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TOP STORY

Atlantic City mayor endorses Fulop, will co-chair campaign for governor

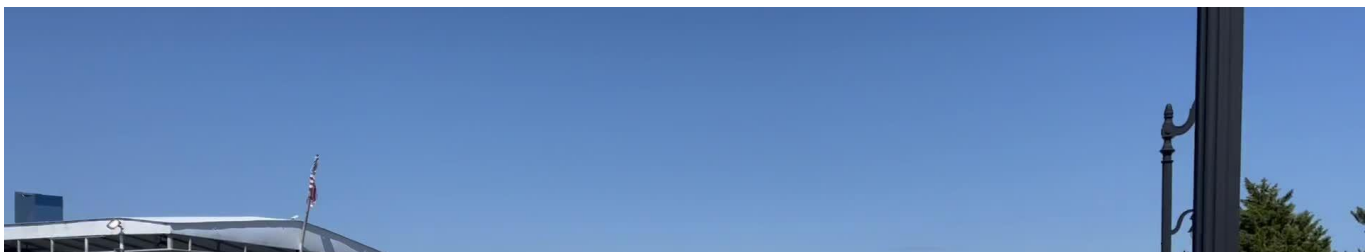
Nicholas Huba , Michelle Brunetti Post

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Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop, right, swears in Marty Small Sr. as acting mayor of Atlantic City in 2019 at City Hall. Edward Lea / Staff photographer

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possibilities if he becomes governor, for the city, for the county and for South Jersey."

Small called Fulop a transformational leader in Jersey City who will do the same for the state.

The two have known each other since about 2008, Small said, and share similar experiences and issues as mayors of urban cities.

"We talk all the time, we get together," said Small, who added the two will have dinner together Tuesday. "He swore me into office during my first time as mayor."

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After touring Atlantic City in 2016, Fulop changed his mind about allowing casinos in North Jersey.



Jersey City Mayor Steven Fulop launches campaign for governor

"I convinced him to go against North Jersey gaming, which was big," Small said.

Small is making his endorsement choice early, as the election isn't until 2025 and the full field won't be known for a long time.

But if Fulop wins, the payoff for Small and the region could be significant.

"To the victor goes the spoils. That's the advantage of coming out early and being a supporter early," said John Froomjian, executive director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. "People who are in on the ground floor as supporters will often be part of a transition team, part of a cabinet or could get an appointment to an authority or board."

This year all state Senate and Assembly seats are up, and 2024 is the presidential race.

"So much of politics in 2025 will be influenced by what happens in 2024," Froonjian said.



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Small will focus on organizing Atlantic County and South Jersey for Fulop, the campaign said, citing his "sharp political organizing skills" leading Atlantic City and fending off campaign challenges and attempts to change the city's form of government and form of elections.

"After decades of Atlantic City struggling, Mayor Small is moving the community forward with major redevelopment initiatives, lower property taxes and improved services, and I could not be more proud to have him join our campaign," Fulop said in a statement. "Mayors are on the front lines of government and have a tremendous responsibility to deliver what their constituents need every day — there's no more

difficult or rewarding job in politics. As Governor I will bring that experience as a Mayor to the State House and enact policies that support local government and help it deliver the progress that residents deserve.”

Fulop and state Sen. Steve Sweeney were unofficial candidates for governor in 2016 but dropped out before officially declaring, after it became clear that then-newcomer Phil Murphy had the support of most county committees. Murphy had offered the committees significant financial backing.

Fulop visited Atlantic City in 2016 and took a tour with Small, whom he swore into office in 2019 following the resignation of Mayor Frank Gilliam Jr.

Murphy was elected governor in 2016 and reelected in 2020.

Fulop served in the U.S. Marine Corps earlier in his life, having enlisted shortly after the 9/11 attacks, according to his campaign.



Fulop

By Nicholas Huba

Digital Editor

Started working in newsrooms when I was 17 years old. Spent 15 years working for Gannett New Jersey before coming to The Press of Atlantic City in April 2015.

By Michelle Brunetti Post

Staff Writer

In my first job after college got paid to read the New York Times and summarize articles for an early online data base. First reporting job was with The Daily Record in Parsippany. I have also worked in nonprofits, and have been with The Press since 1990.
