

# el Esalador

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Lubbock, TX USA

Democrats, GOP asses Latino Impact

## Can Hispanics Swing the National Vote?

By John Helton

Both Republicans and Democrats are courting the Latino vote in this year's election. And there is the potential that four states with large Latino populations might have an impact on the outcome.

Republicans want to parlay President Bush's appeal to Latinos into a larger share of the electorate. Last week, the Bush campaign rolled out its first ads — in English and in Spanish.

Democrats say they've learned their lesson about taking Latinos for granted and losing votes in the 2000 election. They've test-marketed ads in Florida and Nevada that they say changed Latino voters' opinions.

The New Democrat Network launched its Spanish-language advertising campaign the day after the Bush ads came out.

Hispanics make up the fastest-

growing segment of the U.S. population, and the Latino vote went from 2.5 million in 1980 to nearly 6 million in 2000. The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, which studies Latino issues, projects 6.7 million Latinos will vote this year, based on Census Bureau data. (Interactive: Charting the growth of the Latino vote)

**But experts are split on whether the Latino vote is cohesive enough to sway a national election.**

"Every four years, there is this claim that Latinos can swing the election. But if no Latino had voted at all (in the 2000 presidential election), it would have been exactly the same," Rodolfo de la Garza, a Columbia University professor, told a conference on the Latino vote that the Rivera institute put on at the University of



Los partidos Republicanos y Demócrats piensan qu este año el voto latino sera el que decidirán quin sera el próximo Presidente de los EEUU. Ambos partidos estan trabajanco arduamente para conseguir el voto.

Southern California in February.

"I don't think that you can say that there's a 'Latino vote,'" said Angelo Falcon, senior policy executive for the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Educational Fund in New York. "There are so many subtleties and differences within the community between national origin and what region they live in."

**The vote on the North American Free Trade agreement in 1996 illustrates differences.**

Robert DePosada, president of the Latino Coalition, summed it up this way: Latinos from the Southwest supported NAFTA because of the jobs and trade with Mexico it would bring. Puerto Ricans and Latinos from California opposed the agreement because of their ties with labor. Cuban-Americans initially withheld support but ultimately voted for it.

Two-thirds of U.S. Latinos — 66.9 percent — are from Mexico, 8.6 percent are from Puerto Rico and 3.7 percent from Cuba. Latinos from Central and South American countries make up 14.3 percent of the population, and the other 6.5 percent comes from other Hispanic countries.

The largest blocs of Latino voters are concentrated in two states, Republican-controlled Texas and Democrat-dominated California, and Latinos are not expected to vote any differently from how they did in 2000.

Cuban-Americans used to be the largest Hispanic group in Florida but have over the last decade become overshadowed in sheer numbers by non-Cuban Latinos, and now make up just 31 percent of the Hispanic population there.

But many of the new Florida residents are not citizens or don't vote, according to Dr. Dario Moreno, who studies Cuban-American issues at Florida International University in Miami. The Cuban-American minority makes up 8 percent of Florida's electorate, while non-Cuban Latinos, who tend not to vote as often, are 3 percent.

**Four key states**

Party operatives and academics say Florida, Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico are expected to be in play this year.

Between them, the four states hold 47 of the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency. (Interactive: Four key states)

New Mexico has the highest percentage of Latino residents in the country at 42 percent, just 2 percent less than the percentage of whites, and Florida has the fourth-largest Hispanic population, behind California, Texas and New York.

More than a quarter of Arizona's population and 20 percent of Nevada's is Latino. Bush won both states in 2000 — Arizona by 6 percentage points and Nevada by 3.

(Continued Page 5)

## Comentarios

by Bidal Agüero

You know, it really upsets me (to put it in nice words) to think that only 1000 people will decide who will be the next Commissioner for OUR precinct in Lubbock. OUR community/precinct gets to elect only four people to officially represent us in Lubbock County. One councilperson, one school board member, one constable and one justice of the peace is all that our community elects. Sure we have Judge Medina and Sheriff Gutierrez but they were not really elected by only our community.

It will probably not only be 1000 persons who elect our next commissioner but those 1000 persons will also elect our next city councilperson and our next school board member. To know that only 1000 persons will make the decision for all 60,000 (30% of 200,000) of us, Raza, that should upset everyone.

For many years now, ever since this newspaper first started publishing and it seems that since snakes could walk, this newspaper has been telling people that "su voto es su voz" - your vote is your voz. Has all this fell on deaf ears. Estan sordos o ciegos. If you are, you better get out of the way porque se los va llevar el tren.

As my friend from across the tracks says. "Que tiene esta gente? No entienden. No les importa? Les faltan canicas?"

I know that there is no reason on earth other than a person falling over dead, that a person cannot take 10 minutes out of his or her life in 11.....count them 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11 days to go vote.

"What does it matter? My vote doesn't count. Why should I vote, they're all the same." These are all lame excuses that we hear from people who I think are just lazy or don't give a damn.

Early voting starts on April 3th. If you don't have a ride, call me at 763-3841. I'll go pick you up personally during those 11 days.

**Orale Raza - Que no se los lleve el tren!**

contact Bidal at [eleditor@lano.net](mailto:eleditor@lano.net)

## Local Children Lose CHIP Coverage

(LUBBOCK) - In June of 2003 there were 4,914 children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in Lubbock County. That number has declined by 25% to 3,673 as of the end of February 2004. The trend in this area mirrors the decline in the program statewide, with over 113,000 children losing benefits. This decline further solidifies Texas' position as having the highest rate of uninsured children in the nation, with one in four children having no coverage.

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is designed for families who earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid health care, yet cannot afford to buy private insurance. The 78th Legislature in Texas made changes to the CHIP program in 2003. Many different scenarios regarding CHIP were reported as the media struggled to keep up with the proposed changes, which at one point included terminating the program. Ultimately, the Legislature tightened the eligibility requirements and discontinued vision and dental services which lowered program costs, while continuing to provide coverage for some uninsured children. These changes caused some families to lose their eligibility. However, because of the many scenarios discussed, many people mistakenly believed that all proposed changes were made final, when in fact they were not. This confusion has caused eligible children to lose benefits, as some parents may mistakenly believe the program has been eliminated or that they no longer qualify.

The insure\*a\*kid program is a grant funded partnership between the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center and Lubbock area school districts. The goal of the program is to identify children without health insurance and to assist eligible families in obtaining coverage through CHIP and Children's Medicaid.

The CHIP program has changed, but it still provides many vital services such as well checks, prescriptions, lab work, x-rays, immunizations, hospitalizations and more. It is the best affordable option for many working Texas families. A family of four can have a gross monthly income of \$3,067 and still qualify for CHIP. Earnings of parents, step and adoptive parents and money received on behalf of the children count toward this monthly total. The income of other relatives in the home such as grandparents, aunts and uncles or other unrelated persons is not considered in the total.

Some families with higher incomes do not qualify for CHIP or Medicaid, but still are unable to obtain health coverage for their children. Parents can visit the Texas Department of insurance at <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us/consumer/cbo72.html> to see a list of all insurance companies in Texas that sell products for children.

Any adult living with an uninsured child can apply for the program on behalf of children in their care. Children must be age 18 or younger and be US citizens or legal residents.

Co-pays in the CHIP program are affordable and the maximum monthly premium to cover all children in the household is \$25 per month. Many families who do not have coverage use the emergency room for their source of medical care. One trip to the emergency room can easily cost \$800, compared with an office visit co-pay of \$10 or less available through CHIP.

Coverage is provided for six months. Families who are already part of the CHIP program are encouraged to know the end date of their coverage period and to send in renewal information as soon as possible in order to maintain coverage. A 90 day waiting period is imposed on those who do not complete the renewal process in a timely manner.

Applications and assistance are available by calling TexCare at 1-800-647-6558, or the insure a kid office at 806-743-4686. Applications are also available online at [www.insureakid.org](http://www.insureakid.org) -<http://www.insureakid.org/> and [www.texcarepartnership.com](http://www.texcarepartnership.com) -<http://www.texcarepartnership.com/>

## Kerry accuses Bush of using Fox for electoral purposes

Democratic US presidential hopeful John Kerry accused President George W. Bush Saturday of inviting his Mexican

paying attention to them," Kerry charged in a statement.

