

COURT STRIKES DOWN BAN ON OUTSIDE JOBS

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY

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ALBANY — The state is considering an appeal of a lower court decision that allows legislators not only to keep their \$30,500 pay raises this year, but also to continue to hold lucrative outside jobs.

The court ruling strikes down a major contingency for the pay raise determined in December: that legislators after Jan. 1, 2020, would have to quit their jobs outside the legislature, which have often been part-time employment with law firms, if they wanted to continue to get raises.

"It's the worst of both worlds," said Jim Coll of Seaford, founder of the nonpartisan good-government group ChangeNYS.org., said Monday.

Albany Supreme Court Justice Christina Ryba also ruled that the legislation that banned outside income beginning in 2020 was tied to future installments of the raises in 2020 and 2021. Because of that, she ruled those two years' of raises are also null and void. That would cost each legislator another \$20,000 in raises, which they thought had been approved in December by a special pay commission they appointed with Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo.

Cuomo had wanted outside pay to be eliminated, citing past scandals; while many legislators, led by Senate Republicans, said denying outside work violated their constitutional right to provide for their families.

The suit was brought by Assemb. Michael Fitzpatrick (R-Smithtown), Bronx activist Roxanne Delgado and Saratoga County Republican leaders David Arrigo and David Buchyn against the state and State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli as part of the pay commission.

DiNapoli spokesman Matthew Sweeney said Monday the comptroller is still reviewing the decision and no appeal has yet begun.

Cuomo called the decision "a confused ruling" that he expects

will be appealed.

"What's the alternative, to take the raise but not ban outside income? Which I don't think the people of this state would stand for," he said.

Legislative leaders didn't respond to requests for comment. Under the legislation they created, the recommendations of the pay commission they appointed became law unless the legislature rejected its package of raises. It didn't.

Restoring the legislators' 2020 and 2021 raise installments isn't a simple matter. Sweeney said the pay commission has dissolved, so another bill would have to be passed to revive it.

The commission decided in December, just weeks after the legislative elections, to increase lawmakers' pay from \$79,500 a year to \$110,000 this year; to \$120,000 on Jan. 1, 2020; and to \$130,000 on Jan. 1, 2021.

Other raises were upheld by Friday's court decision. Cuomo's salary rose to \$200,000 this year, and will rise to \$225,000 on Jan. 1 and to \$250,000 on Jan. 1, 2021. Salaries for the comptroller, attorney general and lieutenant governor rose from \$151,000 to \$190,000 this year, and will rise to \$210,000 in 2020 and \$220,000 in 2021.

Coll said the ruling is a "very dangerous opinion."

"It upholds the ability of the state Legislature and the governor to allocate to a select group of individuals the power to exercise their specifically allocated constitutional functions. These bodies — unelected and unaccountable — can now write law without any further input from the elected representatives of our state."

The Government Justice Center, a good-government advocate, also is challenging the commission's validity. The center's officials "continue to disagree that the legislature could hand over its lawmaking power to an unaccountable committee and will consider their appeal options going forward," said Cameron Macdonaldcq, executive director.

B.I.G. tribute in Brooklyn

Block where rapper grew up now bears his name

BY MAYA RAJAMANI

Special to amNewYork

When Voletta Wallace turned the corner onto St. James Place in Bedford-Stuyvesant after learning her son Christopher, better known as The Notorious B.I.G., had been murdered, she found herself face-to-face with throngs of mourners.

"It was a sad day," Wallace said, recalling that moment 22 years ago. "And when I saw the crowds, tears came to my eyes. And I said to my friend, 'My son was well-loved.'"

On Monday, hundreds of people gathered on St. James Place to honor the legacy of the late rapper, also known as Biggie Smalls, with a street co-naming, braving a downpour that persisted for the duration of the ceremony.

The co-naming officially means St. James Place between Fulton Street and Gates Avenue — the block Biggie grew up on — will now also be known as "Christopher 'Notorious B.I.G.' Wallace Way."

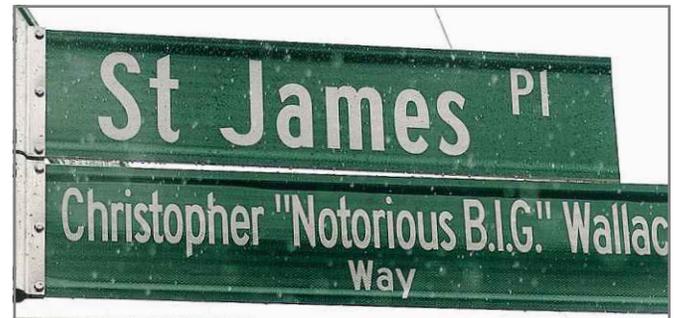
This time, seeing a crowd converge on the street moved Wallace to "happy tears," she said. "I want to thank you for standing out there in the rain to see a sign unveiled. That is love," she said. "You out there, soaking wet? I will remember this for a long, long time."

Biggie's son C.J. Wallace, who came with his grandmother and sister T'yanna Wallace, called the ceremony, wet weather and all, "beautiful."

"I'm just so happy to see this. The rain, all of it, it's perfect," he said. "This is just for Brooklyn, at the end of the day. It's for Brooklyn and for hip-hop."

Family, friends and fans of Biggie, who was killed in a drive-by shooting in Los Angeles in 1997, have been advocating for the renaming for years.

Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo, whose district includes Bedford-Stuyvesant



The block between Fulton Street and Gates Avenue in Brooklyn was co-named Christopher "Notorious B.I.G." Wallace Way.



"I want to thank you for standing out there in the rain to see a sign unveiled. That is love," his mother, Voletta Wallace, said.

and Clinton Hill, said she and other advocates "fought a long time to get to this place."

"That's why this sign is important today — so that the history of why this place is what it is is told to our children, and to our children's children," she said. "We created this borough, and Biggie

Smalls created the soundtrack of inspiration that gave us the growth, the ability, the inspiration to create success in Brooklyn, New York."

Cumbo, fellow council member Robert Cornegy Jr. and Public Advocate Jumaane Williams all credited Biggie with providing inspiration for