



All Eyes On Bloomberg's Choice For President



After months of speculation, Mayor Michael Bloomberg firmly laid to rest the possibility of a run for the White House Thursday – raising the question of who he will endorse in the upcoming election.

Speaking Thursday afternoon for the first time since the Op-Ed appeared, Bloomberg didn't offer any hints as to which candidate he might endorse, but he did say he would back the solutions he supports. That's a change from his previously neutral stance on the presidential candidates.

As for a possible run on another candidate's ticket, the mayor had this to say:

"Nobody's going to ask me to run for vice president."

Bloomberg said as mayor, he's better positioned to implement solutions at the local level and then influence policies at the national level. The mayor cited recent and upcoming successes, including the imminent completion of a new water tunnel, the beginning of construction of the Second Avenue subway line, the planting of trees, the reduction of crime and efforts to fight global warming, as outlined in his PlaNYC.

"I've thought long and hard. It's been very flattering that people have suggested that I seek other offices, but I have been very happy in the last six years and two months," said the mayor.

The mayor said, as Americans and as New Yorkers, we face major problems on a host of critical issues including the economy, the environment, energy, and education, among others. He re-iterated that some of the presidential candidates are showing what he considers hopeful signs of independent leadership, but that he hasn't yet seen enough concrete solutions.

"What we need in this country are approaches to solving the critical issues of our time, internationally and domestically – not just saying that we're in favor of solutions, but actually pointing out what the solutions would be if they get elected," he said. "I think candidates should earn our votes. They've got to tell us what things they'll address, how they will address it, how they will get it through the legislative process, at the federal, state or city level. And how they're going to pay for it."

The mayor did reiterate his support of candidates who take an "independent, results-oriented approach" to the nation's critical issues, similar to the approach he himself has

taken as mayor of New York City.

Aside from an endorsement, it's unclear how Bloomberg intends to make his voice heard. He said he has no intention of starting a 527, which would allow him to run issue ads.

Bloomberg formally ended two years of speculation about a possible presidential run with an Op-Ed piece entitled "I'm Not Running For President, But..." published in Thursday morning's New York Times.

"I listened carefully to those who encouraged me to run, but I am not — and will not be — a candidate for president," he writes. "I have watched this campaign unfold, and I am hopeful that the current campaigns can rise to the challenge by offering truly independent leadership."

It's possible the mayor's low poll numbers played a role in his decision not to run for president. A Quinnipiac University poll released Thursday confirms that in key states Ohio, Florida and Pennsylvania, Bloomberg had just single-digit support for the presidency.

Bloomberg had little to say about his announcement in a radio interview just after 7 a.m. Thursday morning.

"No news whatsoever. Here to raise some money for charity, also to keep working for the city. I have 672 days, 15 hours and 45 minutes left to go in my current job and I'm going to do it," he said.

In his Op-Ed column, Bloomberg had specific criticism for the current candidates. He says they must "know better" than what they tell Americans.

"They must know we can't fix our economy and create jobs by isolating America from global trade," he says. "They must know that we can't fix our immigration problems with border security alone."

He goes on to offer similar criticism of simplistic positions on education, global warming and guns.

But, the mayor does admit he has changed his thinking on an endorsement.

An endorsement from the mayor could possibly steer a wealth of independent voters toward his chosen candidate, perhaps even propelling that candidate toward victory.

"He may not be running for office, but everyone who runs for office is going to be coming and listening to Mike Bloomberg," said Bloomberg adviser Mitchell Moss.

Speculation had been rampant that Bloomberg would launch an independent — and independently-funded — campaign for the presidency.

The mayor steadfastly denied the rumors, but his actions said otherwise. Over the last three months he criss-crossed the country giving speeches on the economy and the environment, and received briefings from experts on foreign policy matters. People close to him said he would spend upward of a billion dollars on the race if he chose to run.

But Thursday's pronouncement puts an end to all that. Instead, Bloomberg said, he will push his agenda by prodding the current candidates.

"In the weeks and months ahead, I will continue to work to steer the national conversation away from partisanship and toward unity; away from ideology and toward common sense; away from sound bites and toward substance," the column said.

Around Manhattan, many [people are not surprised](#) by the mayor's decision.

"He didn't campaign like everybody else and he didn't put his issues in the forefront, so there wasn't enough known about him nationally to run," said one New Yorker.

"Someone like Bloomberg who has a lot of money and is used to buying his way through any kind of cultural or political miasma, it's a risk to democratic principals," added another.

Some observers did say they think Bloomberg would make a better vice president than commander and chief.

The Daily News went so far as to offer the suggestion Thursday that Bloomberg is ideally positioned to run on Barack Obama's ticket.