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Dems in final stretch

Green & Ferrer muster forces, swap accusations

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Unleashing his heavy hitters, mayoral hopeful Fernando Ferrer took to the streets of Brooklyn yesterday with the Rev. Al Sharpton and former Mayor Ed Koch, an unlikely trio that Ferrer hoped would underscore his theme of unity.

"When you see a candidate that can get the support of everyone from me, to Mayor Koch, to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, to Charlie Rangel to Ruth Messinger to Roger Green, it shows the New York we all want," Sharpton said.

"We don't have to all agree on everything, but we need to unite the city for everybody," Sharpton said. "That's why Mr. Koch and I want to walk through Brooklyn with Mr. Ferrer."

Meanwhile, Ferrer's rival, Mark Green, surrounded himself with liberal Democrats and then hammered Ferrer on bellwether liberal issues such as abortion and the death penalty.

On a mostly overcast day, both candidates sought to strengthen their voter base, with Thursday's runoff looming.

SHUNNING PATRONAGE
Sharpton: I don't want a job from the next mayor
PAGE 16

Stumping at restaurants

Ferrer, Koch and Sharpton first appeared at Junior's, the landmark restaurant in downtown Brooklyn. Two hours later, Green showed up at Ben's, a popular Kosher restaurant in Queens.

The day began for Green in Manhattan as he won the endorsement of the city chapter of the National Organization for Women, the Metropolitan Council on Housing and two gay and lesbian Democratic clubs.

Former state Sen. Karen Burstein, the Democratic nominee for attorney general in 2002, blasted Ferrer for comments he made about abortion during his failed 1997 bid for mayor.

"I like Freddy Ferrer a great deal. But he, in fact, betrayed us women," she said.

Latxer, Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell 4th (D-Manhattan) assailed Ferrer as "the candidate from the Bronx political machine" and said the Bronx borough president dropped out of the 1997 race because he was "afraid" of Rudy Giuliani.

"Mark Green has never been afraid of Rudy Giuliani," Powell said.

Green, the city's public advocate, said Ferrer "should stop complaining about having his record exposed and contrasted in the last six days of a mayoral campaign."

"What we have said are not attacks, but facts. And he should answer: Why did he change his position on late-term abortion from 1997 to 2001? Why has he had four positions on the death penalty in four years?

"It's legal, but I think it's hard to defend other than on the basis of politics."

Firing back

Asked to respond, Ferrer said that while Green vowed not to engage in negative campaigning, "every day he's launched yet another barrage of negative attacks."

"I thought he was a man of principles. Apparently he's uncomfortable with the decision he made accepting the mayor's deal for 90 days and he feels he has to launch these attacks. I think that's sad," Ferrer said, referring to Green's support of allowing Giuliani to extend his term because of the World Trade Center terror attacks.

Though he questioned Ferrer's track record, Green avoided assailing Sharpton.

"I work well with him. I'll work with him if I'm mayor. I never sought his endorsement, implicitly or explicitly," Green said.

Ferrer had a day of largely positive campaigning, save for a run-in with Schellie Hagan of Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, who said Ferrer's alliance with Sharpton is a turnoff.

"Why do you have anything to do with Al Sharpton at all?" Hagan demanded of Ferrer at a campaign stop. "He's a very divisive man. He's a race-baiter."

Afterward, Ferrer said everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. "A mayor's got to listen to everybody. Some people will agree with you. Some people won't. But the people who know me know who I am," he said.

Also yesterday, Republican nominee Michael Bloomberg made an appearance in the Bronx, picking up the endorsement of state Sen. Guy Velella, who praised the billionaire's "successful career in delivering services and accomplishing what he set out to do in private industry."

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