



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on January 22, 2014

Cuomo: Room, but not Much Hope, for Conservatives in N.Y. Politics

Conservatives living in the Cuomo Empire State may stop packing and cancel their moving van rentals. A statement from the office of Gov. Andrew Cuomo appeared as an open letter to the *New York Post* Tuesday, disputing the daily tabloid's depiction of remarks His Excellency made in a radio interview with the [headline](#): "Gov. Cuomo to Conservatives: Leave NY!"



The story appeared in the *Post* on Saturday, reporting that Cuomo had been a guest on "The Capitol Pressroom" radio program in Albany and told the interviewer that Republicans with "extreme conservative" views pose a greater problem for their party than the Democrats do.

"Who are they?" Cuomo asked rhetorically. "Right to life, pro-assault weapons, anti-gay — if that's who they are, they have no place in the state of New York because that's not who New Yorkers are."

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"Gov. Cuomo has a message for conservative Republicans — you don't belong in New York," the *Post* story began. But the [statement](#) issued by the governor's office pointed out that the governor in the interview was referring to the political prospects in New York for the kind of conservatives he described, not their right to live in the state.

"The Governor did not say that, nor does he believe that," said the "open letter" to the paper. "If you read the transcript (below), it is clear that the Governor was making the observation that an extreme right candidate cannot win statewide because this is a politically moderate state (either moderate Republican or moderate Democratic).

"In the same response, the Governor went on to say 'it is fine' to be anti-gun control, and anti-choice" — as he respects both positions," the letter stated.

It does appear that Cuomo was speaking about the ability of those he describes as "extreme conservatives" to "survive in this state" politically, while contrasting them with the "moderate Republicans" who helped him pass his legislative agenda in Albany. Those politicians who are "right to life, pro-assault weapons, anti-gay" are on the opposite side of "70 percent of the voters" on those issues, he claimed.

The *Post's* headline reflects a long tradition of catchy and often sensational headlines in tabloid newspapers. To those with long memories it may have recalled the *New York Daily News* headline in October 1975 after President Ford vowed to veto a bill for a federal bailout of cash-strapped New York City. "Ford to City: Drop Dead" [shouted the headline](#) from the front page. Though there were no



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quotation marks around the memorable words, many who saw the page no doubt came away with the impression that Ford had literally told the city to drop dead.

“The *Post* can allow any person they want to publish in their paper,” the governor’s letter chided, “but if they are to retain any credibility they cannot be entirely reckless with facts and the truth.”

Perhaps Gov. Cuomo was being only a little reckless with the facts and truth when he claimed 70 percent support among New York voters for the positions he favors on the issues he cited. That appears a bit high if the state’s legislature is any kind of barometer of voter opinion. After having previously voted against the measure, the New York Senate in June 2011 passed the bill establishing same-sex marriage by a vote 33-29, a good deal less than 70 percent. While Americans United for Life have consistently ranked New York among the states “least protective” of pre-natal life, more than 70 percent of New Yorkers favor some pro-life legislation, including parental notification for minors, waiting periods, and a requirement that abortion providers inform patients of options and alternatives to abortion, according to a [poll](#) commissioned last year by the pro-life Chiaroscuro Foundation and conducted by McLaughlin and Associates.

And though the governor boasts of bipartisan support at the State House for the passage early last year of the Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement (SAFE) Act, by year’s end 52 of the state’s 62 counties had passed [resolutions](#) calling for repeal of the law, which bans all magazines with a capacity of more than seven rounds. By early September the New York State Sheriffs Association and five individual sheriffs had [joined court efforts](#) to block enforcement of the law. Unless the sheriffs are impostors from Idaho and Utah, there appears to be more than a little sentiment among law enforcement personnel and others in the state of New York in opposition to the governor’s gun control agenda.

Cuomo’s comments in his radio interview drew some predictable fire from leaders and organizations in the pro-life and gun rights movements, as reported on [lifesitenews.com](#).

“The Governor might as well have hung a 54,000 square-mile ‘Keep Out!’ sign across the state border to anyone with mainstream views on marriage, life, and the Second Amendment,” Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council said in an e-mail to supporters. “I guess the governor believes if you don’t believe the way he does, there’s not room in what he thinks is his state,” said Michael Long, chairman of the New York Conservative Party.

“Cuomo Excommunicates Catholics,” cried the [headline](#) in the *National Catholic Register*. Cuomo is among a large number of Catholics in political office who support the legal status of abortion, despite its condemnation by their church. The governor’s comments even drew invitations from other states, suggesting conservative New Yorkers might consider moving to politically friendlier climates.

“Come to Texas!” said Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood director who leads a pro-life group helping employees at abortion facilities find other lines of work. “Seriously, I think it shows how ridiculous Gov Cuomo is and the hypocritical nature of his leadership.”

“Hey displaced and persecuted New Yorkers,” Bobby Jindal, the pro-life governor of Louisiana, said in a Facebook post Tuesday, “You can find refuge, loving people, and great food in Louisiana.”

Photo of Gov. Andrew Cuomo: AP Images



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