



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 15, 2010

Emanuel's Challenging Path to Chicago Mayor

After Rahm Emanuel resigned his position as White House chief of staff and announced his intent to run for mayor of Chicago, it seemed his bid would be challenging as he would face a number of other contenders. The *New York Times* indicates, however, that the flood of people interested in succeeding Mayor Richard Daley has trickled, but that Emanuel continues to face a number of other challenges, most notably reacquainting himself with the ins and outs of Chicago politics.



According to the [New York Times](#), "In case his time at the White House made him hazy, Mr. Emanuel has gotten some swift reminders of what Chicago politics looks like: gritty, petty, racially complicated, and never ever dull."

For example, as Emanuel marched along 26th street in the Latino neighborhood of Little Village, an egg was thrown at him from a moving vehicle which landed right at his feet.

Likewise, Carol Moseley Braun, a former senator expected to run, has accused Emanuel of "cutting and running after engineering the biggest Democratic Party political loss in 27 years" and ultimately leaving President Obama "holding the bag."

Emanuel has also been mocked by Mayor Daley's former chief of staff for holding a Hollywood fundraiser with people such as screenwriter Aaron Sorkin in attendance.

Another thorn in the side of Emanuel's campaign is likely to be his former tenant, Rob Halpin, who rented Emanuel's Chicago home while his landlord was in Washington. Halpin, who was angered by Emanuel's sudden return to Chicago, refused to move out of Emanuel's home, and has now seriously indicated that he may be interested in running for mayor himself.

When asked about the issue pertaining to Halpin, Emanuel responded, "I'm not going to get involved in or comment on what I basically consider political games and tricks."

In addition to the difficulties posed by opposition to Emanuel's bid is the abundance of issues plaguing Chicago. The *New York Times* elaborates:

The city has struggled to hold on to convention business, has seen its credit rating downgraded, has used proceeds from privatization deals to balance its budgets, and may face annual budget shortfalls of more than \$1 billion, including unfunded pension obligations.

Divisions over race, ethnicity, and geography are already emerging. For the moment, Mr. Emanuel is the only white candidate who has formally announced his candidacy, and people like Mr. Rangel, who is Latino and leads the United Neighborhood Organization, a prominent Hispanic



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group, has been criticized for his support of Mr. Emanuel over Latino candidates.

Similarly, black leaders in Chicago agreed to support black candidates running for mayor, and decided on Danny K. Davis, at least for now.

In addition to race, President Obama's support may also be a hindrance on Emanuel's campaign. Obama's assertions that Emanuel would make a "terrific" mayor may be heavily contested by those who believe he was far from a "terrific" chief of staff.

Despite the number of challenges Emanuel faces, however, he has also acquired the support of Chicago's business establishment, including United Continental Holdings, chaired by Glenn Tilton, who will be hosting a fundraiser for Emanuel.

Emanuel will be submitting his petition complete with thousands of signatures today, which will officially begin his bid for office. A variety of challengers who were expected to come up against Emanuel, including a sheriff, state and federal lawmakers, and an alderman, have since changed their minds.

The *Times* asserts that their hesitation to run against the former White House chief of staff may have something to do with the way he runs his campaigns. [According to Meg Stapleton, author of *The Thumpin,' hardball tactics are typical of Rahm Emanuel*](#), who tends to be combative.

In fact, it is Emanuel's relentless use of intimidation that would make his transition from Washington, D.C. to Chicago a relatively smooth one.

Photo: Former White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel announces his candidacy for Mayor of Chicago at the John C. Coonley School in Chicago, Nov. 13, 2010: AP Images



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