of the Star-Ledger's editorial page, and in New Jersey, important people read those editorials early every morning. And for the record, she's more powerful today than she was last year – even with her paper's endorsement of Rob Andrews in the Senate primary.

**28 John Myers (same)**  
Archbishop of Newark

The Archbishop of Newark is not as politically potent as he was in Peoria, but no one in New Jersey has a bigger political machine. 2008 is his first presidential campaign as Archbishop – let's see what he does with it.

**29 Jeff Vanderbeek (↑34)**  
Owner, New Jersey Devils

The Devils owner opens his arena – no small fete – and is a regular host to New Jersey politicians who pay homage to him at the Prudential Center.

**30 Steve Lonigan (↑36)**  
Executive Director, Americans for Prosperity-New Jersey

The former Mayor of Bogota and possible '09 gubernatorial candidate (and unpaid *PolitickerNJ.com* columnist) continues to please the conservative wing of the New Jersey Republican party – although not necessarily the Libertarian wing. He led the opposition to Jon Corzine's toll hike plan, and his brief arrest at the Governor's town hall meeting put Lonigan in control of Corzine's news cycle for two critical weeks.

**31 Lewis Eisenberg (↑98)**  
National Finance Co-Chairman, McCain for President

A year ago, the millionaire GOP fundraiser and former Port Authority Chairman barely made the Power List. John McCain's presidential campaign was going downhill, and he wasn't seriously playing in New Jersey politics. Now the McCain National Finance Co-Chairman (titles aside, he's McCain's #1 money guy). If McCain is president, Eisenberg can pretty much have anything he wants: Secretary of the Treasury? Ambassador to the Court of St. James? It really could be his call.

**32 Steve DeMicco & Brad Lawrence (same)**  
Democratic political consultants

The owners of Message & Media, New Jersey's premier Democratic political consulting firm, lost a couple of State Senate races last year (including their mega race, Ellen Karcher), but they won the Democratic U.S. Senate primary (Frank Lautenberg) and have Jon Corzine's re-election in 2009. But will DeMicco's personal political power help or hurt his embattled wife, Jeanne Fox, who is struggling to win Senate confirmation for another term as BPU President?

**33 Skip Hidlay (↑39)**  
Publisher, Asbury Park Press

Last year: "Ask John Bennett why the Asbury Press Publisher belongs on this list."  
This year: Ask Ellen Karcher

**34** **Jeff Carroll** (↑40)  
Chief of Staff to Rep. Frank Pallone

The politically savvy Chief of Staff for Rep. Frank Pallone, whose Health Subcommittee makes him the most powerful staffer of the state's 15-member delegation. Carroll helped advance high profile congressional hearings on federal monitors and deferred prosecution agreements.

**35** **Alfred Doblin** (↑65)  
Editorial Page Editor/Columnist, The Record

He writes editorials for The Record, and his engaging and often witty columns essentially kicked the ass of his onetime competitor, now former Star-Ledger columnist Tom Moran.

**36** **Gary Rose** (↓13)  
Director, Governor's Office of Economic Growth

The *PolitickerNJ.com* 2007 Loser of the Year is leaving state government next week after a tumultuous two years as the Governor's top economic advisor. He'll be missed, maybe, by just one person: his former Goldman Sachs pal, Jon Corzine.

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**37** **Dennis Bone/Ralph Izzo (same)**  
Utility Company Presidents

The Verizon and PSE&G CEO's, respectively, occupy this slot to demonstrate the clout of the state's regulated utility industry in New Jersey politics. And be sure to note that the utility executives are on the list, while the Board of Public Utility Commissioners are not.

**38** **Harold Hodes (↓30)**  
Lobbyist

Brendan Byrne's ex-Chief of Staff keeps his influence in a world where people don't remember Al Beadleston or Bill Hamilton – a testament to his staying power in the ever-changing world of New Jersey politics. But the federal probe of ex-State Sen. Joe Coniglio and the loss of Hillary Clinton takes the lobbying man a full eight notches down on the power list.

