

The Save Jersey Blog

Jay Webber for Lt. Governor?

Matt Rooney | June 4, 2009

Note the question mark standing at the end of this post's title. It's there because I'm not endorsing any candidate at the moment, since 1) no one is really "running" for the job, and 2) only the Christie campaign inner-circle gets to vote anyway. In publishing this post, I'm simply trying to play devil's advocate and make the point that adhering to "conventional wisdom" may produce an unintended *conventional result* for the NJ GOP... defeat. Here's why:

1. **Youth could be important to the GOP ticket.** Chris Christie isn't an old man, but of the "big three" top contenders, only our good friend Tom Kean, Jr. doesn't have any gray hair. Recall that the majority party registration in New Jersey is "unaffiliated" as of 2009. To win these voters over, it's critical to recognize that unaffiliated voters are mostly young voters and/or Reagan Democrats. And when I think of "young Reaganites" in the New Jersey Republican Party, one name instantly comes to mind - *Assemblyman Jay Webber*. His energy and ability to connect with other young people tired of having their futures mortgaged could be a powerful asset going forward.

2. **The GOP never gets credit for picking female or minority candidates.** Promoting female and minority candidates is *critical* to the survival of the Republican Party in the years to come. Consequently, some very solid Republican women are currently under consideration, or are at least being talked about by the pundits paying attention to our election. At the same time, I think it's very important to avoid the trap of thinking that Chris Christie *needs* a woman or minority running mate to win. He doesn't, and the press and most left-leaning voters won't give him credit for it anyway... ask Sarah Palin (or, more appropriately, John McCain).

What Chris *needs* is an energetic, passionate and compelling individual who will inspire conservative and middle-of-the-road voters across the economic spectrum to leave work early and get to the polls. Candidates of this type come in all genders, colors, shapes and sizes. For this reason, it would be a real mistake to constrain ourselves only to choices the media finds "acceptable" or interesting. I only care about finding someone who interests overburdened taxpayers.

3. **We do not need a "moderate" Republican to beat Corzine.** Even down here in the heart of the Camden County Democrat machine, I usually don't encounter too many voters who avoid candidates narrowly because the politician is "too conservative" for their liking. What I *have* witnessed is Democrats and undeclared voters who dislike the

national Republican Party's double talk on fiscal responsibility and overemphasis on social issues lacking a possible near-term resolution.

It's all about the economy in 2009. Chris needs the most articulate and disciplined fiscal conservative he can recruit to draw a stark contrast in voters' minds between Jon Corzine's failures and Chris Christie's solutions. Jay is one of the most charismatic and pragmatic conservatives in our party. He's in the Reagan mold and can truly captivate a room - just ask anyway who heard him speak at the NJYRF Convention back in May. Together, the men from Morris County could do a real number on whatever the Democrats put up.

4. **Geography doesn't really matter**. Not this year, anyway. So what if Chris and Jay both hail from Morris County? My native South Jersey wants to see more of their tax dollars returning to help *South Jersey*; immediate economic relief and equity in statewide spending is more important than the hometown of the candidate that can help Chris get it done.

Just some food for thought, Save Jerseyans. My vote obviously wouldn't be affected by the selection of any of the fine public servants already mentioned as serious contenders. Your humble blogger-in-chief merely wants to make sure that some of our finest prospects aren't ignored in our ongoing discussion of future leaders. Democrats are worried about the young assemblyman's potential... why else would they include someone with low statewide name recognition in **a list of examples for this week's "Chris is too conservative" state committee press release?**