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CUOMO LABOR ALLY ATTACKS THE WFP

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ALBANY — A labor leader close to Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued a statement attacking the leader of the Working Families Party for naysaying the governor's political efforts.

John Samuelsen, president of the Transportation Workers Union of America and the former leader of TWU Local 100, took unprompted shots at WFP executive director Bill Lipton and his organization over recent commentary Lipton offered on the Democratic governor's new push to help Democrats in the House.

Lipton told POLITICO and other outlets that Cuomo had done little in the past, and should be focusing his energy on pushing for a Democratic majority in the New York State Senate — something Cuomo has done intermittently since his 2010 election.

Samuelsen, whose union has done well in contract negotiations with Cuomo and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, noted that it pulled out of

the WFP along with other major labor groups in the wake of its 2014 convention. At that time, progressive activists in the party almost nominated Zephyr Teachout for an insurgent bid against Cuomo; the party eventually voted to en-



dorse Cuomo in exchange for a promise that he actually help flip the state Senate.

“The WFP now seems largely focused on being the self-anointed purity police to determine who is a proper progressive in their brand of social order. Gone from the WFP is the foundational principle that the pathway to economic security for working families is a good union job,” Samuelsen stated. “When state, local and national Democratic Party leaders rallied alongside organized

labor in Manhattan to fight back against the Trump administration's attacks, one would have thought that Bill Lipton would give proper credit to elected leaders advancing true progressive policies, but instead he continued his negative onslaught.”

Samuelsen concluded: “Newsflash Bill Lipton — When Democrats and trade unionists are uniting to defend America's working families against the Trump administration's attacks, you should be standing with us, not attacking us. TWU Local 100 and nearly every other trade union in New York State has withdrawn from the WFP precisely because of misguided actions such as these. It is counterproductive and flagrantly hypocritical.”

Lipton said the WFP was proud of its advocacy on behalf of workers and has “worked closely” with labor unions. “We stand by our statement that it is positive and important that the Governor is finally engaging seriously in efforts to help Congressional Democrats,” Lipton said. “We also stand by our statement that he must finally apply the same standard with the State Senate.