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Mayor Bloomberg Holds Last Bill Signing As Opponents Blow Smoke

BY ERIN DURKIN

Mayor Bloomberg held his last bill signing Monday - as opponents literally blew smoke.

Two protesters lit up cigarettes inside City Hall's Blue Room as Mayor Bloomberg signed a ban indoor use of e-cigarettes and a raft of other measures on his second to last day in office.

"You've shown nothing but disrespect and contempt for not just the choice to smoke, but for individual decision-making itself," said Audrey Silk, founder of the group Citizens Lobbying Against Smoker Harassment, before lighting up in defiance of the current indoor smoking ban. "Good people disobey bad laws."

A security guard grabbed the cigarette away from Silk and she and another man who started smoking in the audience were ushered out, as Bloomberg seemed non-plussed by the protest. "OK, thank you, we just don't permit smoking in public buildings," he said. "I think it's time to leave. Thank you very much."

Bloomberg signed 22 bills into law Monday - bringing his total to 883 bills signed in his 12 years in office. He's vetoed 68, 65 of which have been overridden by the City Council.

"I happen to think that democracy in New York City functions better than at the federal level and in most states," he said. "This administration and the City Council together have every reason to be proud of what we've done for the last 12 years."

Besides the e-cigarette bill, Monday's legislation included a ban on styrofoam and a bill to create a database to track Hurricane Sandy recovery spending. Bloomberg's very last bill was one to re-name six city streets. (The first one, back in 2002, was a bill requiring the health department to publish a pamphlet listing affordable health insurance options.)

The marathon signing session went on for two hours, with Bloomberg's remarks sometimes competing with testing of the sound system for the inauguration of his successor Bill de Blasio outside.

Many speakers took the opportunity to praise the mayor for work on his pet causes over three terms, from gun control to public health to environmental protection.

"I consider you now to be one of my heroes," said Queens anti-smoking activist Phil Konigsberg.

When the ceremony wrapped up, Councilman Jim Gennaro (D-Queens) presented the mayor with a bag full of gifts - a Parks Department hat, a City Hall subway stop magnet, golf balls in the colors of the city flag, and a cake bearing the city seal and the message "Thank you Mayor Bloomberg."

"Let me show you what you should never do with a cake," Bloomberg said, digging his finger in for a dollop of frosting and licking it off.

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