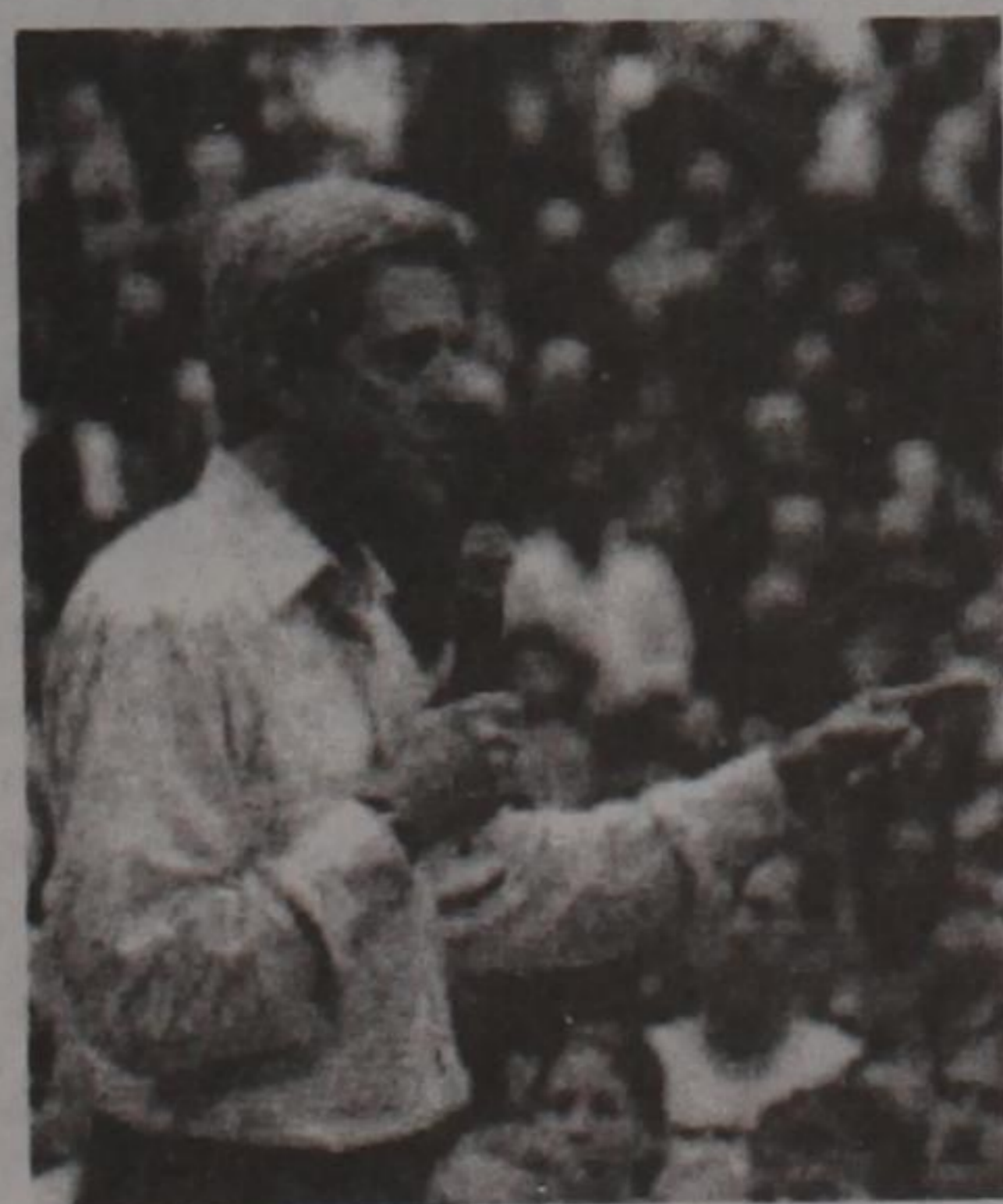
"George Bush lost credibility for failing to make good on his promise in 2001 of immigration reform, but finally laid out a proposal" in January to create temporary work visas for immigrants, he said.

"And after two strained years of US-Mexico relations, this weekend Bush has invited Vicente Fox to his ranch in Crawford," added Kerry, who is set to run against Bush in the November 2 US general election.

"Since Bush took office, more Hispanic families are living in poverty, the number of unemployed Latinos has increased by 16 percent, and the gap between white and Latino homeownership has increased by seven percent," Kerry charged.

"Latinos are right to ask why George Bush only remembers his promises to them every four years."

Kerry vowed that he, in contrast, would work to achieve "real immigration reform" and make relations with Latin America a foreign policy priority.



counterpart, Vicente Fox, to his Texas ranch merely to boost his image among Hispanic voters.

"Latinos can tell it's an election year because George W. Bush is finally

## Peligra el maíz mexicano

El gobierno mexicano advirtió que con la llegada de este tipo de alimentos se ve amenazado el futuro de la gran diversidad de maíz que existe en el país.

Oaxaca, México — Si no se mantienen bajo control, los genes modificados de una variedad de maíz importada de Estados Unidos podrían desplazar o contaminar las variedades nativas de México, dijo el jueves un grupo observador del Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte (NAFTA).

El estudio de una Comisión de la Cooperación Ecológica integrada por los tres países firmantes del NAFTA, dijo que las transferencias genéticas podrían dañar las vastas reservas de maíz de México, país natal de ese grano, cuyos genes



ancestrales podrían ser necesarios algún día para ayudar a las cosechas comerciales a sobrevivir en condiciones adversas.

El informe, presentado en un simposio sobre el maíz realizado en la ciudad de Oaxaca, se encuentra todavía en borrador y podría ser aprobado durante una reunión de la comisión en junio.

Científicos encontraron por primera vez maíz transgénico creciendo de forma silvestre en la parcela de Olga Toro, quien muestra dos mazorcas alteradas genéticamente. El estudio no indica la cantidad de maíz genéticamente modificado que puede hallarse en zonas rurales del país, pero Amanda Gálvez, directora del grupo interagencias del gobierno mexicano, dijo que un estudio federal había confirmado la existencia de transferencias masivas de genes.

En 1998, México declaró una moratoria sobre el maíz modificado genéticamente, y declaró ilegal su cultivo en cualquier lugar fuera de los laboratorios licenciados para ello, pero en un estudio de 188 comunidades del estado de Oaxaca, realizado en el 2001, se halló según Gálvez que un 7.6 por ciento de las plantas presentaban modificaciones genéticas.

Tras advertencias formuladas a los granjeros al respecto el total de plantas con genes modificados bajó en estudios posteriores, pero nunca quedó en cero.

"Tratamos de reducir la penetración de esas plantas, pero ya no podemos volver atrás e impedir su propagación", dijo Gálvez.

Aldo González, director de un grupo de pequeños granjeros, se quejó de que los resultados son incompletos.

"Quisiera preguntar si la cantidad de plantas modificadas genéticamente ha bajado en realidad o si las menores cantidades detectadas significan simplemente que la comunidad científica no puede detectar los efectos transgénicos en el maíz de segunda generación", dijo González ante el simposio de Cooperación Ecológica.

La detección de maíz transgénico en los cultivos mexicanos ha provocado protestas de defensores de la cultura mexicana y ecologistas.

El jueves uno de los artistas más destacados de México, el pintor oaxaqueño Francisco Toledo, protestó contra el hallazgo repartiendo tortillas de maíz en el centro de la capital del estado.

# La Raza es un Asunto muy Importante en el 2004

Por Marisa Treviño

No sé si es una triste ironía o un agravio bien calculado el hecho de que en este año, que conmemora el aniversario 40 del Acta de los Derechos Civiles de 1964, el estado de Texas está ofreciendo a sus estudiantes una nueva beca llamada "Overcoming Affirmative Action Essay Contest" (Competencias de Redacción de Ensayos--Cómo Superar la Acción Afirmativa")

Esta beca de \$10,000, la cual es auspiciada por "Young Conservatives" (los jóvenes conservadores), en la universidad de Texas A&M y la sociedad periodística sin fines de lucro de Texas (Texas Review Society), será dividida entre tres estudiantes cuyos ensayos ganadores describirán cómo ellos o algún familiar pudo superar la "discriminación institucionalizada y/o la marca impuesta por la política pública de preferir ciertos grupos étnicos o raciales a la hora de solicitar admisión a universidades, empleos y también en otras áreas competitivas".

Según James Logan, director ejecutivo de The Austin Review, una publicación de la Texas Review Society, "A pesar de que algunas prácticas reparatorias pudieron haber sido justificadas hace un tiempo atrás en la historia de nuestro país, hace ya mucho tiempo que se tomaron contraproducentes".

Me gustaría saber ¿de qué forma se han vuelto contraproducentes?

¿Será acaso que al establecer

que hay necesidad de una política pública de acción afirmativa, tenemos que admitir que Estados Unidos todavía no es la nación del trato igual para todos que dice ser?

¿O será porque la política pública de acción afirmativa molesta a algunas personas que tienen que competir por posiciones deseadas con los que no se parecen a ellos físicamente, no hablan su mismo idioma, ni piensan como ellos?

Lo que es contraproducente es la noción perpetuada de que los beneficiarios de las prácticas de acción afirmativa se deban sentir marcados o que se sientan inferiores en sus posiciones.

Pero no deberían sentirse así. No mientras exista la discriminación institucionalizada que sabotea que todos participen por igual en el juego de la vida.

Así como hay gente que no cree que el Holocausto ocurrió, también hay gente que no cree que todavía existe la discriminación racial. La discriminación se ha inculcado tanto en el comportamiento cultural, que ya la gente, en vez de cuestionarla, simplemente ni la ve.

La gente no ve que las escuelas que están repletas, que necesitan reparaciones, que tienen los maestros sin preparación y que carecen de los equipos y materiales esenciales, son aquellas donde predominan los estudiantes de color.

Esta gente no ve cómo los latinos y los afro-americanos sufren de fichaje racial, de brutalidad policiaca y de desigualdades en los servicios

bancarios y servicios de salud y de vivienda. No ven cómo los niños de color no reciben estímulos para alcanzar logros académicos, pero sí pueden abarrotar las clases reparatorias.

Tampoco ven cómo en sectores de ciudades donde viven hispanos y afro-americanos las carreteras tardan el doble en repararse, las limpiezas ambientales nunca parecen estar en la lista de prioridades de la ciudad y muy pocos comercios se establecen en estos lugares.

La triste realidad es que la gente que nos quiere hacer creer que la raza no es un asunto importante esperan que todos seamos tan ingenuos como los que ya han sido convencidos de esa manera de pensar.

No quieren que veamos cómo todavía la sociedad valoriza de una forma diferente a las personas dependiendo de su raza.

Si todo fuese igual, entonces ¿por qué el testimonio de 30 hombres negros fue pasado por alto en favor del testimonio de un agente de policía blanco en Tulia, Texas? Por la palabra de ese agente blanco, esos 30 hombres inocentes fueron encarcelados en una redada de drogas en el 1999.

¿Por qué cuando hay casos de personas desaparecidas como el de Elizabeth Smarts y la familia Hargon de Mississippi, sus noticias captan la atención nacional por semanas y meses?

Pero, ¿por qué cuando ocurren situaciones similares en las comunidades de latinos y negros la cobertura noticiosa apenas dura un día y ni siquiera alcanza la prensa nacional?

Los críticos de la acción afirmativa nos quieren convencer de que estas situaciones de desigualdades no tienen nada que ver con las admisiones a universidades.

Y cometen un error.

Lejos de ser casos aislados, cada situación es parte de una dinámica mucho mayor que comprueba cómo el ciclo de la discriminación pasa de generación en generación, bien parecido a los ciclos del maltrato de menores y de violencia doméstica.

