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Ferrer vows he won't give Rev. Al anything

Including a role in picking aides

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Mayoral hopeful Fernando Ferrer said yesterday that the Rev. Al Sharpton "wants nothing from me" and "will get nothing from me" in a Ferrer administration.

"He won't be recommending or picking any commissioners," Ferrer said before the Daily News Editorial Board.

Seeking to refute critics who wonder whether Ferrer's election would give Sharpton a large voice at City Hall, Ferrer added, "I owe him — like I owe all the people that pulled the lever for me."

Sharpton endorsed Ferrer on Aug. 27, solidifying the black-Latino coalition the Bronx borough president was building and propelling Ferrer to a first-place finish in the Sept. 25 primary with 35% of the vote.

But Sharpton has emerged in recent days as a lightning rod as Ferrer and rival Mark Green duel for the support of white voters, who loom as crucial to the outcome of the Oct. 11 runoff.

Firefighters' support

Ferrer's comments came on a day Green tried to hammer home his theme of unity by appearing with black and Hispanic ministers in Harlem, visiting a Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn and attending prayer services for the Jewish holiday of Succoth last night.

He also won the endorsement of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association, which lost 80 of its 2,500 members in the World Trade Center disaster.

Ferrer retooled a TV ad featuring endorsements from prominent white supporters to include former Mayor Ed Koch. Koch and Sharpton also are scheduled to campaign together today for Ferrer.

In his visit to the News Editorial Board yesterday, Green refused to criticize Sharpton. But one of Green's prominent black supporters, the Rev. Calvin Butts, took a verbal swipe at the minister.

At the rally with black and Hispanic clergy, Butts said that amid the Trade Center tragedy, "we must have a united city, we must not allow demagoguery or anything else to separate us."

Asked later what he meant, Butts said, "I think it's important to look at who surrounds you.

"People have a concern, and their concern probably revolves around — I mean, if we are working to hold the city together, you don't say the man who has really served the city well, that he's a clown. That moved us back in a direction where we were. We need to move in a direction away from that."

It was a reference to Sharpton's remarks last Saturday, when he said it was wrong to credit Mayor Giuliani for uniting the city during the crisis. "We would have come together if Bozo was the mayor," Sharpton said.

Ferrer declined to comment on the remarks. "I am not trying to use interesting devices to inflame people," he said.

Budget cures unclear

In their respective appearances before the editorial board, Ferrer and Green were vague on how they would close the multi-billion-dollar city budget deficits looming because of the terror attack.

Both said the magnitude of the gaps is unclear and that the state and federal governments would have to pony up. Both acknowledged that layoffs might be possible as a last resort, but Green appeared more open to the possibility.

"There may be layoffs. It is irresponsible to take that off the table," he said. "I am not going to say I would lay off any particular number."

Ferrer said, "If we are talking about a doomsday budget, I would be a fool to tell you that would not be a possibility."

Green won the endorsement of unions representing police detectives and captains and the uniformed fire officers.

Earlier, he brought together two feuding Democrats who support him — former city Controller Elizabeth Holtzman, and the man who defeated and replaced her, Alan Hevesi — to endorse his plans for coping with the twin towers disaster. It was part of a strategy by Green to raise doubts about the seriousness of Ferrer's plan — and, by extension, Ferrer's ability to lead as mayor.

Hevesi called Ferrer's plan, "Too little, too late . . . It does not measure up. We need action, not blue-ribbon commissions."

"I'm not going to respond," Ferrer answered.

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