**39** **Susan Bass Levin (↑78)**  
Deputy Executive Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

The former Cherry Hill Mayor/Community Affairs Commissioner moves up the power grid as the #2 (and for a short time this year, #1) executive at the Port Authority. See #18.

**40** **Bob DeCotiis (↑41)**  
Attorney

The managing partner at one of New Jersey's most influential law firms.

**41** **George Gilmore (↓31)**  
Ocean County Republican Chairman

The Ocean County Republican Chairman controls one of the few remaining GOP machines in New Jersey. He moved seamlessly from Rudy Giuliani to John McCain, but his bid to elect Ocean County's first Congressman failed, and his incumbent countywide officials were held to under 55% in the June primary.

**42** **Angelo Genova (↑43)**  
Attorney

He's the best election lawyer on the Democratic side – the go-to guy on Title 19 matters. He also serves as a Port Authority Commissioner.

**43** **Frank Spencer (↑47)**  
Eastern District Vice President, United Brotherhood of Carpenters

The head of the state Carpenters Union leader is now playing on a national stage as an officer of the UBC. He's tight with Jon Corzine, and like other labor leaders, won't take a hit for not backing Rob Andrews.

**44** **Bob Franks (same)**  
President, Health Care Institute of New Jersey

The former Congressman runs the Health Care Institute of New Jersey, the trade group for New Jersey's pharmaceutical industry. He built up some chits from the majority party by backing Jon Corzine's budget plan.

**45 Phil Alagia (↑48)**  
Chief of Staff to the Essex County Executive

He's the Chief of Staff to the Essex County Executive and the guy Democrats bring in when they need to win an election in Newark. He gets credit for Steve Aduato's victories, but not his defeats: Joe DiVincenzo and Alagia stayed out of the U.S. Senate race.

**46 Al DeCotiis (same)**  
Attorney

Along with his brother, #40, the former Ambassador and Democratic National Committeeman runs a law firm with a tremendous ability to influence state, county and local government. He backed Hillary Clinton for President, but that doesn't matter: DeCotiis is still in demand as a fundraiser and opinion molder.

**47 Bill Palatucci (↓45)**  
Chairman, Christie for Governor Exploratory Committee

Chris Christie's best friend and chief political advisor has run more statewide races than any other New Jersey Republican (except for Estabrook/Unanue/Zimmer campaign manager Mark Duffy), and was a GOP operative in the days when Republicans won statewide elections here. He's busy gearing up for 2009, but why didn't he stop the U.S. Attorney from giving John Ashcroft a \$52 million no-bid contract?

**48 Maggie Moran (new)**  
Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor

Veteran Democratic insider runs the front office political operation, with considerable influence over the appointments process. She's been on Jon Corzine's staff for eight years now, and the Governor trusts her and depends on her.

**49 Michael Kempner (same)**  
Public Affairs Executive

The MWW Group CEO runs the state's largest public relations firm, and is a serious fundraiser.

**50 Jamie Fox/Eric Shuffler (↑54)**  
Lobbyists

The two ex-McGreevey staffers have formed a successful lobbying firm, and have plenty of access to the Governor, who uses Shuffler to write his major speeches. And Fox may be successful in being one of the remembered former Chiefs of Staff.

**51 Kathy Crotty (same)**  
Executive Director, New Jersey State Senate Majority Staff

The venerable legislative staffer runs the State Senate for Dick Codey, and with relatively few complaints – a tremendous accomplishment in this state.



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**52 Ed Brannigan (same)**  
President, New Jersey Fraternal Order of Police

The independent boss of the state FOP union is courted by both parties, and still has more political clout than the fairly new state PBA President, Tony Wieners.

**53 Al Porroni (same)**  
Executive Director, New Jersey Office of Legislative Services

OLS has incredible influence over what laws get passed in New Jersey, and while he's no Sam Alito, Sr., he's done well learning to make the majority party happy.

