

## **EX-FERRER AIDE LINKS WITH MIKE. IMMIGRATION ISSUES ARE HER STRONG SUIT**

Daily News (New York)

February 4, 2009 Wednesday, SPORTS FINAL EDITION

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 362 words

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### **Body**

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MAYOR BLOOMBERG signed up another Democratic heavyweight for his reelection bid, this time a former Fernando Ferrer aide and fierce advocate of immigration reform.

Andrea Batista Schlesinger is stepping down from the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy to develop "ideas and a rationale for a bold and progressive third term for the mayor," an e-mail sent Monday to Drum board members said.

Bloomberg campaign spokesman Howard Wolfson said Batista Schlesinger will serve as a policy adviser, calling her "one of the leading progressive policy thinkers in the nation, and someone who is committed, like the mayor, to making this city work for all New Yorkers."

Batista Schlesinger is a Ferrer loyalist who served as his education adviser when he was Bronx borough president, and left for Drum with him in 2002.

She became executive director when he gave up the job to run for mayor against Bloomberg in 2005.

Team Bloomberg then accused Drum of "playing politics in the New York City mayoral race" to Ferrer's benefit - a charge Batista Schlesinger vehemently denied.

When asked about her new gig yesterday, Ferrer simply said, "I wish her well."

Batista Schlesinger is known as a forceful advocate for immigrants and defender of the middle class.

"What I've always tried to do in my work is use government to play a positive role in improving the quality of people's lives and that is a view that Mayor Bloomberg shares," she said.

She joins a string of high-profile Democrats Bloomberg recently added to his campaign team, including those with ties to his competitors Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-Queens/Brooklyn) and City Controller William Thompson.

Last week, he hired Democratic strategists Hank Sheinkopf, a Thompson ally, and Basil Smikle, a former Weiner campaign worker.

Party politics wasn't a concern for Batista Schlesinger when she was approached about the job, she said.

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"I've always held Democrats accountable as I have held Republicans accountable. My work has not been in partisan politics," she said.

"When it comes to the City of New York, politics is secondary to whether you can advance an agenda that really works for all New Yorkers," she said.

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## Classification

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**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** MAYORS (91%); CITY GOVERNMENT (90%); PUBLIC POLICY (90%); POLITICAL PARTIES (89%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2008 (89%); POLITICS (89%); US DEMOCRATIC PARTY (89%); ELECTIONS (79%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (79%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (78%); **IMMIGRATION** (78%); BOARDS OF DIRECTORS (76%); GOVERNMENT ADVISORS & MINISTERS (76%); **IMMIGRATION** LAW (73%); EXECUTIVES (69%)

**Person:** MICHAEL BLOOMBERG (89%); ANTHONY D WEINER (59%)

**Geographic:** NEW YORK, NY, USA (95%); NEW YORK, USA (94%)

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2009