

# Despite accord, conflicts loom

■ Hours after agreeing to legislative agenda, Spitzer and pols spar over his push for campaign finance law

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ALBANY — Hours after Gov. Eliot Spitzer and top lawmakers reached agreement on which issues to tackle before the legislature adjourns, persistent divisions over changes to campaign finance law threatened to derail their larger agenda yesterday.

Despite warnings from Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno (R-Brunswick) that Spitzer's push for more regulation of campaign cash "just will bog us down," the Democratic governor insisted that was his top priority. He even vowed to resume criticizing GOP senators in their districts — a flashpoint with Bruno, who is trying to hold onto power.

"We ought to be at peace, and we ought to be trying to get things done and not be in campaign mode because the campaigns aren't for another year," Bruno told Spitzer. "Every week, I read that we're [GOP senators are] going to be taken out."

Disagreements about campaign finance have stalled progress on other issues in the Capitol, though Spitzer has unveiled a raft of legislation to ease construction of public

## Spitzer, Dems celebrate successes

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ALBANY — Crowing about recent successes, top state Democrats turned their spring gathering here yesterday into a pep rally, with Gov. Eliot Spitzer declaring, "We are winning because we are right."

Addressing the conclave, Spitzer joked that as he watched the Legislative Correspondents Association's satiric show "Springtime for Spitzer" last weekend, he smiled — while thinking he'd find out who titled it and "get them."

"The metaphor, however, is right for this party," he said, his

tone turning earnest. "There are new candidates coming onto the field just like new flowers **blooming**. We are looking at things afresh and we know the best seasons are ahead."

He also promised a new drive soon to improve the state university system and cited further property-tax relief as a major goal.

The appearance came one day after he said he was preparing to endorse Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton for president. The Associated Press reported that he promoted the Monday event in an e-mail to supporters that included a request for people to donate further to his political fund.

buildings, insert more nutritious food in schools, legalize gay marriage and bolster abortion rights. The final two are opposed by Republican senators, who instead have focused on lessening the property-tax burden and called for the death penalty for killers of police.

Republicans have controlled the Senate since 1939, with the exception of one year, and now hold a 33-29 edge over Democrats, who hold the Assembly and the governor's office.

Later, Spitzer said he had no personal animosity toward Bruno but wouldn't hesitate to

criticize him or other GOP senators publicly on campaign finance. "This is the first issue on my agenda list, and I will be traveling ... [and] I will be heard," Spitzer said, flanked by good-government groups.

The freshman governor was more conciliatory in the morning at the first of what are expected to be seven public negotiating sessions with legislative leaders. He urged them to concentrate on matters on which agreement could be reached before the legislature adjourns June 21, such as campaign finance, business development

and building more power plants. Spitzer didn't mention gay marriage or abortion, despite championing them for weeks. But he raised combating human trafficking of immigrants forced into prostitution and servitude to pay for their passage to the United States, and using genetic data to convict or exonerate criminals.

The lawmakers didn't delete a single item from Spitzer's agenda but added about a dozen more. They also suggested expanding his children's nutrition initiative.

Bruno and Assembly Speak-

er Sheldon Silver (D-Manhattan) urged nixing some of the hospital closures and mergers recommended by the Berger Commission and ratified by lawmakers; nine facilities on Long Island are affected.

"I totally agree that Berger should not be the end-all and be-all," said Silver. "I don't believe it is too late" to overturn the recommendations, he said. To do so would require a new law, subject to the governor's veto.

Spitzer countered, "I don't think the Berger Commission's recommendations will be reversed or revised."

## Ready for his zoo debut



AP PHOTO / WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Born at the Bronx Zoo on Jan. 5, an unnamed male Indian rhino walks with his mother, Ella, on the grounds of the zoo yesterday. The young rhino is set to make his official debut this weekend, just in time for Mother's Day.

## Mobster, 90, back in jail again

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A 90-year-old Colombo crime family leader who rubbed elbows with celebrities including Frank Sinatra during his mob heyday was arrested yesterday for associating with known mobsters, his fifth parole violation in 25 years, the FBI said.

John "Sonny" **Franzese** was arrested when he appeared for a regularly scheduled visit with a probation officer, said Jim Margolin, an FBI spokesman.

It was the fifth parole violation for **Franzese**, who was jailed for three years after a November 2000 meeting at a Starbucks coffee shop in Greenvale with three Colombo family associates. Before that, he spent two years behind bars after federal agents watched him enjoying a bowl of spinach soup with mob associates at a Great Neck restaurant.

Margolin had no details this time on where **Franzese** had violated his parole.

**Franzese** was being held in a

Brooklyn jail and was scheduled to appear in court next week. He did not have a lawyer, Margolin said.

Despite his age, **Franzese** reportedly ascended to Colombo underboss two years ago after family boss "Big Joey" Massino was convicted of **racketeering** and became a federal witness. Massino, who spent 14 years running the family, became the first sitting mob boss to flip in New York.

But **Franzese** was involved in organized crime long before Massino's ascension. He was a fixture at the Copacabana nightclub, where he often spent time with Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and singer Jimmy Rosselli. He also had a financial stake in the legendary porn movie "Deep Throat."

**Franzese's** parole restrictions continue through 2020, when he would be 103 years old. It was unclear how much prison time he might face on the parole violation.