

David Paterson

David Paterson (D-NY) assumed the office of governor of New York on March 17, 2008, following the resignation of former Gov. Eliot Spitzer. He is not running for reelection.

Gov. Paterson:

- Accepted improper gifts
- Testified falsely under oath
- Acted with willful opacity in consequential state matters
- Shielded a top aide from assault allegations

CHARGE ONE: SELF-ENRICHMENT

The New York State Commission on Public Integrity concluded in March 2010 that Gov. Paterson violated state ethics laws by accepting free World Series tickets in October 2009.¹ Gov. Paterson had directed an aide to contact the New York Yankees to request tickets to game one of the World Series so the governor could attend in his “official capacity.”² The governor then received five field-level tickets with a face value of \$425 each, but an estimated total market value of \$6,000.³

In the face of an expanding state budget crisis, Gov. Paterson came under heavy criticism after it was revealed that he had spent \$21,000 of taxpayers’ money on a custom-stitched antique rug for his residence.⁴ Gov. Paterson acquired the rug after warning that the state deficit could swell to \$15 billion and calling on state workers to forgo a 3 percent yearly pay raise.⁵ The rug was purchased at Stark Carpets, which had contributed \$3,000 to the Spitzer–Paterson campaign in 2005 and 2006, and \$5,000 in 2003, further raising suspicion.⁶

CHARGE TWO: FALSE TESTIMONY

In connection with Gov. Paterson’s acceptance of free World Series tickets, the state ethics commission ruled that Gov. Paterson had falsely testified under oath when he claimed he intended to pay for the tickets all along.⁷ In reality, the tickets were paid for with a backdated check for \$850 from the governor’s personal account, apparently written to support the

¹ Nicholas Confessore and Jeremy W. Peters, Inquiry on Gifts Finds Governor Testified Falsely, *The New York Times*, March 4, 2010.

² Id.

³ Kenneth Lovett, State Watchdog Probes Gov Over Free Game 1 Tix, *Daily News* (New York), November 3, 2009; Fredric U. Dicker, Prober: E-mails Don’t Clear Gov in Tixgate, *New York Post*, March 17, 2010.

⁴ Rick Karlin, Purchase of Turkish Carpet Takes Taxpayers for a Ride?, *Times Union* (Albany, N.Y.), November 20, 2008.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id.

⁷ Confessore and Peters, *The New York Times*, March 4, 2010.

governor's claim.⁸ The state attorney general's office is investigating the matter and considering criminal charges.⁹

CHARGE THREE: TRANSPARENCY

The New York Times called Gov. Paterson's attempts to fill the Senate seat vacated by Hillary Clinton—who was appointed U.S. Secretary of State—an “embarrassing sequence of events” that “ding[ed] Mr. Paterson's credibility.”¹⁰ Gov. Paterson was heavily criticized for dragging out the process, shrouding it in secrecy by refusing to release the results of a questionnaire he required potential candidates to fill out, and neglecting to publically announce any potential candidates.¹¹

Gov. Paterson's record of obfuscation has extended to state fiscal matters.¹² The governor's one-party negotiations on the state budget—conducted during a hastily assembled weekend session—gave legislators and the news media just a few days to read thousands of pages of materials before a vote was held.¹³ NYPIRG, a state ethics-in-government organization, said that Gov. Paterson “gambled that an ‘on-time’ budget means more to voters than ‘transparency.’”¹⁴

CHARGE FOUR: INTERFERENCE IN A SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE

Gov. Paterson is under investigation for allegedly becoming entangled in a domestic abuse case involving top aide David Johnson and Mr. Johnson's girlfriend, Sherr-una Booker.¹⁵ Ms. Booker accused Mr. Johnson of assaulting her in 2009.¹⁶ Gov. Paterson apparently tried to silence Ms. Booker by sending her a message via a state worker that “the governor wants her to make this go away,” in apparent reference to the allegations against Mr. Johnson.¹⁷ Gov. Paterson contacted Ms. Booker the day before her hearing to obtain a protection order against Mr. Johnson was scheduled.¹⁸ Ms. Booker failed to appear in court and the case was dismissed.¹⁹ In addition, the state police department, which has no jurisdiction in the matter, was accused of harassing the victim.²⁰ This revelation resulted in two superintendents resigning from the force.²¹ Two senior aides to Gov. Paterson and his press secretary also resigned in connection with the ongoing scandal.²²

⁸ Id.

⁹ Dicker, *New York Post*, March 17, 2010.

¹⁰ Jeremy W. Peters, Double-Takes by the Governor in Casting a Senator, *The New York Times*, January 21, 2009.

¹¹ Id.

¹² David King, In Albany, Budget Battles Behind Closed Doors, *Gotham Gazette*, March 2009.

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ David Kocieniewski and Jeremy Peters, Inquiry is Told of Paterson Bid to Quiet Accuser, *The New York Times*, March 3, 2010.

¹⁶ Id.

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ Kocieniewski and Peters, *The New York Times*, March 3, 2010

¹⁹ Id.

²⁰ Danny Hakim, Another Aide to Paterson Steps Down, *The New York Times*, March 20, 2010.

²¹ Id.

²² Id.