Para lograr un verdadero progreso hacia una sociedad que no discrimine por color, no se puede comenzar en la academia. Necesitamos educar y graduar más gente de color. Son estos graduados los que, con toda probabilidad, trabajarán como agentes de policía, doctores, enfermeros, dueños de negocios y como maestros en los vecindarios que no sean de blancos.

Hay que estimular a estos graduados de color a que utilicen su educación para adquirir posiciones de liderazgo en estas comunidades donde puedan inculcar el cambio que los críticos de la acción afirmativa dicen que ya existe.

Yo admito que la acción afirmativa no es una solución ideal, pero tampoco lo es la alternativa de que la discriminación sea tolerada simplemente por el hecho de haber existido siempre.

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# A Season of Change, Hope, and Peace

By Abel Cruz

In just a few days we will be entering one of the most beautiful seasons of the year. For a period of about 3 months we will be in a period of growth and renewal. It is a time when we will be amazed at the beauty of the new life around us and the subtlety with which it has joined our world.

When I lived in Washington, DC, spring was a time to see the birth of new buds on the trees, on their outstretched branches, as if stretching from a long sleep and somehow reaching up to heaven. It was the time for the Cherry Blossoms and they were always awaited with great anticipation. And when they blossomed in their full glory, in all their pink beauty, they were even more beautiful than one could ever have imagined.

They could definitely take your breath away.

Some people also view this time of the year as a season of personal and spiritual growth. Christians are in a season of Lent, a season of personal renewal as they await the season of the death and resurrection of Christ.

It is during this period that some people examine their own lives, looking inward, from the outside in, wondering if change is needed in their life. For others, it is business as usual and they go about their lives oblivious to all the changes taking place around them.

Lately, the new movie by Mel Gibson, The Passion of the Christ, has been the object of great attention. There has been an enormous amount of interest and controversy surrounding this piece of art. Although I have not had an opportunity to go and see the film, I hear that it is a beautiful film that accurately depicts the passion of the death of Christ. I am left to wonder if the same would have happened if the film would have debuted in the summer. A time when most people are busy with other things such as kids and vacations? Perhaps it generated so much interest because people are looking for anchors in their lives during this time of spiritual renewal? Maybe it is because it's spring?

Perhaps people are looking for something to hold on to, something to reinforce their belief in their Faith? Perhaps people are just looking at how their lives can be better, how they can grow more in "love and peace"? I hope so...

Unfortunately, in the middle of it all, reality, like a bucket of cold ice water, slaps us in the face, wakes us up, and our thoughts that had been focused on springtime are suddenly blurred by the ugly realities that shape our lives.

Realities like the one that tells us that 3 more American citizens were killed in Iraq today. That close to 600 military personnel has been lost in a "lost cause" war. That over 3,000 people have been injured and countless Iraqis killed and injured. Even as our daily mainstream paper tells us in one of their editorials that the war in Iraq is not the main political issue that Democrats think it is.

I wish the editorialists were the ones charged with the duty of telling the mothers and fathers of those soldier's that have been killed that it's not an issue.

Realities like the one that informs us that a young woman's life has been taken from her parents at the tender age of 19 by a drunken driver, as occurred here this past weekend. The reality that tells us that over 200 innocent people have been killed and over 1,600 wounded in Spain in the name of an Islamic holy war.

The important thing to remember though is that spring gives us an opportunity to reflect on what is important to us in our lives, and allows us to renew our faith in humanity and nature, not only in a physical sense, but in a very spiritual one also.

Lead me from death to life,  
from lies to truth  
Lead me from despair to hope  
from fear to trust  
Lead me from hatred to love  
from war to peace  
Let peace fill our heart, our world  
our universe...  
Peace...  
Prayer for Peace by Mother Teresa  
(c)acruz2004 Email: acruzsc@aol.com

# In 2004, Race is Not a Non-Issue

By Marisa Treviño

I don't know whether it's a sad irony or a calculated insult that during this year marking the 40th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that a new scholarship is being offered to Texas students called the "Overcoming Affirmative Action Essay Contest."

Sponsored by the Young Conservatives at Texas A&M and the nonprofit Texas Review Society, the \$10,000 scholarship will be divided among three students whose winning essays entail how they or a family member overcame "institutionalized discrimination and/or the stigma imposed by policies giving preference to particular racial and ethnic groups in college admissions, employment and other competitive arenas."

According to James Logan, executive editor of The Austin Review, a publication of the Texas Review Society, "While some remedial policies may have been justified at one time in our nation's history, they have long since become counterproductive."

I'd like to know in what way?

Is it because by affirming the need for affirmative action policies we have to admit that the USA is still not the land of equal treatment of all?

Or because affirmative action policies make some people angry that they have to compete for coveted positions with those who don't look like

them, speak like them or think like they do?

What is counterproductive is the notion perpetuated that recipients of affirmative action policies should feel stigmatized or less deserving of their positions.

They shouldn't. Not as long as there exists institutionalized discrimination that sabotages life's playing field.

Just as there are people who don't believe the Holocaust occurred, there are those who don't believe discrimination still exists. It has become so ingrained in cultural behavior that rather than question it, people just don't see it.

They don't see that the schools that are overcrowded, in disrepair, have under-qualified teachers and not enough equipment and supplies are those predominantly attended by children of color.

They don't see how Latinos and African Americans suffer from racial profiling, police brutality and disparities in health care, banking and housing. They don't see how children of color don't receive the encouragement to achieve academically and are over-represented in remedial classes.

Or how in sections of cities where Hispanics and African Americans live road repairs take twice as long to complete, environmental clean-ups never seem to be high on a city's list of priorities and few retail establishments set up shop.

The sad reality is that people

who would have us believe that race is a non-issue are hoping we all are as gullible as those they've already converted to their way of thinking.

They don't want us to see how society still places unequal value on people of different races.

If everything were equal, then why was the testimony of 30 black men disregarded in favor of testimony by one white police officer in Tulia, Texas? Based on the white officer's word, those 30 innocent men were imprisoned in a 1999 drug sting.

Why is it that when the Elizabeth Smarts and families like

Mississippi's Hargon family go missing, their stories sustain national attention for weeks and months? Yet when the same situations occur in Latino and black communities, coverage lasts barely a day, let alone goes national?

Critics of affirmative action would have us believe that these instances of inequality have no bearing on college admissions.

They're wrong.

Far from being disconnected cases, each instance is part of the larger dynamic that proves how the cycle of discrimination feeds upon itself, much like the cycles of child abuse and domestic violence.

If there is to be real progress toward a color-blind society, academia is not the place to start. We need to educate and graduate more people of color. It's these graduates who will most likely work in non-white neighborhoods as police officers, doctors and nurses, business owners and teachers. It's graduates of color who must be encouraged to use their education to advance into leadership positions in these communities where they can instill the change that critics of affirmative action say already exists.

I admit affirmative action is not an ideal solution, but neither is the alternative that discrimination be condoned, simply because that's the way it's always been.

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## EL EDITOR

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## U.S. Hispanic unemployment hits in January

Washington, D.C., February 23, 2004 (AFP) - Unemployment among US Hispanics rose from 6.6 percent in December to 7.3 percent in January, according to a Pew Hispanic Center report published Monday.

From December 2003 to January, the percentage of Hispanics participating in the labor force rose from 67.5 to 68.1, the report said.

The number of Latinos joining the workforce in 2003 doubled over the 2002 increase, according to the study, which found that for the first time since January 2000, the increase in employment for Hispanics consistently beat population growth.

Male immigrants showed the greatest increase in employment during 2003, especially those who arrived most recently and those working in construction, the report said.

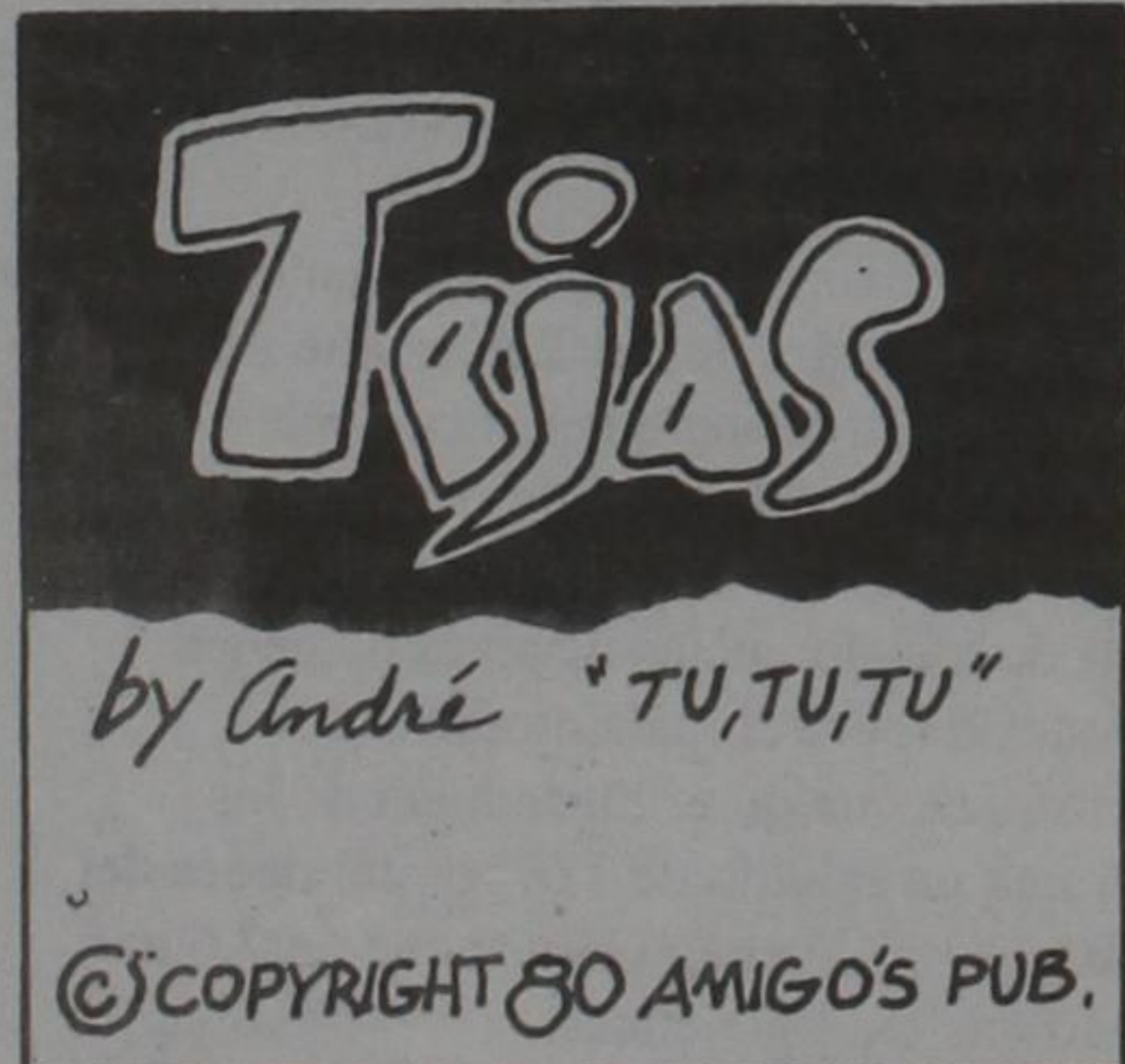
However, Hispanic women, and Latinos born in the United States fared worse, notably those born into the second generation.

