NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Fast start to mayoral runoff

Freddy, Mark target white votes

By JOSE MARTINEZ, CELESTE KATZ and JOEL SIEGEL
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

Democrats Mark Green and Fernando Ferrer began the mayoral primary runoff yesterday by launching a battle over 250,000 *up-for-grabs* voters — most of them non-Hispanic whites — who loom as the key to nomination.

A day after Tuesday's primary, Green and Ferrer made a flurry of public appearances while working frantically behind the scenes to romance the powerbrokers who backed also-rans Alan Hevesi, the city controller, and Peter Vallone, the City Council speaker.

Ferrer traveled to Queens to announce he has the support of Vallone, who finished third in the primary.

Green got the backing of two county Democratic bosses, Tom Manton of Queens and Clarence Norman of Brooklyn, both of whom backed Hevesi.

With the endorsements, the strategy of both became clear.

After spending much of the year forging a black-Latino coalition by complaining the city is a divided "two New Yorks," Ferrer is shifting gears to appeal to the whites who backed Hevesi and Vallone.

And in joining with the Brooklyn and Queens county leaders, Green, the public advocate, sought to reinforce his message that he has the broadest, most diverse coalition of support.

"There will be a fair fight over 15 days about who has the experience, the leadership, the vision, the energy and the coalition to win the nomination and the mayoralty," Green said. "I have, and I can best bring the city together at a time when it needs unity more than ever."

Each candidate also claimed to be uniquely qualified to rebuild New York after the terrorist attack on the twin towers.

The runoff, set for Thursday, Oct. 11, is required because Ferrer failed to corral at least 40% of the vote.

Ferrer's first-place finish was due to a historic turnout of Hispanics — 23% of all votes cast. Their turnout was fueled by the city's shifting demographics as well as pride in Ferrer's drive to become the first Hispanic mayor.

But Ferrer, the Bronx borough president, received only 6% to 7% of the non-Hispanic white vote, exit polls showed, and will be hard-pressed to defeat Green unless he can at least double that.

Not coincidentally, Ferrer made his first stop yesterday at 72nd St. and Broadway on the upper West Side, a citadel of white, Jewish Democrats. "Look, I obviously want to reach out to every voter," Ferrer said.

Green and Ferrer each will be allowed to spend $2.6 million in the runoff, and both camps said they would resume running TV ads. All candidates had halted advertising after the Sept. 11 terror attack.

Hard choices

The elected officials and union leaders who are seeking a new horse to support said they faced a difficult choice.

Green built his candidacy, to some degree, on an air of inevitability, maintaining that Democratic officials and union bosses should jump on his bandwagon or risk not being with a winner. Ferrer's strong showing Tuesday night woke some up to the possibility that he could win after all. Then again, Ferrer's prospects of winning could spur some white voters to flee to Green.

Vallone's endorsement of Ferrer was somewhat unusual in that Vallone had accused Ferrer three weeks ago of being racially divisive by claiming there were "two New Yorks."

Vallone papered over the disagreement yesterday. "All of us know this is one city," he said.

Vallone aides said his ties to Ferrer when they served on the Council together prompted the endorsement, but they said Green "did not help matters" by calling Vallone 45 minutes after the polls closed Tuesday to ask him to concede and support his candidacy.

Green aide Joe DePlasco said Green made no such request, but called as a courtesy to say he planned to make a victory speech on TV.



HEIDI SCHUMANN

PALS Mark Green (left) has backing of county leaders (from second left) Herman Farrell, Clarence Norman and Tom Manton. Below, Fernando Ferrer (right) is endorsed by Peter Vallone.



BILL TURNBULL DAILY NEWS

DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2001

CITY_21MC100_01183024 3

NYC-WTC_000412832