

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2001

Voters seem to be heeding Rudy's advice

**A write-in for the mayor is possible,
but few appear willing to make that statement
and waste their ballot**

VOICES

**Would you consider writing in
Mayor Rudy Giuliani on
the primary ballot even though
he is currently ineligible to serve
a third term?**



"No. We should give somebody else
a chance, even at a time like this.
The next person may be better."
Nick Fonseca, Port Richmond



"Of course I would. I don't think
a new person could come in and handle
all this. He's done a good job, even if
[the terrorist attacks] didn't happen."

*Melante Cendana,
Castleton Corners*

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On the eve of the city's primary elections, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani ducked questions about his political future, saying he hasn't had time to decide whether he would pursue the possibility of staying in office beyond his term.

Today, as voters in the various primary races began to make their choices, it's clear that Giuliani is still on the minds of voters — if not on their ballots.

The mayor did not rule out trying to extend his stay in office, but his curt answers to reporters who pressed him at a news conference yesterday fell short of the expectation that he wanted to remain in office after his current term expires Dec. 31.

Sources close to Giuliani told reporters Sunday that the mayor had spoken with advisers about that possibility, but Giuliani said yesterday "I haven't had time to think about it."

"As soon as I have time, I will think about it and talk to the peo-

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ple I trust most and get their advice," he said. "Then I'll make the statement. But I'm not going to make a statement now."

He also told voters not to write in his name on any ballots, saying it would be a "wasted vote."

The mayor is barred from serving a third term by a term-limits law passed by New York City voters in 1993 and backed by referendum in 1996. In March, former Republican South Shore Councilman Stephen J. Fiola cast a deciding vote in committee that prevented a measure to repeal term limits from reaching the City Council floor.

But Giuliani has received widespread praise for his stewardship of the city, since hijacked jets brought down the World Trade Center, and some voters have called for him to run again or extend his term until New York City regains normality.

Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, Public Advocate Mark Green, City Comptroller Alan Hevesi and City Council Speaker Peter Vallone are facing off in the mayoral Democratic primary today. Media mogul Michael Bloomberg and former Rep. Herman Badillo are seeking the Republican nomination for mayor. Polls will be open until 9 p.m.

Badillo said yesterday that if he wins today's primary he will turn over the nomination to Giuliani. Voters have also pledged to write in Giuliani's name on the ballot.

But judging by the sentiments expressed by some early morning voters, persons seem to be heeding the mayor's advice. Rosalie Di Biase of Castleton Corners, for example, voting this morning at the Armory in West Brighton, did not write in his name.

"I just figured if (Giuliani) is going to run, he can do so in the November elections as an independent. Right now, putting his name down would be a waste of a vote."

John Lorentzen of Westerleigh felt the same way. "If Giuliani's name was up there, I would have voted for him, but rules are rules."

Also voting this morning at the Armory was Leticia Remauro, the Republican Party leader on Staten Island. She said she was now sorry she voted for term limits, but cast her ballot for GOP candidate Michael Bloomberg. "My vote had to celebrate democracy, and I need to vote for someone who can legitimately win."

For Diana Lewis, a retired corrections officer, who showed up to vote at Paulo Intermediate School in Huguenot wearing a large oval-shaped peace sign draped around her neck, the law is the law.

"I voted as I did on the 11th. We

set term limits. He wants everyone to uphold the law, and that's the law. (Giuliani's) waiting to see how many write-ins he gets. He's testing the waters.

"The vote got hijacked in Florida for the presidential election, and I don't want to see the mayoral election hijacked in New York."

Marie and Paul Cacioppo of Prince's Bay, also voting this morning at Paulo, didn't vote for the mayor, but would if he was on the ballot in November.

"It wouldn't make sense," said Paul Cacioppo, a retired New York City Transit general supervisor.

Marie Cacioppo, a technical manager for AT & T, said she considered putting in Giuliani's name, but didn't in the end. "I did think of it; however I thought it prudent to follow his directions, since his directions have been excellent."

Bob and Linda McAndrew, who were at the Central Family Center in St. George, said not to "write him in this morning." "I was very strongly in favor of term limits and I'm sticking to my guns," said Mrs. McAndrew.

But her husband is seriously considering writing in Giuliani later in the general election — he can't today because he's a registered Democrat.

Stephen Mulrooney of Clifton said a write-in vote for the mayor "subverts the whole democratic process."

"I think the law is what it is for a reason," said Mulrooney.

A few folks from Todt Hill said they would've voted for Giuliani if they could've.

"He's done a good job in the past few days as mayor of the city," said Ronald Bertinelli.

"He did a good job through two terms and what he's done in the past few days has just enhanced it," said Catherine Arthurs.

For Giuliani to be eligible to continue serving beyond a second term, the City Council and voters would have to amend the City Charter, or the state Legislature and the Republican Gov. George E. Pataki would have to enact

emergency legislation to extend his term.

Neither scenario is likely.

The Republican mayor faces a state Assembly controlled by Democrats, and support to overturn the term limits law is weak in the City Council. Both Vallone and Democratic state Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver are opposed to the repeal of the law.

"There's no way we're going to do this in the Council," Vallone said yesterday. "We fought this fight before."

Pressure on Silver is possible, given that the bulk of the Assembly's Democratic majority hails from New York City and the mayor's popularity is soaring here. But Silver said yesterday he was feeling no such pressure, and he is aware of the city's enthusiasm for the mayor.

"Foreign terrorists came here to disrupt a democracy," Silver said. "One of the principles of democracy is the right of the people to vote. I do not believe we should be giving into their will of stopping democracy."

Even if the term-limits law was repealed, city lawmakers said the legalities of the amendment under the 1965 Voting Rights Act would have to be considered by the Justice Department in Washington, D.C.

Still, Giuliani called seeking an extended stay in office "an important decision," which suggests that the issue is still alive and that an announcement could be expected in the future.

"I don't want to speculate on that right now because anything I say is going to be interpreted by half the people one way and half the people another way," Giuliani told reporters. "It is true that I have a future. I just don't know what it is yet."

Giuliani cut off speculation and urged voters to turn out at the polls today and select from among the candidates on the ballot.

"It would make no sense to write my name in," he said. "It



Mayor Rudolph Giuliani

would be totally confusing to do that."

Last week, Pataki said if he were a New Yorker he would write in Giuliani's name on the ballot, and many Staten Island residents are considering such action.

Among them is 48-year-old Dorothy Bray of Grasmere, who lauded the mayor yesterday for setting an example to New Yorkers. Since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, Giuliani has worked tirelessly to hold news conferences between visits to the disaster site, funerals and meetings to coordinate a response.

"Right now is not the time to put a new mayor in office," she said. "He's done a great job. With the situation we have now, why can't they bend the rules like they do for everything else?"

Eddie Mansour, 34, of New Springville, feels differently.

"It's all politics," he said. "Everybody should have a fair shot. His term is up."

(Associated Press material)

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