NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2001

Green Aide Calls Finances In Race Unfair

Says Bloomberg's Money Overwhelmed the System

By MICHAEL COOPER

The chairman of Mark Green's unsuccessful mayoral campaign testified yesterday that the city's respected campaign finance program "failed completely" to level the playing field between Mr. Green and Michael R. Bloomberg, who was elected mayor after spending $69 million on the race.

"As much as we want to defend this system, and I represent somebody who has been a staunch advocate for this system, I think that we have to speak frankly about what happened," Mr. Green's campaign chairman, John Siegal, said yesterday at a hearing held by the city's Campaign Finance Board. "The campaign finance system failed completely in the mayoral general election this year."

Mr. Siegal argued that the Green campaign simply could not compete with Mr. Bloomberg. In exchange for public matching funds, the Green campaign agreed to limit the amount of money it accepted from each donor and the amount it spent on the race, a total of $16.6 million. Mr. Bloomberg, who chose not to participate in the system, used his own fortune to finance his campaign. Mr. Siegal said the Bloomberg campaign used so many television commercials that air time became scarcer and television stations charged more for their time.

Mr. Siegal warned that unless the city fixed the financing system, no candidate would want to participate in the future. "New York City does not now have campaign finance reform at the mayoral level," he told the board, which holds the hearings to evaluate the system. "If the mayor-elect runs for a second term, no challenger who wants to run a credible campaign can possibly participate in the campaign finance system."

The chairman of the Campaign Finance Board, the Rev. Joseph A. O'Hare, said the election season was so atypical — interrupted as it was by the attack on the World Trade Center, the anthrax outbreak, the beginning of a war, not to mention a host of unusual local factors — that it might be unwise to change the city's policies based on

Continued on Page D8

CITY_21MC100_011834041

NYC-WTC_000415737