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New York NEWS

De Blasio comes up short on results, clout in Albany

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By EMILY NGO emily.ngo@newsday.com 

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New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio walks to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office at the state Capitol on Wednesday, May 27, 2015, in Albany. Photo Credit: AP

Who's afraid of Mayor Bill de Blasio in Albany?

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Not state

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Republicans, who denied his request for permanent mayoral control of New York City schools, granting him one year instead.

Not Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, who didn't deny he and his team were the unnamed officials in news reports who belittled the mayor as "incompetent" and clueless on influencing the legislative process.

Not advocates for charter schools, who won a lifting of a cap for new schools over de Blasio's opposition in the three-way agreement last week among Cuomo, state Senate Republicans and the Democrat-led state Assembly.

"There isn't a fear factor with Bill. There is a fear factor with Andrew," political consultant George Arzt said.



New York
Bill de Blasio

After the legislature went home, mayoral aides who spoke on condition of anonymity sought to paint a more positive picture of how de Blasio fared, saying they secured the affordable housing requirement he had championed in the real estate tax abatement known as 421-a.

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Aides also indicated they had no plans to rethink their approach in Albany. The mayor said he didn't regret campaigning aggressively, albeit unsuccessfully, against state Senate Republicans last year.

"All over this country, it is normal for a member of a

political party to support other members of that political party," the mayor said last week. As for his defeats and the trash talk aimed at him, De Blasio continued to state Sunday that he would have "more to say" later.

Political experts said de Blasio needs to improve how he plays the Albany game and deals with Republicans as well as his relationship with fellow Democrat Cuomo.

"He looks feckless, like he's getting the back of Cuomo's hand," said Alan Chartock, professor emeritus at the University at Albany.



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"You can be political when you're running for office, but when you gain that seat, you have to think about alliances," said Arzt, who was an aide to the late former Mayor Ed Koch. "He needed to cross the aisles."

Even some in de Blasio's party should be more collaborative and less strident.

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"I hope the mayor was humbled by what has taken place in the last few months in

Albany," said Assemb. Phil Goldfeder (D-Queens). "We want to be part of the dialogue. Nobody likes to be dictated to."

Albany deal-making means relying on "political influence and relationships or making policy proposals that give wins to other SUNY at New Paltz professor Gerald Benjamin scientist.

De Blasio officials said the mayor and senior aides worked closely with new Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (D-Bronx), installed after an indictment forced his predecessor to step aside. Their private complaints about deeper-than-usual dysfunction in Albany preceded the angry pushback from the Cuomo camp.

While beaten on schools issues, City Hall aides said they believe they held their own on rent regulation -- which was extended if not strengthened the way de Blasio wanted -- and won a battle that set off a public spat with Cuomo on the 421-a housing program.

Backed by developers, de Blasio wanted more affordable units in new rental housing, longer-term subsidies and labor rates below "prevailing wage." Cuomo and construction unions opposed lower wages. In the end, 421-a was extended for four years with modifications largely in line with de Blasio's.

However, it will expire in six months unless builders and labor agree on wage terms.

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think 421-a is substantially as we originally proposed it, minus the mansion tax, which I think would have made it better," de Blasio said Sunday of extra charges on properties selling at more than \$1.75 million

Scott Reif, a spokesman for Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (R-East Northport), declined to comment on de Blasio. Heastie said he thought de Blasio "comes out of this just fine" on his overall agenda.

But state Sen. Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) said she felt the city "got hosed." She placed no blame on de Blasio's tactics and instead blasted Cuomo for the disrespect aimed at the mayor.

Governors and mayors have always clashed, but "it seems to have gotten to a level of secret sources for the governor against the mayor," Krueger said. "We might have hit a new low."



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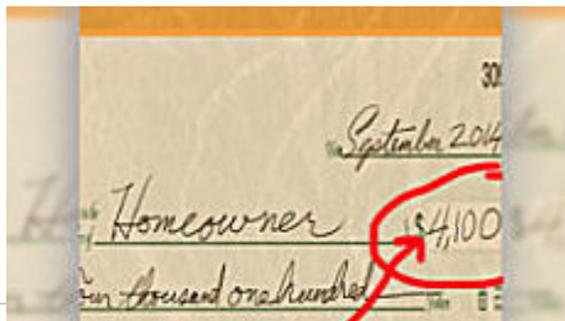
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