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For Bruno, the race is on ... almost Senate majority leader hasn't confirmed his plans publicly, but spokesman says announcement in works

By Irene Jay Liu

ALBANY — Though he's been publicly coy about his re-election plans, Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno soon will announce his intent to run again, a spokesman said Thursday.

Behind the scenes, the Brunswick Republican already is quietly gearing up for a run.

Bruno caused a stir in the Capitol when he refused to say in an interview published Tuesday in "On Board," a newsletter of the New York State School Boards Association, whether he was running for reelection in the fall.

Bruno was similarly noncommittal on Thursday. Asked whether he would run, Bruno told a reporter, "You gonna keep your job tomorrow? Are you? Are you going to be working next week?"

When pressed by another reporter, he said: "Everything is timely, time is everything in this business."

Later in the day, Bruno spokesman Kris Thompson confirmed that petitions with Bruno's name had been printed and were distributed to volun-

teers at a meeting of the Rensselaer County Republican Party on Wednesday.

Petitions also will be distributed in Saratoga County.

An announcement about re-election will be made soon, Thompson said, but "there's a time and place for announcements like this. It's about governing, not politics."

Bruno made his comments after giving a speech at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, which held a forum on gubernatorial succession and the powers of the lieutenant governor.

In his prepared remarks, Bruno expressed confidence in the existing system of succession. In the case of a vacancy in the position of lieutenant governor, Bruno, as temporary president and majority leader, performs the duties of lieutenant governor, which may include casting tie-breaking votes in the Senate.

While he has not yet tested the tie-breaking vote provision, and Senate Democrats have vowed to legally challenge any attempt to do so, Bruno said he liked the idea of it.

"I'm enjoying two votes," he said with a smile. "There probably should have been two paychecks. I'm only kidding."