

Statement of Kevin H. Marino

The time has come to set the record straight about Bill Stepien. He is innocent of any wrongdoing with respect to the Bridgegate affair. He is not “callous,” “insensitive,” or “idiotic.” His judgment is sound and his work ethic is strong. Mr. Stepien is the finest Republican political consultant in America, and his banishment from the RGA and the New Jersey GOP was unsound and unfair. He **successfully** invoked the fifth amendment in response to the Select Committee’s invalid subpoena because he is a properly counseled, falsely accused, innocent man, and for no other reason. Those are the facts.

On April 2, 2014, in an effort to inject the truth into the collective “bloodstream,” I sent Randy Mastro the attached letter demanding that he correct the Gibson Dunn Report’s unsupported conclusions regarding Mr. Stepien’s role in Bridgegate. Specifically, I demanded that Mr. Mastro expressly state what his investigation had clearly revealed: that Mr. Stepien was not involved in the origination, planning, execution, or concealment of David Wildstein’s lane closure plan, and that last December 12th, Mr. Stepien candidly informed the Governor of his advance knowledge of that plan and of his proper suggestion that Mr. Wildstein vet that plan with the powers-that-be in Trenton, not with him. I also urged Mr. Mastro to correct his flatly-erroneous legal assertion that Mr. Stepien’s proper invocation of his constitutional rights — since embraced by Judge Jacobson in her 98-page opinion dismissing the Committee’s lawsuit — somehow supports a proper inference that he is guilty of wrongdoing. No correction was forthcoming. Instead, the Report’s irresponsible conclusions about Mr. Stepien — from its vague determination that he engaged in “troubling” conduct, to its damningly false conclusion that he lied to the Governor about Wildstein’s proposal and his reaction to it, to its legally incorrect contention that one can draw an adverse inference from his refusal to honor an invalid subpoena — have all now taken root.

The widespread acceptance of the Gibson Dunn Report’s false narrative about Bill Stepien, obviously concocted to justify his unwarranted banishment by the Governor, can be clearly seen in the mainstream media’s rank speculation about Mr. Stepien’s involvement in this sordid affair, and was evidenced most recently in the Committee’s questions of Michael Drewniak about Mr. Stepien, and in Mr. Drewniak’s at times curious responses to those questions. As a result, we are left with no choice but to release this letter to the public. We do so not only to inform those who seek the truth about Mr. Stepien, but also to inspire those who know that truth but have thus far refused to embrace it. In particular, we urge the Committee to review the attached letter and those portions of the Gibson Dunn Report to which it refers.