

Give It Back, Chuck

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By *Cynthia Chaffee and Mary Ann Miller*

On January 18th, a frigid Thursday evening, the senior senator from New York, Chuck Schumer, was feted by the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) at a \$1,200 per plate dinner. This all took place at the Midtown Hilton Hotel on 6th Avenue and 53rd Street.

While Chuck was being honored inside, a crowd of about 100 protestors jeered outside. This group, [Stop REBNY Bullies](#), was led by Ray Rogers, a well-known union organizer. “He should be out here fighting for workers and the homeless, and the small businesses. That’s what Schumer should be doing,” Rogers told *LaborPress*. “Instead, he’s in there hobnobbing with REBNY—the ones responsible for exacerbating and creating the homeless crisis in this city...”

Why was this group of millionaires and billionaires honoring our senior senator from New York? Could it be for campaign contributions? Could this all-powerful group of developers, which controls all of the real estate development and landlords in the city and state, be trying to buy our senator as they have so many other politicians and landlords?

Speaking of landlords, disgraced and jailed landlord Steve Croman (and his wife Harriet) is also in on the giving, having contributed heavily between the two of them—roughly \$11,000 to the ‘FRIENDS OF CHUCK SCHUMER’ re-election campaigns of [2002](#) and [2010](#).

Was Steve Croman calling in political favors? Were these contributions to Chuck Schumer and other politicians an insurance policy to protect Croman from his criminal activities, if and when he got into trouble, which he did? It’s something to think about.

Chuck Schumer and Steve Croman are further joined at the hip through Croman's public relations firm, **Marathon Strategies**, which is owned by Phil Singer, a former senior advisor to Senator Schumer. Get this kind of money out of the election process. The campaign finance laws regarding contributions must be changed.

Governor Andrew Cuomo was embarrassed enough recently to return \$110,000 from Harvey Weinstein, the disgraced movie mogul. Cuomo did not return it directly to Weinstein, but to a group affiliated with the National Organization for Women through #MeToo.

We too call on Chuck Schumer to give the money received from both Steve and Harriet Croman not back to them, but to an organization that helps the homeless. We urge him to do so because of all the people he's made homeless. Schumer could also return the money to a no-kill animal shelter, since most of the pets given up to shelters have ended up there because of landlord evictions. The money that Steve Croman donated to you, Chuck Schumer, is tainted, and was obtained fraudulently from banks; it wasn't his to give. Even worse, Croman stole the money from tenants; it comes from his tenants' blood, sweat, and even their tears.

So you see, Chuck, the money wasn't Croman's to give and this is why we insist and urge you to give it up, Chuck.

Cynthia Chaffee and Mary Ann Miller are the Co-founders of the Stop Croman Coalition, which was established on Bastille Day, July 14, 2007.