Comprising 38 million people from the total U.S. population of 280 million, Hispanics surpassed African Americans as the biggest minority in the United States. AFP



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# Más de un Millón de Latinos no puede Votar

En California y Florida, más de 100 mil latinos se encuentran marginados del proceso político y más de 150 mil están impedidos legalmente de votar en cualquier elección en Texas por haber violado la Ley.

Según un estudio del Fondo Mexicanoamericano para la Defensa Legal y Educación (MALDEF) difundido ayer, en 6 de 10 estados del país los latinos constituyen más del 10% del total de personas que no pueden votar porque esos estados tienen leyes que prohíben votar a quienes hayan sido condenados por un delito grave.

El estudio llega a la conclusión de que, comparado con otros grupos demográficos, el latino presenta proporcionalmente más altas tasas de marginación política en esos estados si se toma en cuenta el porcentaje total de latinos que reside en ellos. También concluye que, una vez que se comparan las proporciones de marginados sólo con las de ciudadanos en edad de voto, se nota que "el impacto de las leyes que prohíben el voto de los convictos es mayor entre los latinos".

En California, donde el total de personas que ha perdido sus derechos políticos por esa razón anda por encima de los 281 mil, más de la tercera parte —103,325— son de origen latinoamericano.

A pesar de tener tan alta tasa de representación entre los marginados de la cosa política, los latinos sólo conforman el 28% de la población con poder de voto y el 19.5% de los ciudadanos en edad de votar.

En Florida, del total de población marginada de las urnas el 12.4% es hispana. Si se compara con el total de población en edad de votar de ese origen, los latinos "parecen estar subrepresentados", señala el estudio.

Sin embargo, agrega el documento, "esa cifra de 12.4% es mayor que el 11.28% de ciudadanos en edad de votar, lo que puede significar que los latinos están sobrerrepresentados dentro de la población marginada". El hecho es que 119,100 miembros de ese grupo étnico no pueden escoger a sus gobernantes.

## Immigration is Mexico's "safety valve"

Immigration from México to the United States is getting increasing attention these days. And it will certainly get even more in the future. Each country sees the issue differently from their perspectives.

While the US has been able to use many of these immigrants, both legal and illegal, to fuel their economy (and lower the wage level for greater productivity), the sheer volume of this mass migration does present problems. One of the main faults of the system in the US has been in not bringing the immigration system up to date with reality. As an example, letting the number of visas available for Mexicans at the same level as those from Nepal is just stupidity in light of reality. And on top of this, since this is going to be a bitter election year, no real hope of improving this situation in the US can be foreseen in the near future.

So, let's look at the Mexican side of this equation. México has long used immigration to the US as a "safety valve" to export those who cannot find meaningful work here in México. This has worked for a time to alleviate social unrest, but our system's ability to create a national environment for job creation is running out of steam.

When you look at the "real" unemployment numbers here, it is downright frightening. While the government figures seem to suggest around 3% unemployment, you have to remember that this figure considers anyone over the age of 12 who works at least one hour a week at anything as

### Texas especial

Texas, apuntan los investigadores, es un caso muy significativo, puesto que la proporción de convictos sin derecho al voto —29.6%— se aproxima al de la población en edad de sufragio —28.6%— de ese estado.

En tanto que 3.94% de los texanos en general tiene prohibido ejercer ese derecho, el porcentaje de latinos con la misma restricción es de 5.21%.

Las leyes al respecto varían por estado. En California pierden sus derechos ciudadanos los individuos que se encuentran cumpliendo una sentencia o que se encuentran en libertad vigilada (parolees). El estado, sin embargo, permite el voto de los convictos que se encuentran bajo libertad condicional (probation).

Solamente dos estados, Maine y Vermont, así como Puerto Rico permiten a los convictos ejercer el derecho al voto aun cuando están en la cárcel.

Los estados incluidos en el análisis fueron California, Florida, Nueva York, Texas, Arizona, Nebraska, Nevada, Carolina del Norte, Virginia y Washington.

Los primeros cuatro fueron seleccionados por poseer grandes poblaciones latinas y carcelarias de esa misma etnia. Nebraska, Nevada y Carolina del Norte fueron incluidos por el notable aumento de la población latina en los últimos años.

El número total de ciudadanos que ha perdido su calidad de votantes en el país asciende a 4.7 millones; de éstos, aproximadamente 1.8 millones son afroamericanos, el grupo que, según el análisis de MALDEF, es el más afectado por las leyes que impiden votar a los convictos.

Los latinos forman el 13% de la población y el 16% de los que están en presidio.

MALDEF es una organización sin fines de lucro cuya misión es la defensa y promoción de los derechos de los latinos en Estados Unidos. Los consultores del estudio fueron Christopher Uggen, profesor de sociología de la Universidad de Minnesota, un experto en poblaciones sin derecho a sufragio, y Sara Wakefiel, graduada de ese mismo centro.

employed. That includes selling chewing gum on the street at rush hour and washing a few autos as employment. The real figures are harder to come by, but the actual level of real employment is probably worse than the figures in the US in the depths of the Great Depression of the '30s. And we seem to be loosing more jobs to China than are created. Therefore, the choice is simple, either go north (to the US any way you can) or starve. Remember that there is no unemployment insurance here.

We have villages in the rural areas of Central and Northern México that are almost devoid of anyone but women and children because all of the able bodied men are "in the North". And "remittances" from Mexicans working in the US that are sent home to their families have topped direct foreign investment. In fact, this is our second or third highest source of foreign income. And this, my friends, portends to future social disaster.

And the other side of the coin is that the immigrants leaving usually represent the most aggressive of the population - The "cream of the crop" as it were. And we are seeing more and more of our better educated making the move also. Something like the "brain drain" that England suffered in the '50s.

We are in fact, continuing a national fiscal policy that has been dictated to us by the US, called the "Washington Consensus". This preaches fiscal austerity, high interest rates, low national debt and above

Perhaps one of 20 e-mails and voice mails I get are about people who are worried that Latinos are taking over. Taking over what? Kern County, California, the United States, the galaxy, you name it.

One e-mail writer, building to a paranoid crescendo, predicted that Latinos will "gain strength ... by manipulating and working the open democratic system of our republic to gain political influence, control and dependency upon our government's programs. Then control the area (southwestern United States) through that sheer mass of numbers, abuse of the system, political influence and dependency. Is the picture becoming clearer?"

Yup. Crystal clear. It doesn't take long to figure out that these people -- who thankfully seem to make up a small percentage of Kern residents -- are primarily motivated by one thing: fear.

Now comes a study from the Pew Hispanic Center and the Kaiser Family Foundation that further demonstrates the futility of fearing Latinos as closet separatists.

Many studies have examined the differences among Latinos related to national origin. We've long known that those from Mexican, Cuban and Puerto Rican roots, for example, tend to behave differently. But this study takes a closer look at an often-ignored

factor: the difference between the generations of immigrants. Taking a close look at second-generation Hispanics, the study blows sizable holes in the argument that Latinos refuse to assimilate, refuse to learn English, and consider education relatively unimportant.

The study predicts that within a few decades, second-generation Latinos will catch up with and pass their first-generation counterparts and change the face of Hispanics in America forever. Why is that important? Because second-generation Latinos behave differently than their first-generation parents. Already, they are more like other Americans.

Taking a look at language, for example, the Pew study found that the children of Hispanic immigrants learn English quickly. In fact, by the second generation, slightly less than half of Latinos are bilingual, another 46 percent favor English, and less than one in 10 still cling to Spanish only.

Observations can be misleading. Take a walk among the indoor shops at Mercado Latino on Edison Highway and Chamberlain Street. Stroll past the merchants selling cowboy boots, Virgin of Guadalupe votive candles, and herbal treatments, and you'll hear both business owners and their customers chatter in Spanish.

But wait. They just got here.

In a few years, their children will wear Nikes, sip Vanilla Coke and watch MTV just like the rest of us.

Perhaps one of the most interesting parts of the Pew study dealt with intermarriage.

Sociologists have long known that first-generation immigrants tend to marry within their own racial or ethnic group.

But with Latinos at least, this pattern doesn't hold for long.

While fewer than one in 10 foreign-born Hispanics intermarry, about one in three do so in the second generation.

By the third generation, more than half marry outside their racial or ethnic group.

We may argue about whether America is truly a melting pot, but when it comes to love, marriage and their usual result, children, the Pew study seems to indicate that this model fits. My own family is becoming a happy synthesis of cultures. Second- and third-generation relatives have married Puerto Ricans and Filipinos.

