

The Epoch Times

NOW Endorses Green for Public Advocate

By Helena Zhu
Epoch Times Staff

Created: Sep 1, 2009
Last Updated: Sep 1, 2009

NEW YORK—Members of the nation's largest women's rights organization endorsed Mark Green for public advocate on Tuesday, stating that he is the best of the five candidates for women.

"New York needs a public advocate who ensures that the laws that are put in place to protect the citizens are working ... We need a public advocate who has an unquestionable record of fighting for women's equality, and Mark Green is that candidate," said Jean Bucaria, deputy director of the National Organization for Women's New York City chapter (NOW-NYC), at a press [conference](#) at City Hall on Tuesday.

NOW, the nation's largest organization dedicated to women's rights, has their largest chapter in New York City with more than 5,000 members.



ROSA PARKS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Public advocate candidate Mark [Green](#) speaks with Rosa Schirripa, a woman who inspired him to draft legislation to protect domestic violence victims in the workplace. (Helena Zhu/The Epoch Times)

One of Green's more recent achievements occurred in March of this year. A Staten Island woman, Rosa Schirripa, who had issued a complaint about domestic violence, inspired Green to author a municipal law—later adopted as a state law—that protects domestic violence victims in the workplace.

decades.

[Here's how you can too...](#) → → →

"She's the Rosa Parks of domestic violence in New York City," said Green. "We met in March at [Walk to End Domestic Violence]."

And Rosa came up to me—I didn't know her—but she told me her story that she had an abusive family member, needed time off, and her company was going to fire her because they didn't want to bother with an employee who has such a problem."

Green said that he soon realized that there were many other women who had experiences similar to that of Schirripa's and drafted the legislation.

"It was my pleasure to work with Mark when I was a victim, and it's a pleasure now to speak as a survivor," said Schirripa. "What Mark did by advocating for the law gave victims the armor to go and fight."

"When you need time away from work to go to court, take care of your kids, find an apartment, and get out of the mess—it's not easy for the employer to understand sometimes. What Mark did was giving us the right to say that we need unpaid time," she said.

For the past 39 years, Green has been a public official, public interest [lawyer](#), author, educator, TV commentator, and is currently the president of Air America Radio and president of the New Democracy Project, a public affairs institute that he founded in 1981.

He was the first public advocate in New York in 1993, when the then New York City Council created the office by voting to rename its council president as the public advocate. He served two four-year terms in the office, the limit set by the city council. He was succeeded in 2002 by Betsy Gotbaum, who currently holds the office. Gotbaum is stepping down at the end of this term.

As [an attorney](#) and public advocate, Green pressured municipal hospitals to install 24-hour rape counseling programs and to create separate intake rooms for rape survivors, twice successfully sued former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani for racial profiling and police misconduct, and enacted a law to protect victims of domestic violence from being fired from their workplace.

"The subject of women's rights and women's reproductive rights is not an abstract one to me," said Green. "I've been married 32 years to a working woman. My daughter is now 30 ... So it's not a slogan, but a fact that I have tried to fix the law to help women."

His fellow Democratic candidates include Council Member Eric Gioia (D-Queens), Norman Siegel, the [civil liberties lawyer](#) who lost in a runoff to Gotbaum in 2001, and Councilman Bill de Blasio (D-Brooklyn).

The four will compete in the Democratic primary on Sept. 15. If no one candidate receives 40 percent of the vote, a runoff between the top two candidates will take place.

A final election will take place on Nov. 3, where Republican Alex Zablocki will join the [competition](#). At age 26, he is the youngest candidate to run for public advocate.