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# Cash, Race and Rancor? No, It's Not the Mayoral Race

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA

New Yorkers have just watched a political race that featured harsh attacks, racial divisions, piles of money, a badly fragmented Democratic Party and enormous challenges for the eventual winner.

**Political Memo**

Get used to it. This year's mayoral race could provide a preview of next year's race for governor, now getting under way in earnest, a contest that is already being singled out by campaign consultants and political journalists as one of the toughest and most interesting in the country.

The Democrats, Andrew M. Cuomo, the former federal housing secretary, and H. Carl McCall, the state comptroller, are already running hard, throwing barbs at each other and Gov. George E. Pataki, at a stage when most campaigns have barely begun. They have set up a primary that all sides acknowledge could leave the party as divided as this year's mayoral primary did, with the winner facing an uphill battle against Mr. Pataki, a Republican.

"Of course it's going to be tough," Mr. McCall said yesterday, after giving a speech that assailed the governor on education, the economy and state finances, and that his aides described as the real start of his campaign. "I'd be disappointed if it wasn't tough."

Mr. Cuomo dismissed the speech as "nothing new or provocative."

The campaign, he said, "is going to be about new ideas for very difficult challenges that the state faces," and he promised to be the source of those ideas. Mr. Pataki, he said, has had nothing going for him but "Bill Clinton's economy."

Joseph Conway, a spokesman for Mr. Pataki, said the governor could point to "a record drop in crime, lower taxes, more jobs, a cleaner environment and record investments in education and health care." When Mr. McCall accused the governor of defending the state's byzantine school aid formulas that a judge found had violated the State Constitution, Mr. Conway countered that Mr. McCall did not support the governor's attempts to simplify those formulas.



H. Carl McCall Andrew M. Cuomo

The winner of the race will take over a state battered by a recession and the attack on the World Trade Center, facing a multibillion-dollar budget deficit, and potentially burdened by the financial troubles of New York City, Buffalo, Yonkers, Nassau County, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Mr. Pataki has the advantages of incumbency, high approval ratings and a war chest that Republicans and Democrats both predict will top $40 million, double what he spent in 1998, and far more than either Democrat is likely to raise. But after gov-

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