

Primary Day set for Tues.

Gov. nixes delay, dashes hopes of Rudy backers

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Gov. Pataki said yesterday that the primary for mayor and other offices will be held Tuesday as planned, ending speculation the voting might be delayed a second time after the terrorism at the twin towers.

The decision was met with relief by the candidates, especially the mayoral contenders, who saw further delays as a potential opening for the increasingly popular Mayor Giuliani to somehow remain in office.

Pataki praised Giuliani as "a great mayor," but said he did not support postponing the election. "I tell you, if I were a resident of New York City, I would write him

in," he said. "But the election is going to go forward."

Threat to Bloomberg

The possibility of voters writing in Giuliani's name in the GOP primary could deny Pataki's favored candidate — Michael Bloomberg — the 40% of the vote needed to win the primary without a two-man runoff.

However, even if Giuliani won

in a write-in campaign, he would be barred from serving unless the city's term limits law was changed — an unlikely prospect.

The statewide primaries were halted after the Sept. 11 attacks and put off for two weeks.

Pataki had considered a second postponement because of concerns the Board of Elections might not have enough time to ensure the primary would run smoothly.

One issue was whether police would be available to guard all of the polling sites. That problem was resolved by arranging to have state troopers and the National Guard assist the Police Department on Tuesday.

Pataki said proceeding sends a

message that democracy cannot be derailed.

"This wasn't just an attack on the twin towers, this was an attack on freedom," he said. "We would encourage everyone to come out on Tuesday and show this democracy is strong."

Rudy backers hopeful

The possibility of another delay fueled the hopes of New Yorkers clamoring for Giuliani to stay in office after Dec. 31 — when his second term ends — to deal with the crisis.

The ad giant Saatchi & Saatchi took out a full-page ad in the Daily News yesterday demanding a one-year extension of Giuliani's term. And Manhattan

Rabbi Arthur Schneier said he was organizing clergy to ask that Giuliani be allowed to remain.

After closing the door to staying in office on Monday, Giuliani sidestepped the issue yesterday. "I don't feel like talking about politics. It seems like very, very far from the things that I should be concentrating on."

Hoping to boost turnout, the Democratic State Committee taped radio public service announcements featuring the Rev. Jesse Jackson and actors Harvey Keitel, Kathleen Turner, Glenn Close, Billy Baldwin and Sally Field urging participation Tuesday. Good-government groups also are organizing get-out-the-vote campaigns.

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