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With the extension of term limits, the would-be local races have changed to some degree. We've already seen Anthony Weiner stall his mayoral ambitions as Mayor Michael Bloomberg runs for a third term. The third term extends to borough presidents as well, and now that Queens Borough President Helen Marshall can seek a third term, the political landscape might change.

David Kerpen is a lifelong Queens resident, less his years as a college student at Boston University. Kerpen was considering a run for the City Council when he decided to run for Queens Borough President. Assemblywoman Audrey Pheffer of south Queens has been eyeing this office for a very long time, but her party loyalty has often caused her to stay in Albany. With Marshall seeking a third term, the main challenger to Borough Hall could be David – Dave to his Internet fan base – Kerpen.

The borough presidency has come under some scrutiny, namely whether or not it is actually a relevant position. We have a strong mayoral structure and an ombudsman-style City Council, so why spend more money on staff and personnel to manage discretionary spending?

Dave Kerpen is running for Queens Borough President as a citizen candidate. He holds no elected office. He is a small business owner and a former public school teacher. Kerpen feels that a borough president's office needs to make itself relevant in order to remain part of city government.

"The office is relevant, it has just been under-utilized lately," Kerpen explains.

He feels that he can usher in technology and make city governance more accountable and quicker to serve.

In order for Kerpen to challenge Marshall, he would have to get ballot access through a heavy effort of collecting signatures. The Kerpenators, as his volunteers refer to themselves, are set to give the Little Neck resident a shot at a primary this year.

If you run as a candidate with education as one of your main concerns, you will eventually have to weigh in on mayoral control of the school system. Kerpen wants to see more parental involvement in the process, which is what opponents of mayoral control often say.

He doesn't oppose mayoral control, but feels that there is more input needed from parents. It's an idea that makes sense in theory, but public schools often founder when nobody is accountable. Put parents and community groups in charge and you can no longer blame the mayor; you sort of sacrifice that right.

Kerpen is a smart guy, and it is safe to say that some of his ideas are welcome in this campaign. His plan to visit every school principal as borough president is ambitious and possible. His hope to expand a commuter-link program so people can carpool to work is worthy of attention.

"I will not be a borough president that uses a car and driver paid for by the taxpayer. I will be carpooling to work or finding my own way without costing the city money," says Kerpen.

The borough presidency is a big job in New York City since it gets such visibility. Kerpen is in a good position to launch an opposition campaign in a borough that has an extremely high foreclosure rate.

"We saw two hospitals close while the borough president was planning to renovate Borough Hall for $20 million," Kerpen points out.

In the end, when the economy stabilizes, the city will have to find new ways to save money. Kerpen talks about technology and transparency in budgeting the way many candidates do today. Keep an eye on Kerpen in the coming months, we may just have an interesting primary coming our way.

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