**54 Donald Scarinci (↑55)**  
Attorney

Not as involved in politics as he was a few years ago, he is still name partner in the powerful statewide law firm. His partners: Bergen County Democratic Chairman Joe Ferriero and Monmouth County Republican Chairman Joe Oxley.

**55 Bob Decheine (↑96)**  
Chief of Staff, Rep. Steven Rothman

The Chief of Staff to the only New Jersey Congressman on the Appropriations Committee moves way up on the list because of his key role in Barack Obama's New Jersey campaign

**56 Dan Katz (same)**  
Chief of Staff to Sen. Frank Lautenberg

The Chief of Staff to the senior U.S. Senator from New Jersey, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He might be more powerful had he stuck to his forte, public policy, and not taken an active role in Frank Lautenberg's re-election campaign.

**57 David Norcross (↑60)**  
Republican National Committeeman

The six-term Republican National Committeeman from New Jersey, a partner at Blank Rome, has influence with the White House, and with Republicans in Trenton.

**58 Brian Thompson (↑59)**  
Reporter, WNBC-TV, New York

When NBC/New York runs a major political story, more people than all the print newspapers combined see his work product. And as their top New Jersey reporter, he has tremendous sources and often breaks huge news, typically after receiving a call from the federal building in Newark.

**59** **John Graham** (↓57)  
Democratic fundraiser

Insurance broker was, along with #24, #46 and #49, part of “The Group” that backed Hillary Clinton for President. Advice for the future: remember that it takes mere seconds for e-mails bashing other Democrats to get circulated and posted on the Internet.

**60** **Celeste Fitzgerald** (↑61)  
Executive Director, New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

A great year for the anti-Death Penalty advocate – New Jersey has banned capital punishment. But what does she do for an encore?

**61** **Ed McBride** (new)  
Chief Counsel to the Governor

The successor to the hapless Ken Zimmerman is well-respected in Trenton circles, and could move up the list soon – assuming he gets a handle on internal front office politics and learns how to frighten a legislator or two. Several ex-Chief Counsels appear on this list – will McBride be here five years from now?

**62** **Paul Josephson** (↑66)  
Attorney

Ex-gubernatorial counsel wields considerable influence from his private law practice and lobbying firm, working with central New Jersey powerhouse Bob Bacso.

**63** **Paul Fader** (same)  
Attorney

The onetime Chief Counsel to two Governors and Mayor of Englewood is now Jim Florio’s law partner.

**64** **Bill Watson** (same)  
Advisor to the Mayor of Trenton

An influential Democrat on his own, his power is enhanced as the top advisor to Trenton Mayor Doug Palmer and as the brother of the Assembly Majority Leader, Bonnie Watson Coleman.

**65** **Michael Soliman** (new)  
State Director to Sen. Bob Menendez

The talented and popular young Democrat has moved from running Steve Rothman’s district office to leading Bob Menendez’s state offices. At this moment, Soliman is more influential than his boss, Danny O’Brien, Menendez’s new Chief of Staff.

**66 Mickey Carroll (↑69)**  
Director, Quinnipiac University Polling Institute

The ex-New York Times reporter runs the Connecticut-based Quinnipiac University Poll, which has more influence over campaigns & elections in New Jersey than any other independent polling operation.

**67 Mark Alexander (new)**  
New Jersey State Director, Obama for President

The on-leave Seton Hall law professor was, at first, Barack Obama's national policy director; late last year, he became the New Jersey State Campaign Director. If Obama winds up as President, he'll likely be offered an administration post, but right now he's 12 slots behind Bob Decheine.

**68 Bill Maer (↓67)**  
Lobbyist

The likeable Democratic strategist and lobbyist wields influence in the State Senate and in Bergen County, but he no longer has Joe Coniglio around.



# Congratulations!



From  
**CWA Local 1034**  
Carla A. Katz, President

## To the PolitickerNJ Top 100 Power List Winners!

Special Congrats to Wally Edge—your grasp of history and of Seinfeld continues to impress us. Congrats from your union friends!