One of my cousins laughingly calls himself a "Mexican."

I've heard perhaps more myths about Latinos and education than about Hispanics in any other area.

Tales about about Mexican-Americans -- especially women -- whose parents

discouraged or prohibited them from going to college.

But I'm convinced this was never as widespread as many people believe. In fact, a friend of mine said that when she graduated from high school, her first-generation father told her, in a rough translation from the Spanish, "I'd rather see you spend time in college than with some SOB." Now, she's a high school administrator.

The Pew study found that one in three second-generation Latinos have taken some college courses, and 15 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The statistics are about the same for third-generation Hispanics.

This level of educational attainment translates into a language we all speak: money.

Surveys indicate that income among Latinos rises with education, averaging \$550 per week in the third generation.

Learning the language, a better education, a higher income.

If these goals sound familiar, it's because they are.

They make up the dreams of virtually every immigrant group that has come to this country since it was founded.

And they are further proof that, despite some of the more paranoid among us, the dream of Latinos is the dream of America.

## Paying Taxes in Mexico is is Dire Need of Institutional Reforms

We were talking about the banking landscape in México recently, but today the subject touches more directly the ordinary people here; but it's also important for foreign companies contemplating doing business in México. And this brings up what Jorge Castañeda is talking about (yes, he is starting to write again now) - "institutional" reforms that are badly needed. He was, if you remember, Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Relations in the Fox cabinet.

January reminds us that this is the month that you pay your property taxes; and in México this is a bit more complicated than in the "developed" countries.

First of all, there is no notification sent to property owners or a statement on what you owe. Here, you gather whatever documents you think that you may be asked for, then go and get a pocketful of cash (no, they don't take checks or credit cards) and go downtown and stand in line to find out what you owe. If you are lucky, and you guessed right and have enough cash, you stand in another line to pay. And each of these lines are long - it may take a full day to get up front in the first line.

In our case this year, it took three days of standing in lines to pay the tax. At the first window, they did have an amount, but we had to go to another window because there had been a recalculation on some past taxes. When this additional amount was learned, we had to go back home and get some more papers, come back the next day to settle the additional amount. That was day two. In order to go back to window #1, and start the process again, the day was over, and now for day three, we were able to stand in two more lines and pay.

For one of my friends with more than one piece of property, this process took about a week. You develop strong legs here from standing in lines!

When I renewed my last driver's license, it took two days. There were no complications, but since the lines from one stage to the next were so long, it became a two-day adventure. And this was with no eye test or anything else, I have never had an actual driv-

ing test here or even an eye test by the way - just simply filling out of forms. That's why I went for a 5-year license so that I would only have to undergo this torture every five years.

At least, for federal income taxes, you can pay at your bank, and if you have (unlike most Mexicans) a bank account, you can pay by check. And you can pay your normal monthly bills at the bank by check. Otherwise, you go all around town and stand in lines at the Telephone Company, the Power Company.

And we wonder why so much of our business here is on the "informal" market? And our administrations, from one to another, keep talking about improving "National Productivity"? May I point out that this is a big part of national productivity? And a good part of our traffic problem here also.

Now, in fairness, I should point out that the city of Tlalnepantla (where I live) is trying to run a government that is more attuned and responsive to the needs of the people. But with the "system" that pre-

vails, their hands are tied.

When Castañeda looks back on the beginnings of the present administration, he tells us that the big mistake was focusing on the "details" like fiscal reform, labor law reform, and so on. What he says now is that the mistake was not to tackle the bigger issue, the institutional system that we have to live with.

No amount of "tinkering" will really make any difference if the basic system is not reformed first. And, you know what the largest issue is? That Mexicans deserve better.

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# "Todavía puedo dar mucho más" Najera

Por GABRIEL CABARROUY  
 Eduardo Najera fue titular en el primer partido de los Mavericks del mes, pero su actuación fue tan decepcionante

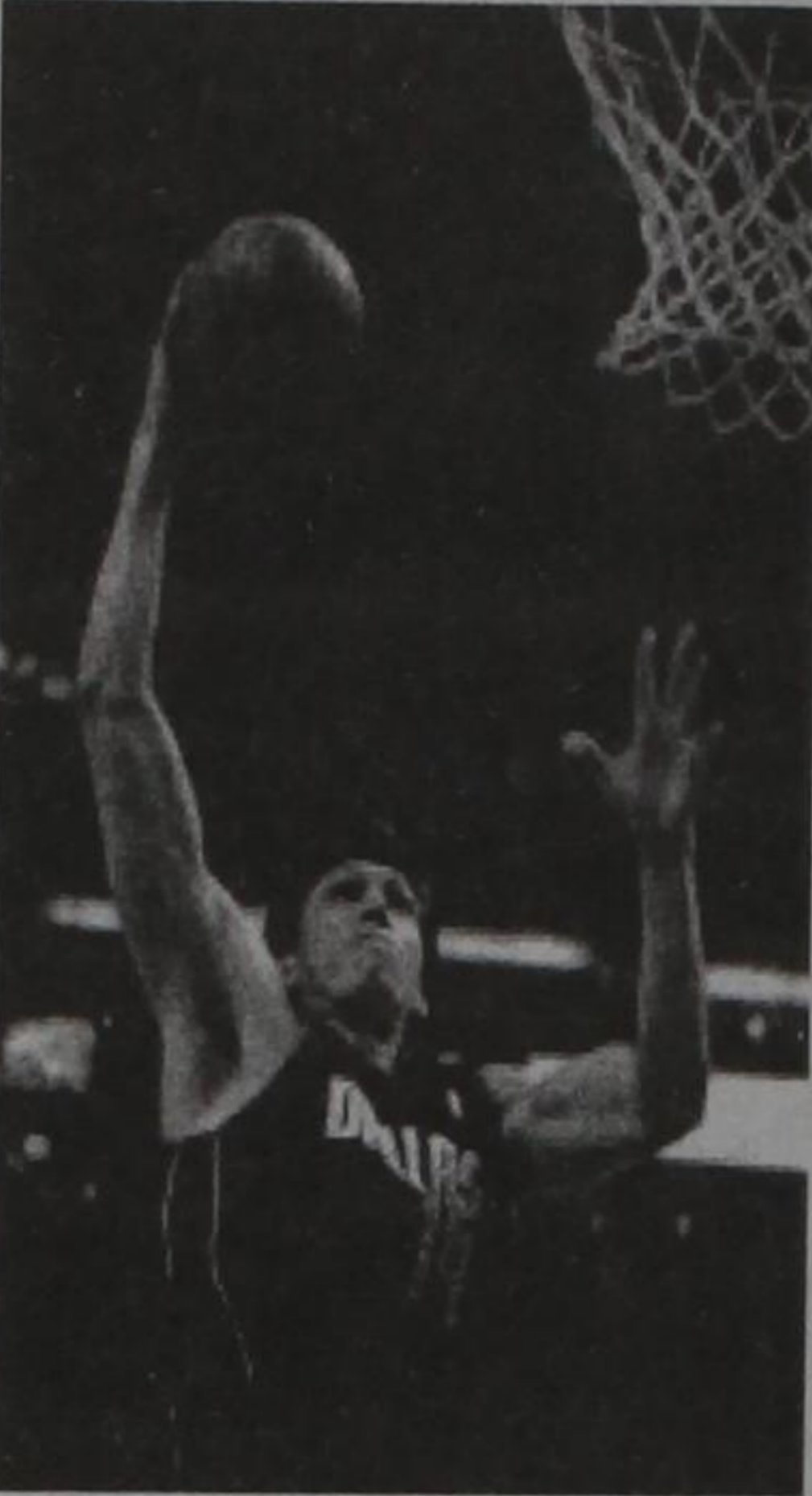
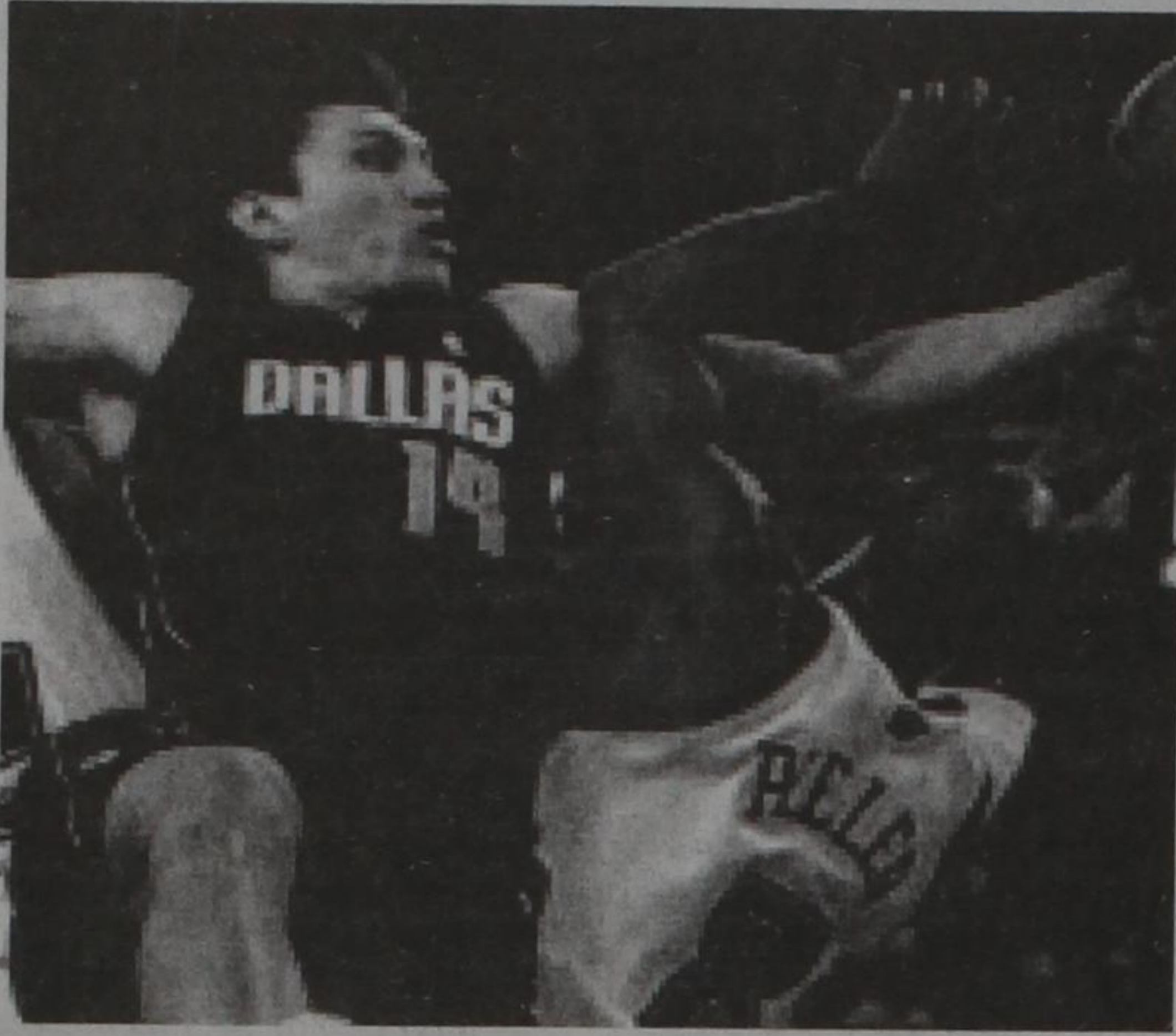
intensidad no estaba ahí, pero desde entonces ha jugado como lo hacía cuando era un jugador dominante", explicó Nelson.  
 Najera está promediando cinco puntos y cinco rebotes

