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Careful wording marks Mitt Romney's exit

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Mitt Romney did. John Edwards did. Rudy Giuliani didn't.

It's a subtle distinction, but when Romney bowed out of the presidential race yesterday, he suspended, rather than ended, his candidacy. Last month, Edwards did the same.

Experts agree that this doesn't mean either man intends to leap back into the mix at any point. But by technically remaining candidates, they retain a modicum of influence, in the form of delegates, and ease some logistical financial issues.

"It's not unusual," said James Campbell, chairman of the University at Buffalo political science department. "It's kind of leaving the door cracked open."

Kevin Madden, a spokesman for Romney's campaign, said "stepping aside allows the governor to bring his delegates to the convention to make sure his principles are in the platform, with the expectation of releasing those delegates to the eventual nominee."

According to The Associated Press, Romney has just under 300 delegates, which he will retain unless he officially drops out of the race. Delegates are not obligated to vote for their candidate; nor would they be obligated to vote for a candidate Romney may endorse.

When Edwards announced his campaign's suspension, his aides told reporters it was a technicality that allowed the campaign to continue receiving matching funds for campaign donations.

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