



Sweeney was out to prove that he possessed as much juice as JCP&L and that his didn't fail for days at a time in a storm. He's established himself as the most consequential Senate President since Somerset County's Ray Bateman in the 1970's.

The political cognoscenti largely agree that in Sweeney, Murphy faced an adversary infinitely more skilled in political dark arts and that the governor's lack of experience and naivete led inevitably to his near capitulation.

His failure to embark on a campaign-like swing throughout the state to sell his tax and budget plan to taxpayers and voters was a glaring shortcoming.

As the days dwindled down and a government shutdown inched closer, the governor enlisted the aid of interest groups who'd supported him to issue statements and place commentary pieces in newspapers and on websites urging approval of his budget.

At one point, he convinced former Vice President Al Gore and former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean to affix their names to supportive commentaries, even though their knowledge of New Jersey's fiscal condition was nonexistent. They drew little attention.

It was too little, too late. All were unpersuasive and went largely ignored, swept aside by increasingly rancorous exchanges between the Senate President and the governor.

Sweeney compared Murphy to President Trump at one point while Murphy accused Sweeney of channeling his inner Chris Christie.

It will be difficult for both to put all that aside and store their snark away for the next three and

