

Kilpatrick

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largely on his flashier opponent who had been dubbed the "hip-hop mayor."

He called Kilpatrick about 3 a.m. to offer his congratulations.

"Although we have lost an election, we have nothing to be ashamed of," he said later Wednesday morning. "Detroiters just made a decision that they wanted to give Mayor Kilpatrick another chance, and I respect them for that."

Hendrix said he believes the timing of the Nov. 2 funeral of civil rights icon Rosa Parks — which brought national attention to Kilpatrick — affected the race.

"I think that it came at an important juncture in this campaign," Hendrix said.

Kilpatrick, 35, touted improved city services. New homes and downtown construction also speak to revitalization in Detroit, though blight still pervades many neighborhoods.

But the mayor also found himself asking voters' forgiveness after questions surfaced about his spending, including the use of city credit cards for expensive out-of-town travel and a city lease of a luxury SUV for his fam-

ily. He stopped wearing his trademark diamond earring as he tried to shed the "hip-hop mayor" label and has implied that the media is out to get him.

In August's nonpartisan primary, Hendrix had topped Kilpatrick 44 percent to 34 percent. But Kilpatrick, a lawyer and son of a congresswoman, gained ground as the election neared.

While voters were still casting ballots Tuesday, the U.S. attorney's office on be-

half of the FBI requested that the city preserve about 46,700 absentee ballots cast in the mayor's race, along with applications and envelopes for the ballots, as part of a probe into potential vote irregularities.

The allegations started with a city council candidate who lost in the primary and a *Detroit News* investigation that found some absentee voters had listed addresses of abandoned lots.

Among the other claims: The names of dead people

were used to cast absentee ballots; ballots were sent improperly; and city staff improperly assisted people incapable of voting. Chief Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Mary Beth Kelly, who granted the request to preserve absentee ballots, ruled last week that City Clerk Jackie Currie had been breaking state law in how she handles such ballots. She ordered the secretary of state and the Wayne County clerk to oversee absentee ballots.

Kelly also has found

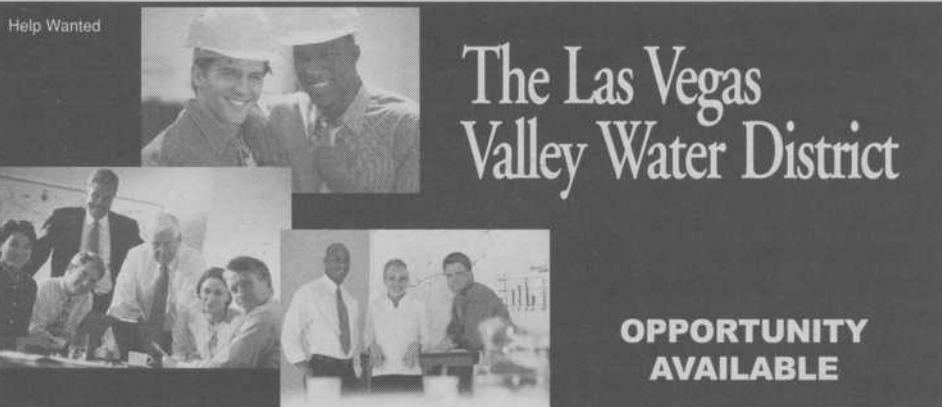
Currie in contempt for mailing 132,000 absentee ballot applications to people who didn't request them, in defiance of a court order.

Currie's attorney Steven W. Reifman said the order to preserve ballots was an unnecessary intrusion into the clerk's power.

In addition to budget problems, Detroit faces a continuing population decline that started a half-century ago. It has just over 900,000 residents, compared with 1.8 million in 1950, and was listed this year as the nation's most impoverished big city.

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