



## The Auditor: Smoking ban proposed for college campuses



By [The Auditor/The Star-Ledger](#)

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Smoke 'em if you've got 'em.

That is, unless you're on the campus of a college or university. In that case, don't smoke 'em. Or chew. Or dip.

Assemblywomen Celeste Riley (D-Cumberland) and Connie Wagner (D-Bergen) have introduced a bill (A3894) that would ban smoking as well as the use of smokeless tobacco on any campus — indoors or outdoors — in “any facility owned, leased, or controlled by” any public or private higher educational institution.

Wagner said Bergen County Community College already has a no-smoking policy on its campus and “it's effective.”

“I guess I'm following in Mayor Bloomberg's philosophy,” Wagner said, referring to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has made the banning of smoking a central part of his public health policy. “We've done it with our parks here in our community.”

Wagner, a member of the Assembly Higher Education Committee, said she thought the bill had “some chance.” She didn't think it was an overreach, but said she could see smokeless tobacco removed from the measure.

“I'm just doing it for health reasons and to see the grounds clean,” Wagner said.

### **“Make sure your seatbelts are fastened ... ”**

When the rumblings started about Sen. Robert Menendez's relationship with a wealthy Florida eye doctor who provided the senator with flights to the Dominican Republic, reporters rushed to websites such as FlightAware.com to track the flights.

Apparently, so did Menendez. Campaign disclosure forms filed last month show the New Jersey Democrat spent \$1,812 on the website in December.

A spokesman for Menendez declined comment. But The Auditor figures it has something to do with an internal review the Menendez campaign conducted after Sam Thompson, the Middlesex County Republican chairman, asked the Senate Ethics Committee to investigate Menendez's dealings with the doctor, Salomon Melgen.

A month after the FlightAware expense was incurred, Menendez paid Melgen \$58,500 for two Dominican Republic trips taken on the doctor's jet he failed to disclose or ask permission for, despite Senate rules.

"Considering the time that lapsed, he quite possibly could have not remembered whether or not he paid for it," Thompson said. "But the point is, at the time he took the trip, he knew what the regulation was."

### **They're jockeying in Hudson County**

The Auditor hears that Hoboken Councilwoman Beth Mason plans to run for the Assembly on state Sen. Brian Stack's ticket in the June Democratic primary.

Not only that, The Auditor has been told Mason will be open to endorsing Gov. Chris Christie, if and when Stack does. An influential Hudson County Democrat, Stack has played a crucial role in backing the Republican governor.

But it would be surprising if Mason endorsed Christie. She paid for an ad criticizing his support of the sale of Hoboken University Medical Center, and she argued with him at a town hall meeting over charity care.

Mason has deep pockets that could be useful if Stack goes to war with the Hudson County Democratic Organization in the primary.

Stack, mayor of Union City, has another seat to fill, too.

Hoboken Councilman Ravi Bhalla, who mounted an unsuccessful Assembly campaign in the 2011 primary, is actively seeking a spot on the ticket and has been raising money. He, too, is open to backing Christie.

"I would absolutely be open to endorsing his candidacy given everything the governor has done for Hoboken over the last few years," Bhalla said.

Others mentioned for the seat include Frank Raia, a wealthy developer, and Councilman Michael Russo. But all three live in Hoboken, so The Auditor wouldn't be surprised if Stack looked to Jersey City for a third candidate.

### **As for Woody, won't he?**

A year and a half ago, Jets owner Woody Johnson raised eyebrows by meeting with powerful Republicans, suggesting he was considering a run for U.S. Senate.

But now The Auditor is told that a candidacy for the Johnson & Johnson heir in 2014 looks less and less likely.

In 2011, Johnson gave Meadowlands stadium tours to the likes of George Gilmore, powerful chairman of the Ocean County GOP. But those gestures have faded.

While he still has time to lay the groundwork for a campaign, top Republicans say they would be surprised if Johnson, who owns a home in New Jersey but votes in New York City, decides to run. Complicating matters is the fact that Johnson is opposing Christie on two fronts — sports betting and whether the troubled American Dream mega-mall will open on Sundays. Johnson did not return a request for comment made through a spokesman.

There's been a little more activity from another wealthy Republican who's been recruited in the past. John Crowley, a biotech exec, attended a Feb. 4 Christie fundraiser.

But Republicans aren't banking on a Crowley run either, since he approached the precipice in 2008 and 2012 before backing away.

For now, the most likely Republican hopefuls to replace Sen. Frank Lautenberg, who announced he did not plan to run again, are Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean Jr. (R-Union), state Sen. Joseph Kyrillos (R-Monmouth), Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-Union) and Assemblyman Jay Webber (R-Morris).

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