NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

The Leader We Need

President Bush got it dead right last night in more ways than one.

Standing tall before the nation's assembled leadership — and on global television — the president introduced Gov. Pataki and Mayor Giuliani: "As a symbol of America's resolve, my administration will work with ... these two leaders to show the world that we will rebuild New York City."

The applause was *thunderous* — for the whole world knows what the pair has done over the past 10 days.

Especially Giuliani.

But while Pataki has more than a year left in his second term, Giuliani, as things stand, has only *weeks* remaining in *his*.

This needs to change.

New York remains a city in shock.

Recovery will come — but more than anything else right now, New York needs continuity of leadership.

Nobody is saying so out loud, in public — not yet. But behind the scenes, leaders of commerce, of politics, of government are asking — indeed, *demanding* — that the mayoralty not be handed to a man who doesn't enjoy the full confidence of the city, the nation and the world.

Mayor Giuliani needs to stay on.

Giuliani, whose inspired leadership has carried all New Yorkers through these dark days, is the man who can bring New York's recovery to *the next* level.

He's the man New Yorkers *trust*. No one really doubts that — but for further proof, just read the letters on the opposite page; they are among *thousands* e-mailed to The Post over the past week.

That's why Pataki and the state Legislature need to postpone next week's primary election, and then change the law so that Giuliani *can* remain in office.

Not for another four-year term.

Maybe not even for another year.

But long enough to build a framework for recovery, to build a structure within which a duly elected successor can finish the city's comeback.

And it is not just Giuliani who needs to be kept on.

Comptroller Alan Hevesi; Public Advocate Mark Green; Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer and City Council Speaker Peter Vallone each has a role to play in bringing the city back.

Then — and *only* then — will it be time for the political clock to begin ticking.

Then, the six men who would be mayor can pick up where they left off.

An extraordinary action?

Certainly. New Yorkers have twice approved the term limits that are forcing Giuliani and every other senior elected official of significance in municipal government from office.

To thwart the will of the people — or so the argument goes — would be to hand the terrorists an unwarranted victory.

But postponing the coming election — for three months, or six, or 12 — wouldn't thwart anything. It would just be recognizing the size of the task at hand.

The Giuliani team has performed *magnificently*.

But soon the immediate crisis will pass — with much profoundly important work still to be done.

This is no time for on-the-job mayoral training.

More and more, New Yorkers are making clear that they want Giuliani to stay on. And the business community — whose future investment in this town is key to its economic survival — wants Giuliani to stay on.

This goes beyond chairing a commission tasked with overseeing the recovery, as some suggest. This is *about continuity* of leadership — and the case for his continued mayoralty is overwhelming.

Rebuilding lower Manhattan is far more than a construction task:

- It means dealing with the profound budget difficulties engendered by the attack.
- It means rebuilding the city's public-safety structure — especially the fire department, shattered by the loss of hundreds of members and its top-echelon commanders.
- It means convincing workers and companies who are considering fleeing the city for the suburbs that they'd be far wiser to reinvest in New York's future.
- It means convincing understandably frightened tourists, who provide a large chunk of the city's revenue base, that New York is still a safe place to visit.
- And it means convincing Congress that the tens of billions of government dollars soon to be pumped into the recovery effort will be spent wisely and prudently — without waste, fraud and cost overruns.

And then seeing to it that the job gets done.

So the case for keeping Rudy on is not only convincing — it's compelling.

What of the election? Can it be postponed, legally?

Yes.

The process is not only constitutional, but far easier than you might expect.

The city is, constitutionally, a political subdivision of the state. In the mid '70s, as the city teetered on the edge of bankruptcy, Albany imposed a new fiscal order on the city.

All the pain of the subsequent state and federal bailout of the city — the thousands of cops and teachers laid off; the programs cut; the loss of control of the courts and the City University — was *dictated* to City Hall.

Yet nobody challenged Albany's power, in no small measure because nobody questioned the severity of the crisis.

Just last week, Pataki and the Legislature postponed the city primaries that were under way when the World Trade Center was attacked — and then rescheduled the vote.

Now they can do what's necessary to see the city through this crisis.

The issue can be stated this simply:

New York needs a proven leader, a man who enjoys the confidence not only of his fellow citizens — but of the rest of the world as well.

The world of finance, and industry, and communications — the industries that call New York home, and that now are looking to Pataki, state Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver to summon the courage needed to do what needs to be done.

To keep Rudy Giuliani on the job.

Again, only for as long as it takes to get the job done.

But not for one day less.

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