

Judicial Watch: This Is One Obama Appointee Trump Should Keep

U.S. Attorneys serve at the privilege of the president, a fact made very clear when President George W. Bush replaced nearly all of them when he took office.

While President-elect Donald Trump has pledged to “drain the swamp,” he hasn’t indicated that he intends to replace all of the federal prosecutors. Regardless, the government watchdog group Judicial Watch, in fact, is hoping he keeps one of his predecessor’s appointees.

The organization’s chief investigative reporter, Micah Morrison, has written a lengthy explanation for why Trump should retain the services of U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York Preet Bharara, whom he labels “the scourge of political corruption in seemingly every corner of New York state.”

Here’s why:

New York is in the midst of a corruption epidemic. Over the past decade, more than 30 lawmakers have been convicted or charged with wrongdoing. You can view the wall of shame here, courtesy of *The New York Times*. According to a recent Quinnipiac University poll, 87 percent of New Yorkers say government corruption is a serious problem. 87 percent. Among those sent to jail by Mr. Bharara are the former speaker of the New York State Assembly, Sheldon Silver, a Democrat; and the former majority leader of the New York State Senate, Dean Skelos, a Republican. Corruption in New York is a bipartisan affair.

Silver and Skelos were two of the infamous “three men in a

room” who control Albany. The third man is the governor of the state, currently Andrew Cuomo. Mr. Cuomo has not been charged with any wrongdoing, but earlier this month, Mr. Bharara indicted eight men, including two former top aides to Cuomo, in a sweeping bribery and fraud scheme. A third former Cuomo aide has pleaded guilty and is cooperating with the investigation.

Mr. Bharara is also taking a close look at New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio on several fronts, including fundraising, the activities of mayoral advisers and the sale of a Long Island hospital. Judicial Watch has reported on the links between de Blasio, adviser Jonathan Rosen and real estate developer Bruce Ratner, a Democratic Party heavyweight.

Bharara is not the only prosecutor pressing forward in New York. The posse includes Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, who has beefed up his anti-corruption unit and pressed Albany for expanded powers for state prosecutors. And on Long Island, U.S. Attorney Robert Capers brought a corruption case against the powerful Republican leader of Nassau County, Edward Mangano. Sources tell me political corruption on Long Island is rampant in both parties.

Trump has indicated he just might keep Bharara, but he’s also reportedly looking at appointing Marc Mukasey, a respected attorney with ties to former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, for the position. And while Mukasey is also well qualified for the job, Morrison insists Bharara should keep his job.

“Mr. Trump famously campaigned on ‘draining the swamp,’ and Mr. Bharara should be encouraged to finish the job he started,” he wrote. “Replacing him sends the wrong signal. There are other places in a Trump Administration for a man of Mr. Mukasey’s talents. New York should keep Preet.”

There is perhaps another reason Morrison and Judicial Watch

would like to “keep Preet” that was left out of the article. Bharara is a central figure in the ongoing investigations into the Clinton Foundation and allegations of pay-for-play corruption.

In August, *The Daily Caller* reported:

Multiple FBI investigations are underway involving potential corruption charges against the Clinton Foundation, according to a former senior law enforcement official.

The investigation centers on New York City, where the Clinton Foundation has its main offices, according to the former official who has direct knowledge of the activities.

Prosecutorial support will come from various U.S. Attorneys Offices—a major departure from other centralized FBI investigations.

The New York-based probe is being led by Preet Bharara, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York. Bharara’s prosecutorial aggressiveness has resulted in a large number of convictions of banks, hedge funds and Wall Street insiders.

The status of that investigation is not known, since it is standard procedure not to comment on such matters prior to the completion of an investigation. Bharara did visit Trump Tower on Wednesday, but gave no indication as to what he and the president-elect spoke about. {eo}