partidos.  
 Nelson estará velando los minutos que juegue y su intensidad en la cancha medirá la salud de su rodilla.

Najera no jugó la primera mitad contra los Clippers el domingo porque la rodilla lo estaba molestando.

Los Mavs ganaban por cinco puntos cuando Najera bloqueó un tiro de Corey Maggette y luego salió corriendo para el canasto fácil en transición.

En la próxima posesión de los Clippers, Najera recibe la falta ofensiva - una de sus especialidades que lo distinguen en la defensa de los Mavs. Así los Mavs aseguraron su segunda victoria en hilo fuera de casa.



"Najera nos trajo un montón de energía cuando entró al juego", dijo Steve Nash. "Él agarra rebotes, fuerza robos de balones y juega agresivo en la defensa."

que regresó al banco enseguida a escuchar el sermón de los técnicos.

Najera respondió con una estelar defensa en Houston, interceptando cuatro pases dirigido al chino Yao Ming. El día siguiente, continuó su tradición de villano, robándose el balón cinco veces y al día de hoy, su productividad sigue mejorando.

"Ha sido lo mejor que he jugado esta temporada pero todavía puedo dar mucho más", dijo.

Nelson ya le dio la bienvenida al viejo Najera "que conocíamos y amábamos."

"Estuve frustrado con su actuación en el partido que lo puse como titular, pensé que su

por juego en los últimos siete partidos. Dos canastas y dos rebotes más que su promedio de la temporada entera.

"Consistencia es lo que estoy buscando en lo personal", dijo. "Me gustaría seguir adelante y jugar de la misma manera pero donde he batallado es que a veces mi rodilla se siente bien y a veces se siente muy mal".

Para calmar el dolor, ha tratado diferente medicamentos fuertes pero lo único que le funciona son los analgésicos de venta abierta al público.

Cuan bien juegue Najera depende de cuan bien se sienta su rodilla izquierda, la cual le ha dado problemas toda la temporada, faltando 22

# Presidential Candidates on the Issue Education for Hispanics



By Erika Robles

One of the many issues of major importance to the Hispanic community we need to pay attention to before deciding who to vote for in the coming elections is the measures the candidates are proposing to improve the educational system in the US.

U.S. Census data confirm that, in the next ten years, a significant share of America's schools will be largely composed of Hispanic children. However, a large percentage of Hispanic children attend inadequately funded schools.

The Education Trust released a report in August 2002 documenting large funding gaps between high- and low-poverty and -minority districts in many states. The report reveals that in 31 of 47 states studied, districts enrolling the

highest of minority students receive substantially fewer (i.e. a difference of \$100 or more per student) state and local education dollars per student than districts enrolling the lowest percentages of minority students. The same gap occurred in 30 of the 47 states studied for districts educating the greatest number of poor students. These gaps have real and troublesome consequences for the quality of education low-income and minority children receive. "In too many states, we see yet again that the very students who need the most, get the least," said Kati Haycock, director of The Education Trust.

Teacher quality is also a fundamental part for the success of the children. Unfortunately, under-funding of schools makes it difficult to

recruit and retain qualified teachers. According to a report issued by The Education Trust "Thinking K-16: Good Teaching Matters," says that if poor and minority children "had teachers of the same quality as other children, about half of the achievement gap would disappear." And if the best teacher were to be assigned to the students who need them the most, the gap could be entirely closed. For example, in California -the state with the largest Hispanic student population- a survey prepared for Public Advocates in March 2002 "Survey of the Status of Equality in Public Education in California" found that "nearly 89 percent of schools in which 20 percent or more of the teachers are 'under-qualified' serve a student body that is majority students of color."

Another issue to consider is overcrowded classrooms. The California Department of Education, 2003, revealed that nearly 1,000 school sites are "critically overcrowded," with student population densities in excess of 200 percent and sometimes 300 percent according to the California Department of Education guidelines. Overcrowded classrooms means less individualized attention making it more difficult for the teacher to spot a student who needs additional help.

Language barriers are an enormous problem for immigrants whose English is poor or who simply don't speak it. During the 2000-2001 school-year, English Language Learners (ELL) students represented 9.8 percent for the total K-12 public school enrollment. Latinos students made up 79 percent of all ELLs. Despite the great demand and need for that program, the current funding for bilingual education provides only \$87 per ELL child, when in reality, experts estimate that \$361 per child is necessary to develop and implement programs for ELLs. The appropriation for this program for the FY 2003 was \$750 million, but it only received \$685 million. Moreover, the Bush administration asked for a \$20 million cut for FY 2004.

Education is the basis of success. Without a proper education, the odds of getting better jobs, of improving our income and of becoming better citizens are low. Everybody deserves an education regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, income and/or disabilities. It's a right and a need. We need to demand a more equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all; a better funding for programs such as ELLs, which directly affects Latinos; and an adequate funding of schools serving Hispanic and other disadvantaged students.

We need to stand up and ask candidates what they're planning to do to make this happen. We'll not accept vague answers; we can no longer afford to do that. We need specifics if we want to give our community a better chance to succeed; to better ourselves through education.

We also need to do our part. It's not enough to just demand this basic right; we also need to get involved in the education of our children. Parental and community support is fundamental; reading to our children improves their vocabulary and intellectual abilities. Most importantly, we need to commit ourselves to it; we have the right to have an education, and we have to take advantage of the education we're given. This means attending school and staying in school, and seeking a college education.

Erika Robles, a contributing columnist to HispanicVista.com

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### What are people saying about Ysidro Gutiérrez?

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Ysidro is the candidate with new ideas. He will bring needed change to Lubbock. Gilbert has been in office for 12 years. It is time for a change.

Ysidro es el candidato que nos trae nuevas ideas. El nos traera el cambio necesario para Lubbock. Gilberto Flores tiene 12 años en el puesto. Ya es tiempo para un cambio.

#### Little Joe Hernandez

"I first came to Lubbock in 1961. Politically Lubbock is the same. Nothing has changed. I'm asking La Raza to ELECT YSIDRO GUTIERREZ. His new ideas will bring the needed change to Lubbock." Yo vine a Lubbock por primera vez en 1961. Cuando se trata de la Política, la situación en Lubbock no ha cambiado. Estoy pidiendo a La Raza que Voten por Ysidro Gutierrez. Las nuevas ideas que el trae cambiarán a Lubbock.

#### Chon Garcia

Hello my name is Chon Garcia. I recommend Ysidro Gutierrez for Lubbock County Commissioner, Pct 3. Our community needs improvements and Ysidro is the candidate whose new ideas will make improvements possible. Vote for Ysidro Gutierrez.

Hola Soy Chon Garcia, recomendandoles a Ysidro Gutierrez. Nuestra comunidad necesita mejorar y Ysidro es el candidato que nos trae nuevas ideas para hacerlo. Voten por Ysidro

#### Olga Agüero

I believe in candidates who believe in Education and Ysidro believes in education. He is an example and mentor for the whole community.

Yo confio en candidatos que valoran el educación. Ysidro es un hombre que valora educación. El es un gran ejemplo y buen consejero para toda la comunidad.

#### Bidal Agüero

Politics is about electing a representative that will truly work for the betterment of people. It is about people who will dedicate themselves totally for the betterment of the community. I believe Ysidro is that person.

La política se trata de elegir representantes que verdaderamente quieren trabajar por la gente. Personas quien quieren dedicarse para hacer lo maximo para el mejoramiento de la comunidad. Yo creo que Ysidro puede ser esa persona.

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**Keeping an Eye on Texas**  
**Nurses in Demand**  
 Texas will need up to 138,000 licensed practical nurses, registered nurses and nursing aides within the next seven to ten years.  
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 For more information about careers in nursing, go to:  
<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/careers/nursing.html>  
 SOURCES: Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn (www.window.state.tx.us) and the Texas Workforce Commission.

**County Commissioner Run-Off Election April 13 VOTE! VOTE!**

# Dems GOP Assess Strength

(from front page)  
Arizona and Nevada have two of the fastest-growing Latino populations, but they have also seen increases in white-collar jobs, which traditionally vote Republican.

Florida and New Mexico played significant roles in the 2000 election -- Florida's disputed vote gave Bush a narrow margin of victory. And Vice President Al Gore's 366-vote win in New Mexico made Florida an issue.

