

# Cuomo assembles team

Governor promotes key aides to state government positions

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ALBANY -- Gov. [Andrew Cuomo](#) announced more appointments to his administration several hours before he took the oath of office Friday night.

Two campaign aides will join the administration. Jim Malatras is deputy secretary for policy management and [Josh Vlasto](#) is deputy communications director. Vlasto was hired onto the Cuomo campaign from Sen. [Chuck Schumer](#)'s press shop earlier this year -- even before Cuomo admitted he was running for governor -- and tirelessly served as the point of first contact for journalists. Malatras, who worked as the legislative liaison in the [Office of Attorney General](#), was involved drafting eight volumes of policy books produced by the campaign.

Cuomo tapped another aide from the attorney general's office, [Ellen Nachtigall Biben](#). She will serve as inspector general. The post is responsible for finding and exposing waste, fraud and inefficiency among various branches of government.

Biben shepherded the office's investigations into pay-to-play at the state pension fund as well as misuse of the [State Police](#). She joins [Steve Cohen](#), [Benjamin Lawsky](#), Mylan Denerstein, [Joseph D'Amico](#), [Richard Bamberger](#) and Les Leach in assuming higher office with Cuomo.

"Ellen has an unimpeachable record of integrity and independence and will bring her well-known tenacity fighting crime and sense of basic fairness to this critical position. I am extremely proud that we have assembled a governing team of such remarkable experience, diversity, and integrity and look forward to continuing the work of building our administration," Cuomo said in a statement.

He also will nominate [Thomas Mattox](#) -- a veteran of Goldman Sachs, Chase Manhattan Bank, [Monitor Consulting Group](#) and the [Harvard Club](#) -- as commissioner of Taxation and Finance.

But other administration posts remain unfilled. Cuomo has yet to announce commissioners for the Office of General Services, Department of Labor, [Department of Environmental Conservation](#), [Department of Transportation](#), Office of Children and [Family Services](#), among other agencies. Lead figures at the agencies set the direction for state regulation and policy.

"It'll be interesting to see who they end up hiring and who they put in place, because change sorely needed in all of those state agencies," said Assembly Minority Leader [Brian Kolb](#), who vetted resumes and interviewed candidates as part of one of Cuomo's

transition teams. "It's a significant undertaking dealing with every single agency, just looking at the top three jobs."

Most have praised the group Cuomo has picked so far.

"You can't separate agencies not working together, or individual agencies working alone as opposed to collectively, and that's on the state level, local level as well," said Albany Mayor [Jerry Jennings](#), a Democrat and longtime Cuomo confidant. (Jennings himself has been rumored as a candidate for an administrative appointment, but said Friday on WGDJ Talk 1300 that "I am where I am, and I'm staying where I am.")

More appointments are expected in coming days. Vlasto said all salaries are yet to be determined.