

Party says Mitchell not running for gov; Mitchell says no plans, but too early for decision

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Dem Party officials said Mahlon Mitchell, president of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, was allowed to speak at the state convention because he told them he's not running for gov next year.

Mitchell said he's got no plans for a bid, but added it's too early for anyone to make a decision about 2018.

The issue popped up because the party is not allowing potential 2018 gov candidates to address the convention. State Sen. Jon Erpenbach, who has been mentioned as a possible candidate, spoke during Friday night's opening because the convention is in his Senate district.

"I have not made any plans to run," Mitchell said in an interview.

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Mitchell stressed the party had nothing to do with his introduction of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, one of Friday's keynote speakers. Mitchell said the two met several years ago and have developed a relationship. Mitchell added he did not consider his introduction of Garcetti to be addressing the convention and stressed he was not looking to run afoul of any party rules.

After Mitchell introduced Garcetti, a Dem spokesman emailed reporters that the mayor had requested Mitchell introduce him. He added Executive Director Jason Sidener and Chair Martha Laning said Mitchell told them he's not running.

"He said right now he's not," Sidener told reporters.