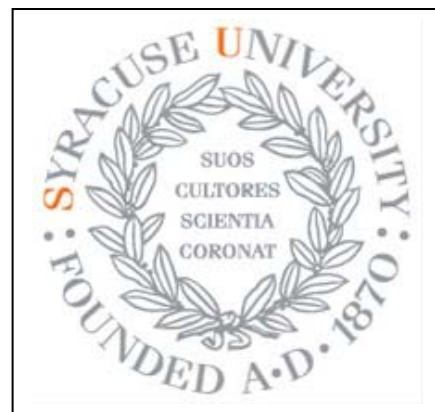


## **N.Y. Senate makeover: Democrats poised to defeat multiple incumbents in state**

**By: Kevin Eggleston**

**Posted: 4/8/08**



Paloma Capanna, a Democratic candidate for state senate in New York's 54th District, spoke up last weekend for a constituency she felt had been ignored in the state capital. And, after her speech at the Democratic Rural Caucus in Saratoga, N.Y., she had a message for her Republican counterparts.

"There is a belief that the Republicans are omnipotent," Capanna said Saturday. "They are paper tigers. It's time to show up and say 'Boo.'"

Capanna, a Webster, N.Y. native, is part of a wave of candidates facing Republican state senate incumbents this election year, who plan to shake the incumbents out of power. She is the first to challenge Sen. Michael Nozzolio (R) in the 54th district since 1992.

And while Republicans may still have more bite than paper tigers, there is little doubt their accomplishments have been paper-thin. According to the Ithaca Journal, a New York University Law School study says the New York state Legislature - and the Republican-controlled Senate in particular - has been one of the most unproductive governing bodies in the country.

Pet projects have spiraled out of control and been unfairly allocated. Senate majority leader Joseph Bruno and nine fellow Republican senators received nearly a third of funds set aside for pet projects for their own districts, according to a 2006 New York Times article.

The top pet project spender, of course, was Sen. Bruno himself, who for the past two years has also been under investigation by the FBI for his possibly unlawful business interests.

Bruno is a former boxer from Glens Falls, N.Y. But in this 2008 election cycle, his party's control is facing a threat from pugilist candidates like Capanna. The Democrats' goal: to take back the majority in the New York Senate and deliver the knockout punch to Sen. Bruno's reign as the state heavyweight champion of government stagnation.

In fact, they've already won the first round. After Republican Sen. Jim Wright resigned from the 48th district, Democratic Assemblyman Darrel Aubertine won the seat in a special election victory this past February. It was the first time a Democrat won the region in more than 100 years.

Capanna, a family law attorney, is more than ready to take on Sen. Bruno. In reference to Bruno's boxing career, she said she wanted to bring boxing gloves to Albany - and paint them blue.

The Democrats are now just one seat away from taking the power away from Bruno and two away from making minority leader Malcolm Smith, the new majority leader.

Don Barber, for one, just announced his entry into the race - and he's making Republicans nervous. Barber has been raising money for two years to prepare to challenge 22-year-old Republican Jim Seward in the 51st district. According to the Ithaca Journal, Barber wants to go to the state capital in Albany to bring accountability to government, which he says will come from putting the state under the control of Democrats, who will no longer have Republicans to blame for the government's problems.

This summer, consider volunteering for a local Democratic candidate. If just one more seat goes to the Democrats this election season, the state senators will not just be bringing the sound of the "Rocky" theme to Albany. They'll bring something much more important: your voice.

Kevin Eggleston is sophomore political science and television, radio and film major. His columns appear every Tuesday. He can be reached [kmeggles@syr.edu](mailto:kmeggles@syr.edu)

---

© Copyright 2008 The Daily Orange