

FROM THE POINT

Deciphering Bellone's poll

Steve Bellone is sending out some results of a poll he commissioned which — surprise, surprise — reveal that the Suffolk County executive is very popular.

Global Strategy Group, which conducted the poll of 402 likely general-election voters in late June, finds that the two-term Democratic official gets very high marks from across the political spectrum — a positive rating of 61 percent among Republicans, 62 percent among independents and 69 percent among Democrats.

A summary of the results was given to The Point by Jason Elan, the head of Bellone's communications team. Elan, who did not provide the actual questions asked or the raw polling data that support the conclusions, said Bellone used campaign funds to pay for the survey. The firm also does polling for Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo.

The poll finds that Cuomo leads GOP gubernatorial candidate Marc Molinaro 55 percent to 36 percent, and that the incumbent Democrat does well with independents (57 percent) and Republicans (34 percent). It also finds that candidate Cynthia Nixon is not doing well in the 'burbs. Her favorability rating was 24 percent; 40 percent rated her unfavorable.

Cuomo is running for re-election; so are members of Congress and the State Legislature. But Bellone is not up for re-election until next year. Known to be a tightwad about spending campaign funds, why is Bellone splurging for an off-cycle poll?

It gives him the ability to tout his political strength and activism in a swing county, which gives him clout with Democrats statewide. Writ large, if Suffolk delivers some State Senate seats for Democrats and even a congressional seat, Bellone can take the credit. But don't overlook the immediate politics as well. Bellone comes across as Suffolk's Democratic leader, not just an elected official. His message is that he is a political influencer and strategist for the local party, not his archenemy, county party leader Rich Schaffer.

Even for a tightwad, that's money well spent.

— Rita Ciolli

Hempstead board discord disappointing

I have been watching Town of Hempstead Board meetings online and am appalled at the behavior of the residents and council members.

We have a new supervisor, Democrat Laura Gillen, who deserves the respect of the title.

She is constantly being berated by members of the public, especially on the administration of the animal shelter, while the board does nothing to help her.

I think she is trying hard to work with the Republican majority on the board. As a registered Republican, I ask board members to work with her. Don't get up and leave while angry residents take her to task. We elected all of you to represent us, so put parties aside and back the supervisor.

Now retired, I was a 36-year town employee and was a union vice president. I've never seen such fighting before. Please stop and keep the residents who elect you in the forefront.

James Moran,
Levittown

Editor's note: The writer is a long-time board member of the Levittown School District.

Save highway repairs for the nighttime

On a recent Tuesday, my wife and I drove from Oakdale to Morganville, New Jersey, via the Southern State Parkway and the Belt

JUST SAYIN'



Hempstead Supervisor Laura Gillen at a board meeting in May.

Parkway to the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge. We left at 10 a.m. to travel 90 miles, but didn't arrive until 1 p.m. Traffic was constantly backed up by road construction in Queens and Brooklyn.

Our trip back to Long Island after 8 p.m. took a shade under two hours.

My point is: Daytime work on the parkways costs the public time, wastes fuel and adds to pollution. When will politicians wake up and start having more roadwork done at night?

Stan Feldman,
Oakdale

Utilities should restore roads properly

Roads in my neighborhood feel like those in a Third World country.

There is no oversight or inspection after utility work. Holes are over or underfilled and result in a very bumpy ride — and could cause vehicle damage.

I called the Nassau County Department of Public Works and asked whether it will inspect repairs made after utility companies dig up the roads. The short answer was no. I was told that it's the responsibility of the utilities to repair the road. After calling PSEG Long Island, I was told that contractors do the repairs, and again, there is no inspection.

The utilities shouldn't be allowed to repair roads unsatisfactorily and make them like washboards.

Gary Goldberg,
Bellmore

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OPINION

Though battered, FBI is still keeping us safe

BY MIKE VOGEL

On Wednesday, the people of Cleveland got to watch their Fourth of July parade and fireworks in safety, thanks to the FBI.

FBI officials said Demetrius Pitts, an American citizen also known as Abdur Raheem Rafeeq who has expressed support for al-Qaida, was allegedly scouting locations to launch a bomb attack, including Cleveland's Fourth of July parade.

Pitts also allegedly talked to an undercover FBI agent about giving remote-control cars

packed with explosives to children of those in the U.S. military. He was arrested on Monday.

But that's the work the FBI has been quietly and mostly effectively doing since 9/11. Last Christmas, the agency said it thwarted an attack by Everitt Aaron Johnson, an Islamic State-inspired tow-truck driver and ex-Marine who allegedly plotted to blow up a crowded San Francisco pier. Johnson had hailed the Oct. 31, 2017, attack in New York City in which an ISIS sympathizer plowed a pickup truck into a bike path, killing

eight people.

The FBI, while not perfect, has worked diligently for years to protect us in this way. So why is the president of the United States constantly bashing the FBI and other U.S. intelligence agencies trying to protect us? Because U.S. intelligence discovered that Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential election, and may have colluded with the Trump campaign to do so. The president recently called the investigation of such collusion "a political hit job" and talked darkly of a "deep state" conspiracy against him.

Constantly bashing and denigrating U.S. intelligence agencies while praising Russian President Vladimir Putin ("He said he didn't meddle") and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un ("He's got a great personality") undermines the morale and effectiveness of the agencies.

"The FBI is in tatters?" former Acting Attorney General Sally Yates tweeted. "No. The only thing in tatters is the President's respect for the rule of law. The dedicated men and women of the FBI deserve better."

So while you might not hear this much lately, thank God for the FBI, and other U.S. intelligence agents working daily to keep us safe from enemies foreign and domestic.

BTW, what was the response from our president to the FBI preventing a disaster this week?

Crickets.



Playwright Mike Vogel blogs at newyorkgritty.net.