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Would-be successors: He's got to obey limits

By TOM TOPOUSIS and KIRSTEN DANIS

Candidates vying to succeed Mayor Giuliani yesterday had a message for the term-limited mayor: Your time is up!

"Normalcy should include democracy and the resumption of constitutional regularity," said Democratic hopeful Mark Green. "We resumed regularity and voted during the Civil War, during the Second World War and didn't change term limits for President Eisenhower during the Cold War," said Green.

Giuliani roiled the political waters the day before the primary when he would not rule out speculation that he'd run for re-election if the city's term-limits law was either suspended or overturned.

Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer called Giuliani's comments "bewildering to say the least."

Any attempt to change the law would end up in court, Ferrer warned. "People who try to overturn the will of the electorate do so at their own peril."

City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, who has been singing Giuliani's praise for two weeks, said the council won't overturn a term-limits law that has been approved by voters. "It's over. We've been through that fight," Vallone said.

Comptroller Alan Hevesi also said term limits for the upcoming election are a done deal. "I think it's a little late in the game to affect this election," he said.

Republican Michael Bloomberg, who has already pumped more than $20 million into his mayoral run, was staying on course as a candidate, said his spokesman, Bill Cunningham.

"All of this speculation is just that. Right now, the law's clear, we're running for mayor, tomorrow there's a vote, there's an election scheduled for November," said Cunningham.

But GOP hopeful Herman Badillo said that if he wins the mayoral nomination and term limits are repealed, he would step aside and let Giuliani take his place.

The Rev. Al Sharpton accused Giuliani of intentionally floating a "trial balloon" to gauge public response to overturning the law so he could run again. "I'm here to burst that balloon," he said. "I think that his behavior in the last two weeks could be a good end to his mayoralty. But I also believe it should be *the* end."

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