## Values that connect

Republican operatives say they are making inroads into the Latino vote beyond Bush's personal appeal.

"There are values that connect," said San Antonio,

Texas, ad executive Frank Guerra, who is part of Bush's re-election effort and has worked on the Republican campaigns of Bush's brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, and Texas Gov. Rick Perry.

"You drive through these neighborhoods and you see these mom-and-pop businesses -- they are so tied to small business -- it's a natural marriage to the GOP," Guerra said. "They connect on the issues that face small businesses."

Michael Madrid, who advises campaigns on Latino issues and was political director for the California Republican Party, says younger Hispanic voters are more likely to be in step with the GOP than their

parents or grandparents. "They are increasingly attending and graduating from college, home ownership among them is higher, they are more fiscally conservative," he said. "They have a vested economic stake in the fabric of this country. That is changing their political attitudes."

Republicans say Latinos also connect on a shared social conservatism -- on what they call family values and religious issues. But others say that doesn't translate to votes.

"It's true that Puerto Ricans and Mexicans are likely to be anti-abortion and conservative on some social issues, but that's not what they're voting on," said Lisa Garcia Bedolla, a political scientist in the University of California-Irvine's Chicano/Latino Studies program.

"What's driving party identification is economic and educational issues, and so far Democrats seem to have sway in those areas."

"Republicans have gotten it half right -- Latinos are socially conservative, but they are conservative on issues that they believe shouldn't play a role in a public debate," said Fernando Guerra, who directs the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University and before that was head of the university's Chicano studies program. "These are things that should be dealt with in the family or within their religion."

Bedolla said Latinos have a different understanding of government's role than the Republican Party does.

"There are real reasons why they're Democrats -- it's not just random," she said. "They believe in Social Security, they believe in health care. Ask them the direct question 'Do you think government should be larger or smaller?' and they are likely to answer 'larger.' That's a pretty significant policy difference with the Republican Party."

## GOP's two paths with Latinos

Republicans say Bush has presented them the opportunity to make inroads into a part of the electorate that has traditionally been a Democratic stalwart.

Republicans say Bush has presented them the opportunity to expand the Republican Party's base among Latinos be-

yond its dependable Cuban-American supporters.

"Bush's personality drives a lot of it, his affinity for the community, his history of being from the Southwest," Madrid said. But for Republicans to build upon the Latino base Bush has built, he said, will take a broader commitment to including Latinos in policy.

"It can't be a cosmetic approach," he said. "It can't be a six-weeks-before-the-end-of-the-election, wrap yourself in a sombrero and say 'Viva whoever it is.'"

Madrid uses California and Texas to illustrate the two paths Republicans can choose:

"There were radically different tacks in approaching the Hispanic electorate -- in Texas you see an embracing and engaging of the community, and 10 years later you see Republicans totally dominating that state.

"California is the exact opposite. Our party leadership chose to demonize and vilify the immigrant whether illegal or legal, and the party virtually disappeared, became pretty much irrelevant."

Lionel Sosa, who has worked with Madrid and Frank Guerra on Republican campaigns and whose ties to the GOP go back to Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign, thinks Democrats who don't see that shifts are occurring are "in denial."

"If they don't think anything's changing, that it's business as usual, that's fine with me," he said.

## Hitting the streets and airwaves

Maria Cardona, vice president for media relations and director of the Hispanic Project for the New Democrat Network, said Democrats did treat Latinos as business as usual in 2000 but that they won't repeat that mistake.

"We sort of assumed it was going to be a cakewalk," she said. "The economy was still good, economic indicators were good. There wasn't a compelling reason to think that Gore wouldn't win."

For the past two years, Democrats have been preparing from the ground up, Cardona said. Activists on the ground are getting voter lists up to date, registering voters and walking the precincts, she said.

In concert with that, the NDN launched its Spanish-language ad campaign targeting Latino voters.

Ads began airing Friday in

Albuquerque, New Mexico, Las Vegas, Nevada and Phoenix, Arizona, and will air in the Florida cities of Orlando, Miami and Tampa on Wednesday, the day after the Florida primary.

"We're going to tell our story and ensure that they're on our side," she said.

The NDN has tested ads with Latinos in key cities like Orlando, Florida, and Las Vegas, Cardona said, and says polling before and after the ads show "they cut into Bush's numbers significantly."

The campaign will use television, radio, print and the Internet to spread the message, primarily in Spanish, Cardona said.

Republicans will also use a multimedia approach aimed at Hispanic voters, Sosa said, but in English as well as Spanish.

The GOP ads aimed at Latino voters that launched last week show Latinos among

other Americans to show inclusiveness, Sosa said.

Question of personalities Sosa is predicting a close election that will hinge on the candidate's persona.

"Latinos want someone they like, someone they can trust, a strong leader with strong character," he said. "There's a comfort level with Bush that [Democratic front-runner Sen. John] Kerry couldn't possibly have."

Cardona said though Kerry isn't well-known among Latino voters, he has traits that will resonate with them.

"I think his Vietnam war-hero past will play well to Latinos -- a lot of them have sons and daughters in the military," she said. "Service to the country is highly regarded."

Coming Tuesday: Republicans say Bush has put them in position to build a base among Latino voters.

# Government Faked Bush Support

by Chris Tryhorn - The Guardian

TV news reports in America that showed President George Bush getting a standing ovation from potential voters have been exposed as fake, it has emerged.

The US government admitted it paid actors to pose as journalists in video news releases sent to TV stations intending to convey support for new laws about health benefits.

Investigators are examining the film segments, in which actors pretending to be journalists praise the benefits of the new law passed last year by President Bush, to see if they could be construed as propaganda.

Two of the films are signed off by "Karen Ryan", who was an actor hired to read a script prepared by the government, according to production company Home Front Communications.

Another video, intended for Hispanic viewers, shows a government official being interviewed in Spanish by a actor posing as a reporter with the name "Alberto Garcia".

One segment shows a pharmacist telling an elderly customer the new law "helps you better afford your medications".

"It sounds like a good idea," the customer says, to which the pharmacist replies, "A very good idea."

And in some scenes President Bush is shown receiving a standing ovation from a crowd cheering him as he signed the Medicare law, which is designed to help elderly people with prescriptions.

The government also prepared scripts to be used by news anchors. "In December, President Bush signed into law the first-ever prescription drug benefit for people with Medicare," the script reads.

"Since then, there have been a lot of questions about how the

law will help older Americans and people with disabilities Reporter Karen Ryan helps sort through the details." The "reporter" then explains the benefits of the new law.

Lawyers from the investigative arm of Congress discovered the tapes as part of an investigation into federal money that was used to publicise the new law.

They will be keen to ascertain whether the government might have misled viewers by failing to reveal the source of the videos, which were broadcast in Oklahoma, Louisiana and other states.

"Video news releases" of this sort have been used in the US since the 1980s, but the way they blur the lines between news and advertising troubles many media experts and campaigners.

The government defended the videos, which Democrats described as "disturbing". "The use of video news releases is a common, routine practice in government and the private sector," a health department spokesman told the New York Times.

VNRs are also used in Europe but a furore surrounding a Greenpeace video package about its campaign to prevent the dumping of Shell's Brent Spar oil platform sent to British broadcasters some years ago led to new rules clamping down on their use.

Greenpeace's sophisticated media offensive - including the provision of emotive film footage of its occupation of the platform - resulted in one-dimensional coverage by BBC and ITN, news chiefs admitted at the time.

Guidelines were subsequently drawn up to label video news releases as such - a category which the regular Osama bin Laden videos now fall.

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**Study:**

# Too Few Young Hispanic Women Get Pap Test

By Amy Norton  
NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - Lack of knowledge about the Pap test used to detect early cervical cancer may be keeping some young Hispanic women from being screened, new study findings suggest.

The survey of 189 Hispanic women between the ages of 18 and 25 showed that nearly one-third had never had a Pap test. Researchers found that women who were confused about where to go for testing, or who worried that it would be painful, were less likely to have been screened.

Dr. Theresa L. Byrd, of the University of Texas at Houston School of Public Health, led the study. The findings are published in the journal *Preventive Medicine*.

Certain sexually transmitted strains of the human papillo-

mavirus (HPV), which commonly infects young women, are the major cause of cervical cancer. Although most women who become infected with HPV never develop cancer, persistent infection with certain viral strains can cause cervical cell changes that can lead to cancer.

The Pap test, which is performed during a routine pelvic exam, can discover such precancerous cell changes, explain the authors of the article. It is credited for the 70-percent drop in cervical cancer deaths the U.S. has seen over the past 50 years.

Yet, national statistics show that Hispanic women have lower rates of Pap testing than either non-Hispanic white or African-American women, the researchers say.

The new study looked at young Hispanic women living

in El Paso, along U.S.-Mexico border. At the time of the survey, public health guidelines called for all women age 18 and older to begin getting regular Pap tests; revised guidelines now advise women to begin testing three years after the first time they have sex, or at age 21, whichever comes first.

Although cervical cancer is rare in young women, the abnormal cell changes that may eventually lead to cancer can be found and, if necessary, treated at a young age.

Overall, 69 percent of the women Byrd's team surveyed said they had had a Pap test at some point. The researchers found that women who were most acculturated (based on their use of English) were nearly five times as likely to have had a Pap test as those who were least assimilated.

Concern that the test would be painful also kept some women away.

The biggest obstacle, however, was that many women did not know where to go for screening, according to the report.

A number of women said they bought their birth control in Mexico, where oral contraceptives are cheap and available without a prescription -- a fact, the researchers note, that could mean they had not been advised on Pap testing.

In general, the authors point out, women who get contraceptives through a doctor's office or family planning clinic receive Pap tests at those sites.

Byrd told Reuters Health that she and her colleagues have developed a video and written materials aimed at giving women a positive view of cervical cancer screening. These

materials include a list of places to get screened and a list of the documents required to qualify for "sliding-scale" pricing for the test, she said.

