



June 15, 2009

Doherty praises Webber pick

By **MATT FRIEDMAN**, PolitickerNJ.com Reporter

Conservatives Assemblyman Michael Doherty (R-Washington Twp), who will soon move up to the state Senate after beating the moderate state Sen. Marcia Karrow (R-Raritan) in this month's primary, gave Republican gubernatorial nominee Chris Christie high marks **his pick of Jay Webber for Republican State Chairman**.

"I think Jay Webber is a great pick. He's a Ronald Reagan conservative and has been a leader on all the conservative issues that The Republican base looks for and will do a great job," said Doherty.

Christie tapped Webber last week to succeed Tom Wilson, who represented the more moderate wing of the party. The move was applauded by conservatives, many of whom supported Steve Lonegan in the primary against Christie.

The Republican nominee for governor traditionally picks the chairman of the state party, although the choice will have to be ratified by the state committee members on Wednesday.

Conservatives chafed under Wilson's leadership. The most cited recent example was the Republican U.S. Senate primary, when establishment Republicans **recruited candidates** rather than support either of the two conservatives in the race: state Sen. Joe Pennacchio (R-Montville) or Ramapo College finance professor Murray Sabrin (**Doherty toyed with a bid for that seat, too**). In this year's race for governor, conservative candidate Steve Lonegan frequently complained that party leaders had stacked the endorsement process in Christie's favor.

"I think it indicates that the Republican Party big tent philosophy that folks from all across the spectrum are welcome and are invited to take part in leaders, I think it's an outstanding development," said Doherty, who, spurned by Republican county committees in Hunterdon and Warren Counties, ran on Lonegan's line. "I don't, nor have I ever discerned any hard feelings among the base. That's what primaries are about: somebody wins and somebody loses. We're all big boys and girls."