

# BOSTON HERALD



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Thursday, April 8 1993

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## Protest gives Menino a feel for life in mayoral hot seat

By JOE SCIACCA

Acting-mayor-in-waiting Thomas M. Menino faced his first test of nerves yesterday as angry, chanting protesters marched into his office demanding more youth programs in Greater Roxbury.

"I think this was a set-up," said Menino with a sigh as activists confronted him waving signs reading "After School Programs Not Gangs," and chanted, "The people united will never be defeated."

About 15 members of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, or ACORN, a group known for tactics such as City Hall sit-ins, visited Menino's City Council president's office.

They charged that the council president, set to take over when Mayor Raymond L. Flynn quits this spring or summer, was a no-show at a meeting on youth programs and has ignored the issue.

Menino told the activists

that he supports youth programs but said funding must come from federal grants, not the city budget.

"It may not be the response they want to hear but it's the truthful response," he said.

The group was not satisfied.

"He gave us the kind of speech you'd expect from a candidate for mayor," said Joyce Campbell of Dorchester. "He gave us no specifics, just a candidate's speech."

Willie Walton of Roxbury said, "He just kept saying over and over what was happening in his neighborhood. I say, 'What about my neighborhood?'"

City Councilor Charles C. Yancey of Mattapan rushed to Menino's aid, herding the protesters out of the president's office and telling them the council has little control over funds for youth.

But Walton said, "Well, if Menino's going to be acting mayor, he's going to have that control."