**69** **Lisa Jackson (new)**  
Commissioner of Environmental Protection

She has won the respect of Jon Corzine, and as a result, she's able to significantly influence environmental policy in New Jersey. Corzine likes her so much that she's reportedly a possible candidate to become his next Chief of Staff. If that happens, look for her to take a spot in the top ten.

**70** **Joyce Powell (↑99)**  
President, New Jersey Education Association

2007: "Still new at the job after replacing Edith Fulton; watch for her rapid climb up the list."  
2008: From #99 to #70

**71** **Bob Master (new)**  
Legislative/Political Director, CWA Region 1

The state CWA official has taken a greater interest in New Jersey politics as he seeks to depose Carla Katz from her role as President of one of the nation's largest CWA locals.

**72** **David Pringle (same)**  
New Jersey Environmental Federation Campaign Director

He runs New Jersey's most powerful environmental organization, and he benefits from his competition with the state's other environmental activist Jeff Tittell, who is not taken as seriously by legislators and policymakers.

**73** **Jim Harkness (new)**  
Executive Director, New Jersey State Senate Minority Staff

A highly-regarded legislative veteran and former Chief Counsel to the Governor, he left a cushy job at Riker Danzig to run the Senate Republican staff under Tom Kean, Jr. It didn't take long for Harkness to show just how weak his predecessor was – the Senate GOP has emerged as a more formidable force in state government.

**74** **Dale Florio (↓71)**  
Lobbyist; Somerset County Republican Chairman

The Double Dipper: He's the political boss of genial Somerset County, and the head of one of the state's biggest lobbying firms. But he's no Luke Gray, and his organization line isn't what it used to be. But then, neither are Republicans right now in Trenton.

**75** **Joseph Hayden (↑90)**  
Attorney

Business is up for this premier criminal defense lawyer; it's not hard to imagine hundreds of state, county and local officials carrying his business card around.

**76 Ron O'Malley (same)**  
Bergen County Utilities Authority Chairman

This fairly obscure Bergen County insider has the ear of Joe Ferriero and Dennis McNerney, and they listen to what he says.

**77 Ken Kurson (↑80)**  
Political Consultant

From co-author of Rudy Giuliani's best-selling book to Assembly candidate to COO of Rudy's presidential campaign, he continues to impress Republicans with his integrity and skills. He's now a partner at Jamestown Associates, which gets most of the top GOP races in New Jersey and has a growing national client base.

**78 Sheryl Gordon (↑84)**  
President, AFSCME Local 183

Key player in New Jersey organized labor, and well-liked among her union brothers and sisters.

**79 Adam Kaufman (↑87)**  
Lobbyist

The lobbyist is very well liked and his business is growing -- especially with Joe Doria at DCA. He's got tremendous influence in Democratic circles.

**80 Nick Accocella (↑83)**  
Editor, Politifax New Jersey

While he doesn't have a website, everyone talks to him and he's basically unspinnable. New Jersey insiders depend on him for his consistency and reliability.

