

**New York Daily News - <http://www.nydailynews.com>****Mike denies doing favor for city aide**

BY ROBERT F. MOORE and GREG WILSON

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Mayor Bloomberg denied giving a former top city official special treatment by ordering the city Law Department to resolve his 9/11 illness claim - but less connected litigants weren't buying it yesterday.

Although the city is officially still appealing a state-approved worker's compensation claim by ex-deputy mayor Rudy Washington, Bloomberg instructed city lawyers to reach a "fair settlement," according to sources. But Bloomberg said yesterday his involvement was not improper.

"Let me make this clear: He never asked for any special treatment, and he didn't get special treatment," Bloomberg said.

Bloomberg said he learned of Washington's compensation claim two months ago when he ran into the former Giuliani administration honcho.

Bloomberg said his offer to help cut through red tape was politely declined, but he later determined that city lawyers were relying on a technicality to battle Washington's claim for reimbursement for treatment of respiratory problems.

"This was something where a lawyer was probably reading the law too closely and shouldn't have done that and so I changed it and that's the answer," Bloomberg said.

It was unclear precisely what Washington is seeking and what the city is willing to offer.

But other city workers and volunteers who say they were sickened by working on the smoldering pile of toxic debris following the terror attacks don't have a powerful ally to help them, complained David Worby, a lawyer who represents about 8,000 ailing Ground Zero workers.

"I'm glad he's going to get help," Worby said. "But why isn't Bloomberg picking up the phone on behalf of all these other people who need help?"

News of Bloomberg's call angered Joseph Zadroga, the father of James Zadroga, a retired NYPD detective who died Jan. 5 from what a coroner called a 9/11-linked disease. The city has not designated Zadroga's death a line-of-duty fatality, which would greatly boost pension benefits paid to his family.

"They should take care of the emergency workers, not just the politically connected," he said.

Washington could not be reached for comment, but his former boss, Rudy Giuliani, said yesterday the city is right to work toward a settlement of Washington's claim.

"He was a true hero on Sept. 11," Giuliani said. "Rudy put his own health at risk to help other people, so I am glad it worked out."

**With David Saltonstall**