Today's Lead Story: Assemblyman's Resignation To Come Early

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Once-powerful Brooklyn Democratic boss Vito Lopez has said he will resign from the Assembly this morning before his colleagues have the opportunity to expel him from the state Legislature.

Lopez had said on Friday that he woud finish out his term in June in spite of mounting calls for his immediate resignation following the release last week of a detailed report of sexual harassment allegations against him. A special prosecutor found no basis for bringing criminal charges against the 71-year-old political veteran last week.

Before the weekend, the Albany leadership began making plans for Lopez to depart sooner, with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver backing a resolution that could lead to Lopez's expulsion. But Lopez said Saturday he would leave today instead.

Political science Professor Doug Muzzio of Baruch College told The Associated Press that Lopez's resignation amounted to "partial deodorizing" of Albany. He added, "Albany needs more extensive and permanent disinfectant."

Lopez said in a statement Friday that he was innocent of the allegations against him, and was leaving office largely to focus on winning a seat in the City Council. The New York Post reported that Lopez has more than $1 million left in his state campaign account and could redirect some of those funds to his Council campaign.

Meanwhile, the anti-Lopez movement is organizing to support Lopez's likely opponent, Antonio Reynoso, in the race for the 34th District. Reynoso is an aide to term-limited Councilwoman Diana Reyna, who currently represents the district.

Bill Hammond of the New York Daily News wonders how Lopez could, as the state ethics report charges, get away with harassing and humiliating female staffers for such a long time and blames Speaker Silver and his aides.

And while political adversaries say Silver should go because of his handling of the allegations against Lopez, the editorial board of the Albany Times-Union disagrees : "His errors here were in matters of judgment and degree, not ill intent."

Fred Dicker writes in the Post that the state's top Republican wants the governor to name a special prosecutor to look into how Silver dealt with the Lopez allegations.

WEEKEND ROUNDUP

The Buffalo News began a series looking at how police serve on the front line of mental health in New York. The Daily News scrutinized the political connections of employees at the city's Board of Elections. The Wall Street Journal writes that Republican mayoral hopeful John Catsimatidis has a lot of ideas , some of them more ad hoc than others.

Other Stories We're Following

Battle Lines Drawn In Fight Over Indian Point (WNYC)

Charges Filed In Killing Of Gay Man In Greenwich Village (NY Times)

Brooklyn DA Comes To Prime Time This Week (New York Magazine)

Stop-And-Frisk Trial Judge Responds To Govt Critics (Associated Press)

Who Will Be The Next City Planning Commissioner?   (Crain's)

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