

Mayor Trying To Push Addabbo Into Election Fight With Maltese

Just because Mayor Michael Bloomberg might want to back City Councilmember Joseph Addabbo Jr. against state Senator Serphin Maltese in this November's elections doesn't mean the Ozone Park lawmaker is going to break a leg to start campaigning.

Addabbo, now in his second term, said in an interview, "I'll pick the time and place when and where I think I should run."

But, he added, he found the unexpected development interesting and hadn't completely barred the door to it.

Addabbo said he had no axe to grind with Maltese, who the mayor is apparently targeting to repay a political debt and to try to coerce more money for the city from Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno.

"I'm still exploring options," Addabbo went on, mainly because term limits will end his council career in four years, as matters now stand. "You've always got to have your options open." But, he added, "It's too early in the year to make any decisions."

Addabbo said he had had no direct contact with Bloomberg. The mayor's people had reached out to his staff and that's how the idea had originated.



As for term limits, which has a key role in Addabbo's planning, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn is on record as in favor of changing the law so present members who will be subject to term limits at the end of this term in 2009 can have a third term. Since Quinn took over as head of the council about a month ago, there's been no mention of when and what might be in the works.

"Let the people make a decision on this," said Addabbo.

Word of the mayor's interest in backing a challenge to Maltese, 73, and financially supporting the effort, comes some two weeks after it was reported that Democratic strategists, expecting a major victory by Spitzer and United States Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton could help in some state legislative contests, were eyeing not only Maltese's seat but also Senator Frank Padavan's.

The threatened challenge to Maltese was unexpected, but word of a possible challenge to Padavan from Councilmember Tony Avella (D-Bayside) has been bandied about since Avella scored an impressive re-election victory last November in Northeast Queens. Avella said he's made no decision on this, however.

Bloomberg, who's on good terms with Padavan, is looking for revenge against Maltese, the Queens Republican leader, because he supported his close political ally, Thomas Ognibene, when the later tried to force a Republican primary against Bloomberg last year. The effort failed and Ognibene subsequently ran against Bloomberg on the conservative party line in the general elec-

tion.

The mayor has also made Maltese a target as a way of getting at Bruno, who, he feels is not sending enough funding to the city and also helped to sink his Jets stadium plan.

Commenting on the Addabbo report, Maltese said in a call from Albany that he didn't think the mayor was serving the city's best interests by quarreling with Bruno and threatening the leader and Maltese.

Maltese, an 18-year senate veteran pointed out that following Ognibene's defeat in the primary, he, as county chairman, led his executive committee in endorsing the mayor unanimously for re-election.

He also emphasized that Republican state senators from New York City, including himself, John Marchi from Staten Island and Padavan, are senior members holding important committee assignments.

"The mayor may feel we're not doing enough for New York City," he said, "but the senators from New York City have been tenaciously active in securing millions of dollars in funding for the city's students."

He continued, "I've got lots of respect for the mayor and Joe Addabbo. Our districts overlap in certain areas, so we have worked together for our districts on many issues." For that reason, he said, he found it incredible that the mayor is trying to set up an Addabbo/Maltese race. Bruno said he was "amazed" by the report.

But, Bruno said, if necessary, he would raise a \$1 million for Maltese, "no matter who might challenge me," Maltese said. But, he added, "No matter what, we're going to do everything we can to get as much money as possible for the city."

The only other possible motivation behind the mayor's declaration of war against the state senate might be to use the threats to try to get better treatment in Albany.

Bloomberg is already fighting with Governor George Pataki for holding up the court-ordered \$5 to \$6 billion for city schools and he hasn't been on good terms with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver since Silver scuttled the West Side Stadium plan which, in turn helped kill the city's 2012 Olympic bid.

CROWLEY DEFEATED FOR DEM CAUCUS POST: Congressman Joseph Crowley made an impressive showing but fell short in his attempt last week to be elected vice chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, the fourth highest position in the leadership.

Crowley (Queens/The Bronx) scored 87 votes to the 116 racked up by winner Congressman John Larson of Connecticut, but was grateful for his support from the New York delegation.

