GOP officials say West remains low key but upbeat as his future is decided

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As U.S. Rep Allen West pursues legal action on two fronts in an effort to get ballots recounted in his U.S. House District 18 race, the Palm Beach Gardens Republican is remaining low key but upbeat, according to GOP officials close to his campaign.

West has granted few media interviews since Election Day.

Bill Paterson, chairman of the St. Lucie County Republican Party, said he's been in contact with West by phone since Tuesday night, where they stayed inside West's private room at the Hutchinson Island Marriott hotel in Stuart.

West, he said, is "very positive," about his pursuit of a recount in his re-election bid in which his Democratic opponent Patrick Murphy has claimed victory. The race is an extremely close.

"I think he's handling it better than I am," Paterson said of West.

"I think he's a trooper, he's a gentleman and an honorable man, and I think he believes so strongly in this Republic that he thinks this will be all worked out and we'll come to some resolution," he said. "I also think if it does show that all of our suspicions and questions have been answered to his satisfaction, I believe that he will do whatever is the right thing to do at that time. But we aren't at that point yet."

A Palm Beach County judge on Friday denied West's request for an injunction against Palm Beach County's supervisor of elections seeking to impound ballots and voting machines.

West didn't attend the hearing.

But he did attend a Veterans Day event at Martin County High School where he was the main speaker. He talked about his experiences in the military and honoring veterans for serving their country. He also presented the school's ROTC students with an American flag and a congressional coin.
A similar recount motion is still pending in St. Lucie County, but it's unclear when St. Lucie County Circuit Judge Dan Vaughn will schedule a hearing.

Kevin Lanning, professor of political psychology at Florida Atlantic University, said the race's turnout so far echoes what happened in West's prior military service in the Army.

"I don't know West personally, but it strikes me as almost a Shakespearean tragedy, this guy's life," Lanning said. "Here's somebody who sees himself as an American patriot, who kind of personifies the old Barry Goldwater quote that 'extremism in the pursuit of liberty is no vice,' and he embraces conservatism and alienates — I won't say demonizes — but he certainly has shown no positive feelings toward those on the far left. And in this election, what we see is his extremism has led him to be discharged by the electorate."

Lanning noted that West, during his military career and as an elected official, has given his life to public service.

"But in both cases, (he) went too far," added Lanning, "and has paid a sad price."

Despite West's remarks to FoxNews Radio Wednesday that he wasn't stressing over his legal efforts to sort out the election results, Lanning speculated West must be reacting emotionally to what could be a failed re-election bid.

"I think he hurts. I think after giving his life to public service, this is how he's treated," Lanning said. "I think that this is how he feels. This is a guy who has worked really hard for his country, in his mind, and has been rejected."

Martin County Sheriff-elect William Snyder, who attended West's election party Tuesday night, said he never saw West that evening, and didn't specifically ask why he declined to address his supporters.

"I had several conversations with his campaign manager, but I never had any discussions with them as to why he didn't come down," Snyder said. "I don't know what their strategy was that night; maybe he was totally consumed with watching the election results."

Former congressman Mark Foley of West Palm Beach said West's supporters probably wanted to see him on election night, but he stopped short of speculating why West remained elusive.

"Stylistically, that's not how I operated, but again, everybody is his own boss in the political realm," Foley said. "I would always try to include my supporters in the briefings, so they knew the reason they were there and the reason I was still up trying to check every possible data point because we were in this together."
Paterson meanwhile, said he agrees with West in considering the congressional race unsettled. A recount would be appropriate, he said, especially in St. Lucie County.

"A lot of things happened that should not have happened," Paterson said. "To concede at this time would be really premature."

West is expected to appear at the National UDT-Navy SEAL Museum Saturday in Fort Pierce for its annual muster event. He’s scheduled to speak after a series of demonstration that begin at 11 a.m., museum spokesman Rolf Synder said Friday.