

# Weiner Makes Move In 2009 Mayor's Race

Following the pattern set by presidential candidates who are gearing up for an election that's almost two years away, Congressman Anthony Weiner filed campaign papers with the state Board of Elections last week, setting up a "Weiner '09" committee and identifies the office being sought as "NYC mayor".

But unlike the horde of presidential candidates for the 2008 election, Weiner said this was not an announcement that he's running, but just starting to build the infrastructure for a campaign, including a campaign bank account.

The Queens/Brooklyn congressman said he was just keeping his options open and doesn't plan to start campaigning for three years.

The 42-year-old lawmaker, who came very close to winning the Democratic Party primary for mayor in 2005, said that many of the same issues that attracted him to the 2005 campaign still keep him up at night, but, bottom line, there's plenty of time to consider whether he'll run in 2009.

However, there's already a list of Democrats that are expected to run for the vacancy that will be created as Mayor Michael Bloomberg exits under term limits as he completes his second four-year term.

The possible lineup includes city Comptroller William Thompson, who's already got close to \$2 million in his campaign treasury; Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Councilmember Tony Avella of Bayside; Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion and Brooklyn Borough President

Marty Markowitz.

Avella is the only one who has officially announced his intention to run for the post.

If Weiner does decide to go after the mayor's chair again, as he's expected to do, he will not only bring the promising 2005 primary contest into his campaign but also an impressive record from Congress.

He'll be close to the 10-year mark in Congress when the 2009 mayor's race rolls around. In this present term, he should be able to pass several meaty pieces of legislation since the Democrats took control of Congress in January and Weiner and other Queens delegation members have all been appointed to good committee memberships.

In the past, Weiner has consistently tried hard to get more cops for the city, as well as a fair share of anti-terror funding. Issues such as these will help in a mayoral campaign.

**GORE'S 'OSCAR' HIJINKS:** Former Vice President Al Gore obviously has developed some major support in Hollywood in his epic battle to stop global warming.

It started out on an amusing note early in Sunday evening's Academy Awards ceremony program, broadcast on ABC Television, when actor Leonardo DiCaprio called Gore up to the stage to cite him for his environmental efforts. Then DiCaprio asked whether all Gore's global warning campaign efforts might have inspired him "to make some other kind of major, major announcement to the world tonight".



It appeared as though the bit had all been staged to have the losing 2001 Democratic presidential candidate announce his entry in the 2009 race.

With a serious look on his face, Gore paused then reached into his jacket to pull a sheet of paper out. "I had not planned on doing this, but I'm going to take this opportunity right here and now to formally announce."

At this point, he was drowned out by the orchestra as the audience, with the tension snapped, broke into long, loud and amused applause.

On stage, Gore and DiCaprio broke out in huge grins, their joke having succeeded.

Later in the evening Gore accompanied Davis Guggenheim on stage when Guggenheim received an Oscar for his documentary film entitled "An Inconvenient Truth", which featured Gore on the global warming issue.

Called upon to make some comment, Gore, addressing people all over the world, declared, "we need to solve the climate crisis."

Did all of this serve as a staged reminder to the U.S. electorate, especially Democratic voters, that perhaps Gore might emerge from the crowd of Democratic candidates in 2009 as the dark horse of the field and snatch the nomination?

There's no doubt in our minds that the people around Gore at this time were harboring such thoughts.

Can it happen? Anything is possible in politics, especially with so large a field of candidates grabbing and clawing at each other.

**BITTER BUDGET BATTLE?** Governor Eliot Spitzer, who lost the fight over picking a successor to former state Comptroller Alan Hevesi, is in another

fight he could lose. It involves his proposed billion-dollar reduction in state payouts to hospitals and nursing homes.

Opposing Spitzer on these proposed cuts in his budget are two Albany powerhouses—the hospital industry and Local 1199, United Healthcare Workers East. Both are powerful forces in Albany, and the union is especially influential among lawmakers because union leaders are able to get small armies working against legislators who don't play ball with them.

Spitzer's battle with the two organizations heated up last week as the union-hospital coalition launched a television advertising campaign and the governor responded on a Sunday talk show.

The opposing coalition says Spitzer's Medicaid cut proposal has the wrong targets. He should be going after super-wealthy H.M.O.s and the pharmaceutical industry, they claim.

On Sunday, Spitzer turned the attack on high-paid hospital executives who, he said, would lose fat salaries if his Medicaid cuts are made in the budget. The governor said one major hospital chain, which he did not name, has three top executives who together make \$24 million. Spitzer suggested that if his cuts go through, the executives could cut their pay packages and still not be hurt. Then, he said, the state could use the savings to "insure kids and provide better care for seniors".

When this battle escalates, the hospitals/labor combine will turn up the heat on legislators and their leaders who, in the past, have treated them very delicately and beneficially.

Judging from past confrontations, the legislators might go to bat for Spitzer's opponents. That's when the real fireworks could start. Stay tuned.

**QUEENS ST. PAT'S PARADE:** The Queens St. Patrick's Day Parade this Sunday, the only one in the city that welcomes gays, will have Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Congressman Joseph Crowley among its marchers.

Now in its eighth year, the march will begin at 12:30 p.m. at 43rd and Skillman Avenues in Sunnyside and end at 61st Street in Woodside. Among other marchers expected are city Comptroller William Thompson, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum, Assemblymembers Jose Peralta and Rory Lancman and Councilmembers David Weprin and Eric Gioia.

The 2007 parade grand marshal will be Bronx public school teacher Caroline Duggan, a Dublin native. Duggan founded and operates Keltic Dreamers, a program that brings Irish music and dance to mostly Latino and African-American school kids.

Parade Co-Chair and Founder Brendan Fay, stated: "We are especially proud to welcome Council Speaker Quinn. We celebrate Irish heritage and culture as diverse communities in New York celebrate Ireland."

## 2007 Garvin Award Recipient



Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown celebrated Black History Month by presenting Justice Juanita Bing Newton, New York State Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives and New York City Criminal Court Administrative Judge, with the William Tucker Garvin Public Service Award.

The Garvin Award was established in 2001 in honor of the first African-American Assistant District Attorney appointed in Queens County. The award is presented annually during Black History Month to an individual of African-American descent in recognition of his or her notable contributions to public service.

"Sometimes a whisper speaks louder than a shout. Clearly, that statement defines William Tucker Garvin who led a quiet, unassuming and yet remarkable life, breaking down racial barriers and overcoming prejudices at a time when segregation was still prevalent in this county," Brown said. "The dedication, perseverance and integrity that he brought to his job each day paved the way for future African-Americans and is reflected in the long and distinguished legal career of this year's honoree, Judge Juanita Bing Newton, whose own leadership and compassion for justice and public service has motivated and inspired many, just like William Garvin."

**Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown with Garvin Award recipient Justice Juanita Bing Newton.**