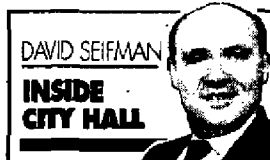


NEW YORK POST, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2001

Bush will work the phones for Bloomberg



PRESIDENT Bush will be making a last-minute pitch for Republican mayoral candidate Michael Bloomberg.

Sources said the president has agreed to record an automated phone message that Bloomberg's campaign will direct at registered Republicans starting tomorrow.

One insider said a key question facing Bloomberg strategists is whether to expand the call list to include independents — a group that could prove crucial in Tuesday's election.

"Bush definitely helps with Republicans," said the insider. "Then you have to ask yourself if the president has an impact with others."

Independents are lean-

ing heavily to Bloomberg 58 to 23 percent, according to yesterday's Marist poll.

But 19 percent of the independents remain up for grabs.

There was a hint of trouble for Mark Green at the Bronx GOP dinner, which always seems to attract some Democrats.

One of those was freshman City Councilman Joel Rivera, who joined the crowd at the Villa Barone on Thursday night in heartily applauding the arrival of Bloomberg.

Rivera's father, Assemblyman Jose Rivera, was among a large group of state legislators who endorsed Green this week.

But the younger Rivera has yet to follow in his father's footsteps.

"I'm neutral," he said. "I'll be making an endorsement in the next day or so."

Libby Pataki was the leadoff speaker this week at a "Women for Bloomberg," and she made reference to just two women in her speech.

One was Estee Lauder, founder of the cosmetics firm, and the other was Evelyn Lauder.

Tax returns released by the Patakis in April show the first lady earned \$80,000 for serving as a marketing consultant to cosmetics billionaire Ronald Lauder, Evelyn's husband.

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