

## Diehard Trump Supporter From Erie Takes Control Of NY State Republican Party



*In 2016, Langworthy shared this photograph with Donald Trump (Facebook)*

The Erie County Republican Party Chairman, 38-year-old [Nick Langworthy](#), has deposed the New York State Party Chairman, Ed Cox, after the GOP saw a decline in power that resulted in loss of the majority in the State Senate last fall.

In his campaign to win over party leaders across New York, Langworthy [reportedly promised](#) to bring in a new generation of county leaders as well as recruit more female and younger candidates.

“It’s time for a change,” former gubernatorial candidate Carl Paladino told Gothamist/WNYC.

Like Paladino, a financial backer, and Rep. Chris Collins (R-27), a political mentor, Langworthy has been an enthusiastic backer of President Donald Trump. He served on Trump’s [transition team](#). At the time, he was caught exaggerating the president-elect’s local success at the ballot box.

Paladino predicted Langworthy would recruit more Trump-like candidates to run for office, particularly people who spoke more to working class residents.

“Nick is a supporter of the working man, and the working man is the future of the party,” he said.

Moderates warn that Paladino’s scorched-earth, Tea-Party politics could backfire, rather than reverse the party’s fortunes.

“It could be a big branding problem going forward,” one Republican campaign consultant told Gothamist/WNYC. “If we’re doubling down on Trump and Paladino in 2020—that’s just

bananas.”

Nothing in politics is permanent, but there may be little any party leader can do about the decline of the GOP in New York, according to Prof. Gerald Benjamin, a SUNY-New Paltz political scientist.

“I think we’re looking at the Massachusetts-ification of New York,” said Benjamin, a self-described GOP apostate who for a dozen years was the highest office-holder in rural Ulster County. “Things are looking pretty grim for Republicans.”

If Democrats retain their grip on Albany in 2020, he said, they’ll control the once-a-decade redistricting process — and undo the GOP-gerrymandered legislative map that kept the waning party relevant, even as Republican voters disappeared.

“You might get someone at some point, especially if they’re independently wealthy,” such as Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker or former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, he said, “but that wouldn’t be a resurgence of the GOP. That would be the exploitation of the weakness of the GOP by an individual to capture it for his purposes.”

The departure of Cox marks the end of an era. The son-in-law of former President Richard Nixon, Cox has been a fixture in national GOP politics since the mid 1960s, when he began dating his future wife, Tricia Nixon. In 2009, he took over the state party, pledging to bring the GOP back to the political relevance that gave it two three-term governors, Nelson Rockefeller and George Pataki, and a four-term U.S. senator, Jacob Javits.

Instead, Cox presided over the [continuing decline](#) of registered Republicans in New York, as rural areas shrunk and urban centers grew. And last year, with [a deeply unpopular](#) President Trump in the White House, the GOP lost three congressional seats and eight in the state senate, forfeiting its last lever of power in Albany.

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