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Newday Photo / Ken Sawchuk

Democratic candidates Fernando Ferrer, left, and Mark Green before debate

Green Has Harsh Words for Ferrer

By Robert Polner
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STAFF WRITERS

Mark Green criticized rival Fernando Ferrer on the campaign trail yesterday for waiting nearly three weeks since the destruction of the World Trade Center to propose a recovery plan.

Ferrer detailed his plan on Monday, "two weeks after I first spoke out and one week after I noted his silence," said Green in an unusually barbed statement.

Green, the city's two-term public advocate, fired the shot as he rolled out additional details of his own proposal for a mayor-governor authority to solicit and spend billions in federal disaster aid.

"There are some real differences in our approaches, and considerable omissions," said Green, embroiled in a close and increasingly negative Democratic mayoral runoff.

Green's statement appears crafted to seize back the momentum that Ferrer gained by coming out against Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's attempt to pressure the State Legislature to allow him to stay in office for an extra three months.

Green hopes to make the remaining days before the Oct. 11

runoff a test of which candidate has the most smarts and best advisers to pull the city through its darkest hours.

For Green, the need to change the topic appears obvious. Ferrer, the Bronx borough president, has often dominated the conversation in recent days by repeatedly charging that Green's bowing to Giuliani's resurging popularity was a sign of weakness, and he even asked at one point: "Why is a candidate wasting the time of the electorate if he is not ready for a crisis?"

John Del Cecato, a Ferrer campaign spokesman, responded to Green's criticism: "Borough President Ferrer understands that this [the Trade Center recovery] is an extremely important matter that warrants a deliberative process and a thoughtful, collaborative discussion with leaders throughout the city. So that's what he did before releasing his framework. He didn't think it was appropriate for him to have a knee-jerk reaction and two-page press release 48 hours after the tragedy."

On a busy day for the Democrats, Ferrer picked up the endorsement of the Rev. Floyd Flake, leader of the 12,000-member Allen AME Church in Queens.

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