

KARL ROVE'S US ATTORNEY PROJECT, MARY BETH BUCHANAN EDITION

Remember the stated reason Karl Rove gave for firing a bunch of US Attorneys? He saw these US Attorney positions as a great stepping stone for rising political stars.

And now it looks like Mary Beth Buchanan, best known for her politicized prosecution of Dr. Cyril Wecht, may join Chris Christie and Tim Griffin in pursuit of elected office, in her case to run against Blue Dog Jason Altmire.

U.S. Attorney Mary Beth Buchanan is pondering a run for Congress to challenge Democrat Rep. Jason Altmire next fall.

Ms. Buchanan, a Republican and appointee of former President George W. Bush, has been considering a run for at least a month, Allegheny County Republican Party Chairman Jim Roddey said yesterday.

[snip]

Mr. Roddey said he has met with her, and Ms. Buchanan is consulting with state and national Republican leaders to gauge support and her chances against the second-term Democrat from McCandless.

But remember. Buchanan is still the acting US Attorney. Which puts her in the same position Chris Christie got in when it came out he was working politics while still in office.

The county GOP leader said he did not see any ethical qualms with exploring a run while sitting as the chief federal prosecutor for Western Pennsylvania, and said Ms. Buchanan should step down only

if she announces her candidacy.

Mr. Altmire, who said he has heard Ms. Buchanan's name mentioned as a possible opponent, disagreed.

"She's in a position that's supposed to be nonpolitical," Mr. Altmire said. "If that's true, I think it would be an inappropriate use of her time."

Who knows? Maybe like Christie she'll go on to boast about discussing offering AUSAs political jobs when she wins (though a Congresswoman would have fewer patronage jobs than a Governor to dole out). Or, maybe like Christie, it'll become clear she has no platform (save, in Christie's case, a plan to prevent women like Jane and me from getting mammograms) and her campaign will stall out.

In any case, it's probably time to start tracking these races as a whole (including whatever race Troy Eid decides he's going to run for) to monitor how effective the second part of Rove's scheme to politicize US Attorneys turns out to be.