THE 1600

NY Dems ride anti-Trump train

Dan Janison

dan.janison@newsday.com

The political status quo features red-state and blue-state partisans slugging it out daily on a national stage for the consumption of voters back home.

In Democratic-dominant New York, the biggest elected officials jockey to show resistance to Republican President **Donald Trump**, who has feeble approval ratings in his home state.

Last week Mayor **Bill de Blasio** eclipsed Gov. **Andrew M. Cuomo** in the race to be the region's leading anti-Trumper. The mayor blew off a presidential meeting in Washington, blasting Trump immigration policies and what he called "racist" federal pressure on "sanctuary cities."

That fight will go on. Trump's Justice Department demanded numerous localities prove they're sharing information with federal officials about people who may be in the U.S. illegally.

Playing to his own base, Trump responded Wednesday: "The mayors who choose to boycott this event have put the needs of criminal, illegal immigrants over law-abiding Americans."

De Blasio's intraparty nemesis, Cuomo, who seeks re-election this year, makes national noise too, raging, for example, at the ways the GOP tax law favors red states over blue.

"Senate Democrats must adjust to this new reality and understand in this conflict there is

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and New York State Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman wear the badge of Trump antagonist.

only red and blue. There is no purple," Cuomo stated last week in an online commentary.

One Senate Democrat, New York's **Kirsten Gillibrand**, basks in the same cost-free speculation about the 2020 presidential race as Cuomo and de Blasio. Last month she attained the badge of a Trump antagonist when he personally insulted her on Twitter.

She demanded investigation of more than 20 women's public sexual abuse allegations against Trump over the years. Trump called her a lightweight who "would do anything" for his campaign contributions. She called this a sexist smear. It brought her uncritical media attention. Like Cuomo, she seeks re-election in November.

State Attorney General **Eric T. Schneiderman** holds the longest-lived credentials as a Trump nemesis, having first sued the now-defunct Trump

University for fraud in 2014.

As they speak out, Cuomo and de Blasio fend off public-relations problems of their own. Cuomo's longtime top aide, **Joe Percoco**, is on trial on corruption charges. De Blasio is undergoing a Housing Authority scandal over lead paint. The two are at odds over immediate municipal issues such as mass transit.

As Senate minority leader, New York's **Chuck Schumer** has a different role, tangling with Trump as part of the job.

Schumer's eyes are fixed on Senate races in November, not so much on 2020. His caucus pursues seats in purple, Trump-friendlier states. That was clearly part of his calculus in calling off the unpopular "shutdown." Expect him to slam Trump without forcing his partisan allies into tough votes and positions when they campaign in swing states.

SPINCYCLE

GUIDE TO POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

Pol's nonpartisan approach

Rookie Nassau Legis. **Joshua Lafazan**, who ran for his 18th District seat as a Democrat but is not registered in any political party, is showing his nonpartisan roots by setting up a property tax grievance workshop with three Republican officials.

Lafazan's co-hosts for the Feb. 6 workshop at Long Island University in Brookville are Brookville Mayor **Daniel Serota** and Upper Brookville Mayor **Elliot Conway**.

The workshop is being presented by Hempstead Town Tax Receiver **Don Clavin**, also a Republican.

When he contacted the other officials, "partisanship was never even in the conversation," said Lafazan, of Syosset. "We're showing everyone across Long Island that campaigning is for campaigns. When you're elected, it's time to get to work."

Said Clavin: "Challenging your assessment is a bipartisan issue. I'm delighted to reach across the aisle and help anybody."

— *Celeste Hadrick*