In the study, health insurance -- which one-third of all participants lacked -- did play a role in screening, as uninsured women were less likely than the insured to have had a Pap

test, according to Byrd. Still, health coverage did not emerge as one of the major factors.

Byrd said she hopes to do similar research on the Mexican side of the border, since that nation's cervical cancer death rate has remained unchanged for the past 30 years.

SOURCE: Preventive Medicine, February 2004.

## “safety valve”

from page three

all, low inflation and wage rates. And this is while, in the US, they are doing the reverse, big time!

We talk about protecting our "sovereignty" in México, but in fact, we have relinquished one of our most important areas of this to foreigners. And without a whimper from our politicians.

While the government is trying to work out a "fiscal" reform (in which the administration is still trying to push the cost on the poorest), we should be talking about gearing up for a systematic institutional reform of our very government.

This must also include labor and legal reform to provide a government that works for its people and one that has the confidence of its people. And besides cutting down government inefficiency, spending the necessary money to make it work. Economics 101 tells us that you never raise taxes in a depression. You invest in the country for the future. And in doing so, the government gets their money back in the better economy of the future through fair taxation. But not under the

Washington consensus.

Critics of the administration's fiscal policies point out that while we have a very low inflation rate, and a "stable" and "investment grade" economy, we are in fact destroying the country.

We see in the US, who has also lost many manufacturing jobs to China and elsewhere; that the federal government is starting to fund job skill re-training. They, at least, realize that many of these jobs will not be coming back in their past forms. México could do well to listen here. But outside of some lip service in increasing funding for education, little has worked its way down to the classrooms. Again, we are talking about institutional reform.

And most important, we have to really try to develop a viable national market here. This requires wage earnings to support this, but it is the real way for financial independence for México.

And keep this in mind: We, México, are going to have to solve these issues. No one else will do it.

## La obesidad es un peligro mortal

La dieta deficiente y la inactividad física se han convertido en las principales causas evitables de muerte en Estados Unidos aseguró ayer el secretario de Servicios Humanos y de Salud (HHS) Tommy G. Thompson, al tiempo que anunció el inicio de una campaña educativa nacional contra la obesidad y el sobrepeso.

Un nuevo estudio de los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC) indica que las muertes ocasionadas por mala alimentación y falta de ejercicio se elevaron a 33% durante la década pasada y podrían superar al tabaquismo como las causas más importantes de fallecimientos que se pueden prevenir.

“Los estadounidenses necesitan entender que el sobrepeso y la obesidad literalmente nos están matando. El saber que los malos hábitos de comida y la inactividad están a punto de sobrepasar al uso del tabaco como las principales razones evitables de muerte en el país debería motivar a todos los estadounidenses a tomar acción para proteger su salud. Necesitamos abordar el asunto del peso tan agresivamente como el de fumar”, dijo Thompson.

Se calcula que el 64% de la población de EU, es decir unos 130 millones de personas, sufre de sobrepeso o es obesa, lo cual supone que son más propensas a padecer enfermedades cardíacas, diabetes, cáncer y otro tipo de problemas de salud.

Más del 30% de los adultos estadounidenses o 59 millones de personas son obesos.

El secretario subrayó que la entidad a su cargo emprenderá una campaña de anuncios para educar a los ciudadanos acerca de los beneficios que reporta a la salud tomar pequeños pasos en la dirección correcta. “La gente no necesita ir a extremos tales como inscribirse a un gimnasio o seguir el último plan dietético para mejorar su salud”, dijo.

En lugar de ello, Thompson sugirió hacer cada día pequeños cambios en el estilo de vida, por ejemplo, subir las escaleras en lugar de tomar el elevador, comer frutas y verduras en lugar de dulces o caminar unos minutos en lugar de ver televisión.

Thompson hizo también un llamado a las corporaciones y empresas para que se unan al esfuerzo nacional contra el

sobrepeso y ayuden a los individuos a tener acceso a comidas saludables y a programas de actividad física.

El inicio de la nueva campaña educativa de HHS coincide con la publicación del estudio de los CDC sobre el sobrepeso que apareció esta semana en el *Journal of American Medical Association*.

Tragedias evitables  
El estudio, denominado “Causas reales de muerte en Estados Unidos en el 2000”, señala que, en ese año, 400 mil muertes en el país (17% del total) estuvieron relacionadas con una alimentación deficiente y falta de ejercicio. Sólo el tabaquismo provocó más fallecimientos (435 mil).

La investigación indica que, mientras la mayoría de causas evitables de muerte han declinado o han registrado poco cambio desde 1990, las muertes atribuidas a la dieta inadecuada y a la inactividad física crecieron el 33%.

Paralelamente, el centro de investigaciones Rand Corporation advirtió de que, si los estadounidenses siguen engordando al ritmo actual, en 2020 uno de cada cinco dólares que se gasten en salud tendrán como objetivo el tratamiento de personas de entre 50 y 69 años debido a la obesidad.

“Es necesario que los estadounidenses comprendan que el sobrepeso y la obesidad nos están, literalmente, matando”, dijo el secretario de Salud, Tommy Thompson, en una conferencia de prensa.

“El hecho de que más de un

tercio de las muertes anuales en Estados Unidos esté relacionado con fumar, malos hábitos de comida y falta de ejercicio es trágico e inaceptable porque éstos son comportamientos evitables”, dijo, por su parte, Julie Gerberding, directora de los CDC.

“Las inversiones en programas para incrementar la actividad física, mejorar la dieta y dejar de fumar son más importantes que nunca antes y deben ser consideradas como de alta prioridad”, agregó Gerberding.

El doctor Elías Zerhouni, director de los Institutos Nacionales de la Salud (NIH), advirtió que el sobrepeso y la obesidad “son una amenaza muy importante” y pidió que se incrementen las investigaciones para resolver el problema. Por otro lado, agregó, “no hay una sola causa de la obesidad humana. Debemos explorar formas de prevención y tratamiento que incluyan muchos aspectos como la conducta y factores socioculturales, socioeconómicos, ambientales, fisiológicos y genéticos”.

Grupos de defensa del consumidor han denunciado que una causa principal del sobrepeso y la obesidad es el creciente consumo de “comida basura”.

Según Margo Wootan, portavoz del Centro para la Ciencia y el Interés Público, el gobierno debería ordenar que no se venda ese tipo de comida en las escuelas.

Añadió que también se debería pedir que el Congreso exija que se difunda el nivel de

calorías en los productos alimenticios que se venden en los restaurantes de “comida basura” y que se promueva la actividad física de la juventud.

Se estima que 129.6 millones de estadounidenses, equivalentes al 64% de la población total, padecen obesidad o sobrepeso. Numerosas investigaciones han demostrado que estas dos condiciones incrementan el riesgo de desarrollar diabetes tipo 2, enfermedades del corazón, algunos tipos de cáncer y otros males.

Los costos totales directos e indirectos ocasionados por este problema ascendieron a 117 mil millones de dólares en el año 2000, de acuerdo con la Oficina del director General de Salud.

La campaña educativa de HHS, denominada “Estilos de vida saludables y prevención de enfermedades” incluye anuncios de servicio público y un sitio interactivo en internet ([www.smallstep.gov](http://www.smallstep.gov)) que alienta a los estadounidenses a hacer pequeños cambios en sus hábitos para asegurar un control de peso efectivo a largo plazo.

“Nuestra investigación ha demostrado que muchos estadounidenses creen que necesitan hacer cambios drásticos en su estilo de vida para mantenerse saludables, pero a través de esta innovadora campaña mostramos que los pequeños pasos pueden recorrer un largo camino”, dijo Peggy Conlon, presidenta y directora general de Ad Council, encargada de la campaña publicitaria.

## Observando a Texas

### Demanda de Enfermeras

Texas necesitará hasta 138,000 enfermeras con licencia, enfermeras registradas y enfermeras de apoyo en los próximos siete a diez años.

El Centro de Estadísticas Laborales de los Estados Unidos proyecta que la profesión de enfermera será la ocupación con más rápido crecimiento en los próximos cinco años.

Para más información acerca de carreras en enfermería, visite <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/careers/nursing.html>.

Fuentes: Carole Keeton Strayhorn, Contralora de Texas ([www.window.state.tx.us](http://www.window.state.tx.us)) y la Comisión de la Fuerza Laboral de Texas.



## Lubbock Centro Aztlan Congratulates Viva Aztlan Dance & Mariachi Festival Winners

### Children's Competition

Division C-Beginner Ballet Folklorico Aztlan, Lubbock won r- Best Choreography, Best Costume, Best Overall  
Division B: Intermediate Ballet Folklorico Nuestra Herencia, Lubbock won Best Choreography, Best Costume, Best Overall  
Division A: Advanced Roswell Folklorico won Best Choreography, Best Costume, Best Overall

### Adult Competition

Division C - Beginner - Best Traditional: Paisano Folklorico, Terlingua won  
Division C - Beginner - Best Contemporary - Fiesta del Sol, Lubbock  
Division C - Beginner - Best Traditional, Best Costume, Best Choreography, Best Technique, Best Overall - Paisano Folklorico, Terlingua  
Division B - Intermediate - Best Contemporary, Best Costume, Best Choreography, Best Technique, Best Overall-Division B, Ballet Folklorico Aztlan, Lubbock, TX  
Division A - Advanced - Best Traditional-Ballet Folklorico Quetzales, El Paso, TX and Mexico-Espana Dance Co., San Antonio, TX, Best Contemporary- Mexico 2000 Ballet Folklorico, Dallas, TX, Best Costume-Ballet Folklorico Quetzales, El Paso, TX and Mexico-Espana Dance Co., San Antonio, TX, Best Choreography-Ballet Folklorico Quetzales, El Paso, TX, Best Technique: Mexico-Espana Dance Co., San Antonio, TX Best Overall-Division A- Ballet Folklorico Quetzales, El Paso, TX and Mexico-Espana Dance Co., San Antonio, TX  
Best of Festival-Ballet Folklorico Quetzales, El Paso, TX and Mexico-Espana Dance Co., San Antonio, TX

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