The Elmhurst lawmaker described the year-long battle for the party position as "intense" and unlike anything he had experienced in his political career.

MARSHALL EXTENDS CONDOLENCES: "He was a son of Queens who wanted a career in law enforcement, but made the supreme sacrifice in service to his country in Baghdad," was how Queens Borough President Helen Marshall paid tribute to 25-year-old Army Specialist Marlon Bustamante of Corona, who died last Wednesday when an explosive device blew up near his vehicle in Baghdad.

MetroCard Van Visits Flushing



Herb Stark, representing the Mitchell-Linden Civic Association and state Senator Toby Ann Stavisky arranged for the MetroCard mobile sales van to visit Flushing. The van allows older adults to apply for reduced fare MetroCards as well as other transactions.

He leaves behind three children and his wife, Danielle, herself a former soldier, family and friends.

BRUNO DISAGREES WITH BUSH, PATAKI: State Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno joined the debate on the Iraq War last week and came out on opposing President George W. Bush and Governor George Pataki. Disagreeing with the top Republicans, Bruno declared "We won the war, in essence," and said it was now time to bring home the troops and get out of Iraq.

Bruno made his comments to Albany reporters when asked if Bush's sagging ratings could hurt GOP Senators' re-election chances this year.

Bruno, an infantry sergeant in the Korean War, pointed out there had been elections in Iraq and now the country was enmeshed in guerrilla warfare that could go on for a lifetime.

Earlier last week, Pataki reiterated support for the president's position, echoing his assertions that the United States' commitment in Iraq helps in the war against terror. Also defending the president was state Conservative Party Leader Michael Long, who noted Bruno was not a foreign policy expert.

GOLISANO OUT: Meanwhile, Bruno was also at odds with upstate billionaire Tom Golisano for dropping out of contention for the Republican gubernatorial nomination. A weak candidate at the top of the ticket could also hurt GOP chances to retain control of the upper house.

Bruno was hoping Golisano might become the candidate because the upstate businessman's deep pockets would give him a fighting chance against the Democratic frontrunner, New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. Early on, Golisano, who ran against Pataki three times as the Independence Party candidate, officially switched his party affiliation to the Republican Party, feeding Bruno's hopes that he would make a strong effort to grab the party's nomination for governor.

But the Rochester businessman dropped out of contention last Tuesday, citing personal and professional reasons. His withdrawal helps ease

the way for former Massachusetts Governor William Weld, who has the backing of Pataki and the State GOP chairman, Stephen Minarik. Still in the race against Weld are former Assembly Minority Leader John Faso, ex-Secretary of State Randy Daniels, and upstate Assemblymember Patrick Manning.

Weld is the leader of his GOP rivals in campaign funding, having raised about \$2 million mostly from supporters in his former home state, but that would have to be augmented tremendously to make him competitive with Spitzer, who's sitting on \$19 million right now.

According to a Marist College poll reported last Tuesday, registered Republicans gave Weld the lead in the GOP race, with 8 percent, followed by Faso at 4 percent, Manning, 3 percent and Daniels, 2 percent. The poll had 50 percent undecided and gave Golisano 33 percent. The poll was taken before Golisano withdrew from the race.

SPITZER, PATTERSON DISAGREE ON DEATH, TAXES: Leading Democratic gubernatorial candidate Eliot Spitzer and Senate Minority Leader David Patterson only became the team of governor and lieutenant governor about two weeks ago, but they've already disagreed publicly about the death penalty and income taxes.

Spitzer favors the death penalty and Patterson opposes it. Spitzer has said he will not seek a tax increase, but Patterson favors re-imposing a personal income tax surcharge on New Yorkers earning more than \$500,000 a year.

Meanwhile, Spitzer's possible primary opponent for the nomination for governor, Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi, stated last week that if the state should happen to find some surplus funds, not all of them should go to New York City. Part should be used to lower property taxes and create jobs upstate. Suozzi is already on record as making property tax reductions in his Long Island hometown.

The young county executive also said he thought the surpluses might be created by a sharper crackdown on Medicaid fraud, possibly about \$5 billion a year.