

News Coverage on Redistricting

Rangel: Cuomo Being ?Unfair? On Redistricting

[Liz Benjamin](#) [1] [2] [2] [2] [2]

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There has been a lot of speculation about Cuomo 2016 after the freshman governor's stellar performance during his first year in office, particularly when it comes to wrangling seemingly impossible bipartisan deals out of the Legislature – something that has largely eluded President Obama.

But one veteran New York Democrat says he's reserving judgement on whether Cuomo is presidential material until after he deals with the thorny issue of redistricting.

Asked by my NY1 colleague, Juan Manuel Benitez, if he thinks Cuomo might be headed to the White House in four years, Rep. Charlie Rangel replied:

"No, no, no, no. But he's doing a fantastic job on being a new but very, very successful governor. And he has my complete support, and clearly, as you pointed out, he manages to go right down the middle and to get people to negotiate and finally come out successful."

"He's got another big problem in his hands. Every ten years the lines of public officials, geographically are changed because we are growing in population, but we don't grow in the size of the political body. So, the New York State Assembly, their districts are gonna get larger, the New York State Senate and of course the lines of the members of the United States Congress."

"I concentrate in the Congress of course because we lose two congressional seats, which means

we are gonna have to pick up population to make up for the fact that we'll have two less, we'll only have 27. And the governor says that Legislative body should not do it, but an independent group should do it. So, you ask me that question after the lines are drawn and I'll give you a better answer."

Rangel, who has fallen from grace considerably since his ethics mess and subsequent censure, nevertheless still remains a prominent figure in New York politics. He's also the dean of the congressional delegation, which explains why he's acting as a spokesman for his colleagues on redistricting.

Keep in mind, too, that Rangel is one of the so-called Harlem "Gang of Four," which included former NYC Mayor David Dinkins, former Manhattan BP Percy Sutton and former state Secretary of State Basil Paterson, who happens to be the father of former Gov. David Paterson. Rangel was a big David Paterson fan and ally, and he [had some choice words for Cuomo](#) [4] back when the then-AG was headed toward a possible primary challenge against the state's first black governor.

Cuomo, as you'll recall, has threatened to veto any redistricting plan that is not drawn up by an independent commission, which doesn't exist at this point. Rangel said he thinks it's "not fair" to leave sitting members of Congress – not to mention anyone who might want to challenge them or run for any seats that might open up – in the dark on the process, particularly since the primary is going to be early this year (thanks to the DOJ).

New York needs to lose two House seats this year, which means four sitting members will end up having to decide between running against one other and early retirement.

"(T)he direction has to be decided so that we will know where we are running," Rangel told Benitez.

"I mean, some people, I have a Harlem district as you know, it has Washington Heights, it has the West Side and the famous El Barrio. But some people have said that I should be in Westchester, up in The Bronx. But they don't know, I don't know, so we shouldn't have that frustration."

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[4] <http://www.observer.com/3812/rangel-cuomo-promised-will-not-run-paterson>