



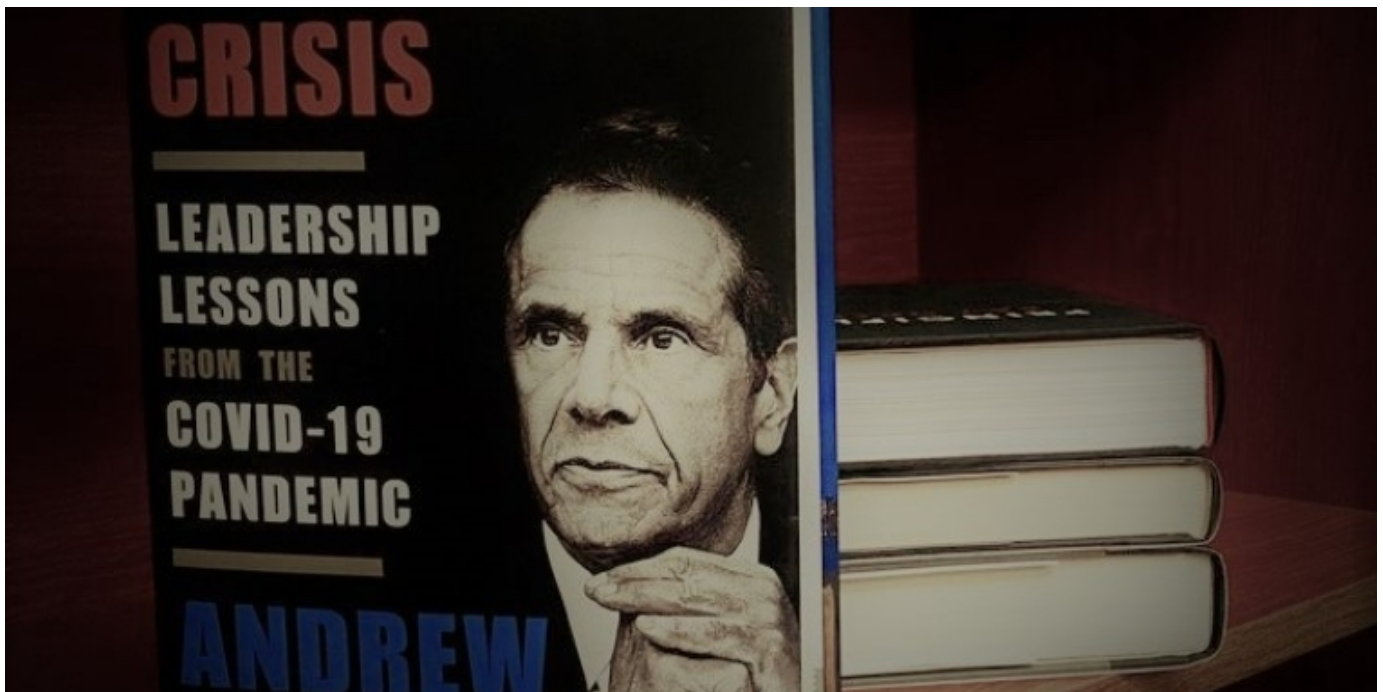
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator Borrello Drafts Legislation Barring Elected Officials from Publishing Books While in Office

GEORGE M. BORRELLO March 12, 2021

| ISSUE: [ETHICS](#), [COVID-19](#), [PUBLISHING](#), [ELECTED OFFICIALS](#)



ALBANY – Senator George Borrello has introduced legislation to prohibit elected officials from publishing books about their public service while still in office.

[Senate Bill 5601](#) would amend the Public Officers Law to prohibit elected officials from publishing books about his or her time in office while still holding the position of such office.

“This isn’t a free speech issue, it’s an anti-corruption issue. This legislation is largely inspired by Governor Cuomo’s published memoir, ‘American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic,’” Senator Borrello said.

“In the midst of the pandemic, the greatest crisis facing our state in a generation, the Governor somehow found the time to write a 300-page memoir praising his administration’s COVID response. Setting aside the fact that his ‘victory lap’ proved to be grossly premature, it is a situation that raises troubling questions about the ethics of elected officials collecting outside profit from actions related to their government responsibilities.”

“After the book was published, we learned that the information it contained surrounding the administration’s handling of the COVID crisis in nursing homes – and purported as ‘fact’ – was not the truth. We now know that the Governor and his administration completely misled the public by underreporting nursing home deaths by at least 50 percent. Given his administration’s cover-up, I don’t believe the Governor, or any New York State public servant should be able to profit from selling their story as it happens before history is able to judge those actions,” said Senator Borrello.

“More troubling, in the case of the Governor, is that it now appears that the Cuomo administration’s manipulating and delaying data could be linked to the timing of the Governor’s book deal. He lied about the true numbers and withheld data back in July, when he was likely finalizing his book negotiations with Crown Publishing. If it is true that he altered public information for personal financial gain, that is potentially a criminal act.”

“The Governor’s actions have exposed a gap in state law that is our responsibility to fix. As a taxpayer-funded employee, an elected official who is able to effect legislation and state contracts should not be able to profit personally from something that directly involves their government role.”

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