

## Gov. Jon Corzine should release the Carla Katz emails

Posted by [kheyboer](#) January 13, 2009 05:53AM



Star-Ledger File Photos

Gov. **Jon Corzine** has been saying for a year and a half that there was nothing wrong, nothing unethical, nothing even particularly interesting about the series of e-mails he exchanged with **Carla Katz**, his ex-girlfriend/labor-negotiations-adversary, in late 2006 and early 2007.

"Most of them you will find extraordinarily boring," Corzine said last May.

But, he said, he had to fight against a lawsuit seeking public release of those e-mails because an important principle was at stake: Governors must be able to communicate privately with a wide variety of people, inside and outside their administrations, without worrying that every note and message may become a public record.

Yesterday a state appeals court agreed.

"Confidentiality serves to protect government sources of information, and disclosure of confidential e-mails between the governor and a union leader, or a union leader and members of the governor's staff, would tend to have a 'chilling effect,'" Judge Mary Catherine Cuff wrote for a three-judge panel.

Now it's time for Corzine to declare victory -- and then release the e-mails.

We have said before that the public has the right to know what Corzine and Katz -- who were on opposite sides of negotiations over the state workers' contract -- were e-mailing back and forth. As Superior Court Judge Paul Innes wrote in the ruling that was reversed yesterday, the public should be able to determine whether their relationship "had any improper influence or effect on the governor's paramount obligation to serve the interest of the citizens of New Jersey first."

Corzine's concern about executive privilege had merit, too. A governor's private communications should not be subject to fishing expeditions by political rivals, which is pretty much what state Republican Party chairman Tom Wilson's lawsuit comes down to.

"I have nothing to be embarrassed about, but I have a constitution to protect," Corzine said back in July 2007.

So if that was his purpose in fighting the lawsuit, he won. And that's exactly why he should now release the e-mails -- so Wilson won't appeal. To let the case continue to the state Supreme Court would be to put at risk the very principle Corzine successfully defended.

Besides, as a political matter, it would be better for Corzine to get it all out in the open now rather than have questions about the "secret Carla e-mails" hang over his head throughout his re-election campaign.

Assuming, that is, that they really are all that boring.