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The Character Issue

Bloomberg, Green probe each other's political psyche

By Robert Polner and Jessica Kowal
STAFF WRITERS

The latest of what may prove to be frequent skirmishes in the New York mayor's race broke out yesterday as Republican Michael Bloomberg and Democrat Mark Green each testily disparaged the other's character.

Bloomberg said Green is conducting himself presumptuously as a major-party nominee before the Board of Elections has even finished tabulating results of the close Oct. 11 Democratic runoff.

Even worse, said Bloomberg, Green acted as if he had already won the Nov. 6 general election in naming a panel of current and former city and state officials to advise him on the municipal budget earlier this week.

Doing so was "arrogant" of Green, said Bloomberg. "He should talk about why people should vote for him, and not go and measure the drapes for Gracie Mansion," the Republican businessman said.

Green shot back that a wealthy Republican spending his own millions to run for mayor has no place accusing others of arrogance.

"He probably should avoid personal terms like that, but since he has opened the door, allow me to walk through it," Green said. "It's probably more arrogant for him to think he can buy the election than for me to reflect the Board of Election statistic that I have an 18,000-vote majority."

Green vowed to continue planning for the mayoralty because, he said, he expects the Board of Elections to confirm his victory in the runoff by tomorrow.

As of last night, the official count showed Green with an 18,029-vote edge over his Democratic challenger, Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer.

Election experts say Green's margin of victory is too sizable to be upended by the count of 28,402 affidavit and absentee ballots ruled valid. Ferrer would need almost nine of every 10 of those votes to come out ahead.

"Look," Green said, referring to his campaign and transition planning. "There's no presumptuousness or arrogance involved."

The candidates spoke separately. Bloomberg visited the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce and met with reporters at his campaign headquarters, where former police commissioner Ray Kelly endorsed him.

Green visited the beleaguered business district north of Ground Zero in Manhattan with the press in tow.

If anyone thinks Green, the city's two-term public advocate, has more governmental experience than the founder of a worldwide, 8,000-employee media company, then Bloomberg sought to emphasize he disagrees.

Bloomberg said in remarks to the chamber of commerce that he has "more experience in dealing with government than probably anybody in the whole world." It comes from running a company that has offices in dozens of countries and states, including Washington, D.C., and not from "taking a government paycheck," he said.

Green Still Leads in Final Machine Tally

By Stephanie Saul
STAFF WRITER

The final machine vote tally in the Democratic mayoral race shows Mark Green retaining a significant lead of 18,029 votes over rival Fernando Ferrer.

Elections officials completed the machine recanvass Wednesday and yesterday began counting 28,402 valid paper ballots, which include 20,003 affidavit ballots and 8,399 absentee ballots.

The paper votes are expected to favor Ferrer and diminish, but not close, Green's margin of victory, elections experts have said.

The Board of Elections completed its recanvass of voting machines late Wednesday, revealing a final, but still unofficial, machine count of 393,385 for Green and 375,356 for Ferrer.

The valid paper ballots were culled from a total of 62,086 cast. Most of those were deemed invalid following a review by elections officials.

Among reasons for the invalidation of ballots are that they were cast by voters registered outside the Democratic Party. Those voters aren't eligible to vote in Democratic primaries, and they will receive notices advising them that their votes didn't count.

The Ferrer campaign said this week that it is reviewing invalidated ballots to determine if any were thrown out improperly.

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