**81 David Samson (↑82)**  
Attorney; former Attorney General of New Jersey

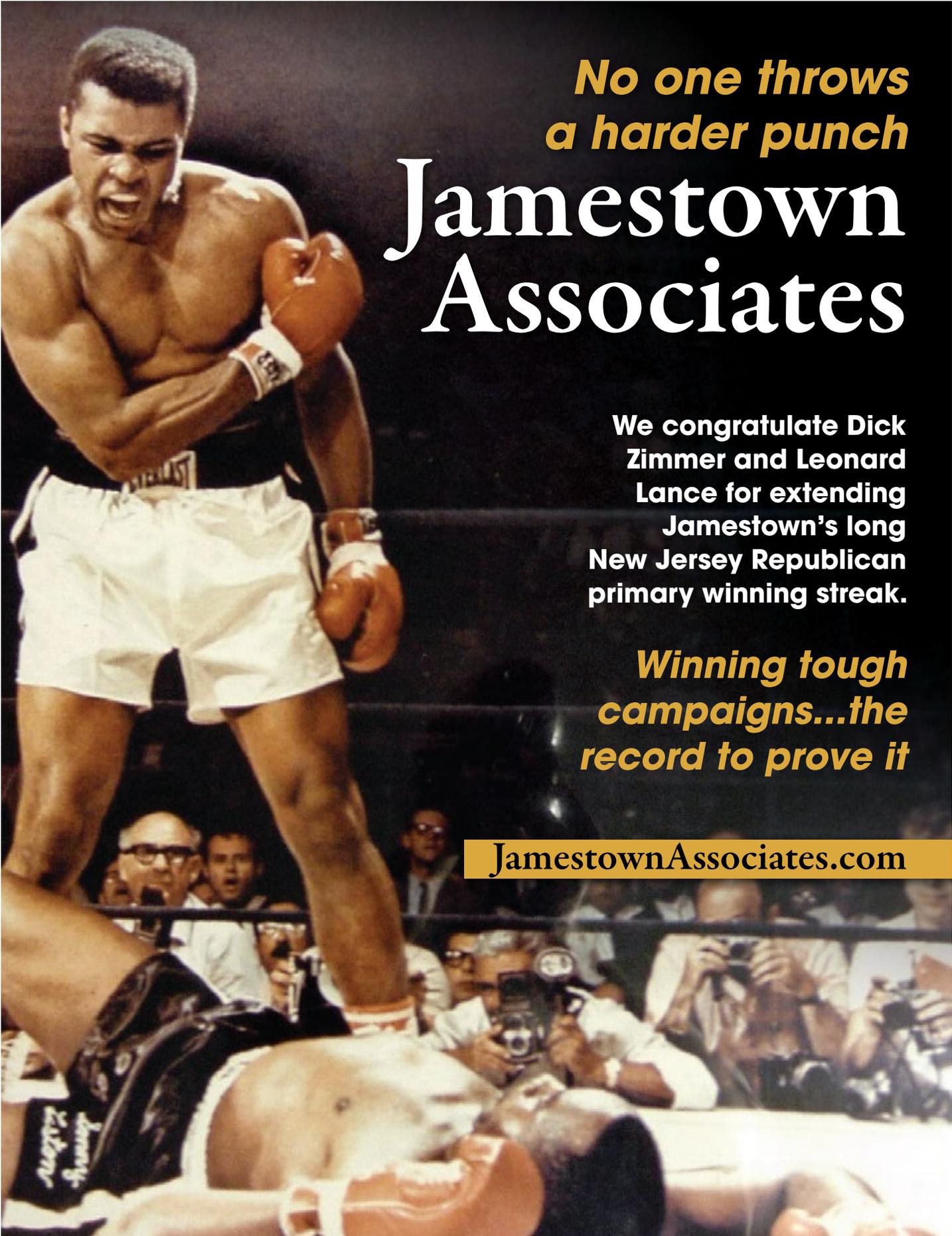
The former Attorney General, now back to heading a major New Jersey law firm, is the recipient of a lucrative federal monitoring contract.

**82 Steve Ayscue (↓62)**  
Democratic strategist

He is George Norcross's top political lieutenant and the guy who implements the boss's orders. He is also a smart and savvy strategist, but his '08 U.S. Senate candidate (Rob Andrews) got blown out earlier this month.

**83 Richard McCormick (new)**  
President, Rutgers University

The Rutgers University President is becoming increasingly influential -- he's getting his stadium expansion, and budget cuts haven't affected Rutgers to the extent that they have other state colleges. Some people say he has enhanced his power by hiring a political insider as VP of government affairs; others say he made a smart move to solidify his relationship with the Governor.



