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News Coverage on Campaign Finance

What Cuomo Gains from Obama's Albany Visit

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<http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/empire/2012/may/07/what-cuomo-gains-obamas-albany-visit...> [3]

President Barack Obama's visit to a microchip manufacturing plant makes sense for Obama: [a chance to connect to white, rural voters similar to those in states like Ohio and Pennsylvania he'll need to get reelected in November](#) [4]; [in the state that has major donors](#) [5]; next to a popular governor, Andrew Cuomo, [who promoted investment in the very same microchip plant last September](#) [6] as a symbol of how government and the private sector can work together to move the economy forward.

But Cuomo has decided that standing by the president—in more ways than one—is a smart move.

“He wants to be among those governors who are saying when the President is beleaguered, I am allying with the president, I’m going to act in accord with him,” said SUNY New Paltz professor Gerald Benjamin. “The Governor’s calculating that being on the president’s side is a no-risk proposition.”

Benjamin pointed to the example of Cuomo’s backing through executive order (the constitutionality of which Benjamin has questioned [in a recent op-ed](#) [7]) of the statewide health care exchanges mandated by the Obama administration’s health care overhaul, which was general opposed by the state Senate’s Republican majority.

Both Cuomo and Obama retain high approval ratings in New York. While it’s all but certain New

York will go for Obama in the election, there are short-term issues having a friend in the White House. Take the Tappan Zee Bridge: [the state lost out on \\$2 billion in federal funding](#) [8] needed to help construct the project. It's hard to see how being on the President's good side could do anything but help.

"The president controls the purse strings for a lot of things, especially for infrastructure projects that this state really needs a lot of help on," said political consultant George Arzt.

There are other benefits of joining the president on stage at a press event. Obama is also validating Cuomo's agenda for the state. This is the President's third trip to New York, landing in a spot that Cuomo himself has used to highlight is economic policy priorities.

"Cuomo plays chess. He's looking forward and this validation is a resource that he can claim and he can use: Not only am I claiming that I was successful in the first two legislative sessions; here's the President of the United State laying hands on and this relationship's important," Benjamin said.

And, of course, there's the 2016 benefits. Despite [an at least half-hearted attempt recently to downplay the rampant speculation that Cuomo will run for the presidency next time around](#) [9], it's hard—especially in New York—not to see the beneficial side effects of receiving heaps of praise from the person with the job you want.

"I think he wants to look to be helpful. The President is going to do very well in this state, especially among African American voters," said Arzt. "That could help Andrew in 2016."

"He's building a resource. It's not an immediate pay-off. It's longer term thinking," Benjamin said.

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Links:

[1] <http://nyconstitution.org/press-clip-author/Colby-Hamilton>

[2] <http://nyconstitution.org/press-clip-author>

[3] <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/empire/2012/may/07/what-cuomo-gains-obamas-albany-visit/>

[4] <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Obama-sees-a-political-charm-in-third-visit-3538777.php>

[5] <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/2012/jan/19/president-obama-attend-four-nyc-fundraisers/>

[6] <http://www.governor.ny.gov/press/092711chiptechnologyinvestment>

[7] <http://effectiveny.org/professors-corner/executive-powers/what%E2%80%99s-constitution-between-friends>

[8] <http://transportationnation.org/2012/05/03/ny-gov-cuomo-sounds-can-do-about-tappan-zee-bridge-but-funding-remains-unclear/>

[9] <http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/19734/20120426/cuomo-tamps-down-speculation-about-2016>