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**84 Rick Shaftan (new)**  
Political Consultant

He's the strategist for true-believing conservative Republicans, including likely gubernatorial candidate Steve Lonegan.

**85 Gerald Krovatin (↑92)**  
Attorney

Another criminal defense attorney with a busy practice. If you get in trouble, he and #75 are the people to call.

**86 Pablo Fonseca (↓75)**  
Chief of Staff to the Mayor of Newark

Cory Booker's Chief of Staff drops eleven slots on the list after his boss lost some intra-party fights, and the support of several City Council members.

**87 Ben Rich (↑91)**  
Chief of Staff to Rep. Bill Pascrell

His influence went up when Bill Pascrell got a seat on the House Ways and Means Committee.

**88 Bob Ingle (same)**  
Gannett New Jersey columnist

He's not very popular among with the people he covers, or even with his colleagues, but he's not afraid to call people out and his willingness to beat people up scares the crap out of the New Jersey political elite.

**89 Carl Van Horn (same)**  
Professor, Rutgers University

Same as last year: this policy wonk is often the smartest guy in the room, especially in this administration. He's a favorite of the Governor.

**90 Bill Layton (new)**  
Burlington County Republican Chairman

The newly-elected Burlco party boss has the potential to be the next Glenn Paulsen. His candidate won the District 3 congressional primary (though he'll be judged in the future by his ability to hold Jim Saxton's seat) and easily his machine to victory in the '07 general and '08 primary.

**91 Kathy Ellis (new)**  
NJ Natural Gas Executive

Once the Governor's press secretary, and still the First Lady of Belmar, she pulled a trick that her successors in Trenton might envy – the media still like her.

**92 Michael Aron (new)**  
Senior Political Correspondent, New Jersey Network

The venerable political reporter and weekend TV host makes the list not as much for the number of people that watch him on television, but for who those people are. There's no shortage of public officials and candidates who judge the success or failure of a press conference on whether he shows up.

**93 Tom Barrack (same)**  
CEO, Colony Capital

He's the money man behind Xanadu and the Hilton's Atlantic City casino operation.

**94 Laurel Brennan (↑97)**  
Secretary-Treasurer, New Jersey AFL-CIO

Highly regarded labor leader started as an intern at the New Jersey State Federation of Teachers. Even people who don't like Charlie Wowkanech seem to speak well of her.

**95 Julie Roginsky (↓85)**  
Political Consultant

The fiercely partisan Democratic operative gets her clout as a daily talking head on FOX and MSNBC. She returned to staff work briefly this year as Frank Lautenberg's primary spokeswoman.

**96 Joan Verplanck (↓58)**  
President, New Jersey Chamber of Commerce

Is the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce terribly relevant anymore? Attendance on the annual train trip to Washington is down, and their endorsement of Jon Corzine's debt reduction plan limited their influence over pro-business Republicans.

**97 Bari Mattson (new)**  
Senior Advisor to the Mayor of Newark

The former New York City lawyer and public relations executive has joined Cory Booker's administration as a Senior Advisor to the Mayor, where she is quickly gaining the reputation as the go-to person to get things done in Newark. Booker listens to her, and she seems to be adept at cutting through the bureaucracy and getting things done.

**98 Michael Murphy (new)**  
Lobbyist

The former Morris County prosecutor and gubernatorial candidate became the most visible staffer on Rob Andrews' failed U.S. Senate bid – and while he clearly annoyed the 84-year-old incumbent, he's made some huge allies among South Jersey Democrats, who control six State Senate seats and the General Assembly.

**99 David Knowlton (new)**  
President, New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute

The President of New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute has received high marks for working with Democratic and Republican legislators on some difficult legislative initiatives.

**100 Harry Hurley (new)**  
Radio Host

**Readers Choice:** The radio talk show host has enormous influence over voters in Atlantic County, where legislative races are among the most competitive in the state and where scandals in Atlantic City have caused considerable turnover in city government. When he speaks, voters listen -- and that's not something every journalist can say.

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