

# The Rise and Demise? of the Latino Ethno-nationalists

By K.C. McALPIN

Imagine that someone running for mayor of a major American city was found to have once belonged to a white separatist group that wanted to make a “homeland” for whites out of the entire northwestern United States. Or suppose that a white congressman facing a stiff challenge for reelection from a Mexican American candidate told a TV reporter that “the Mexicans are trying to take away this seat from us.”

The time such people would remain viable candidates would be measured in hours, if not minutes. Media outlets would erupt with anger and outrage as Americans of all ethnic backgrounds and races rushed to condemn the candidates’ bigotry.

Now let’s assume that both candidates were Latino instead of white. Would things be any different? In this case we don’t need to guess, we know. Everything would be different. The news stories would quickly fade. There would be no ongoing media outrage, no self-righteous denunciations from the pulpit, from the academy, from editorial boards, or from anywhere else. Zip, zero, nada...The candidates would go on to victory without even bothering to offer an apology.

When Anthony Villaraigosa ran for mayor of Los Angeles in 2005, it came out that as a student at UCLA he had been an active member of the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, known by its acronym “MEChA.” MEChA’s name translates in English as “Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán.” It is an organization of radical Hispanic students whose founding charter says, “As Chicanas and Chicanos of Aztlán, we are a nationalist movement of Indigenous Gente (People) that

lay claim to the land that is ours by birthright. As a nationalist movement we seek to free our people from the exploitation of an oppressive society that occupies our land.” The land MEChA claims as its own “by birthright” happens to be the entire southwest United States, which MEChA plans to rename “Aztlán.” Non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Asians, and other ethnic groups presumably would be expelled or “encouraged” to relocate elsewhere.

The example of the congressman actually involved a congresswoman. Facing an unexpectedly strong challenge from a Republican of Vietnamese descent in her California district during the 2010 election, Democratic Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez told a Spanish language interviewer that “the Vietnamese” are “trying to take this seat away *from us*.” Sanchez is still in Congress.

The list of interest groups that profit financially from adding millions of illegal and legal immigrants to the U.S. population every year is a long one. On it you will find college presidents and teachers’ unions anxious to fill classrooms with foreign students, legally present in the U.S. or not, big government bureaucrats eager to expand the customer base of the Nanny state, immigration attorneys and refugee resettlement agencies growing wealthy on a never-ending stream of lucrative cases, employers eager to exploit taxpayer-subsidized illegal immigrant labor, and big developers always thrilled to cover more of the landscape with malls, highways, and tract housing.

But there is a shorter list of groups whose main motivation for backing open border policies is not money, but political power. This includes the Marxist-leaning left, which dreams of dividing America into ethnic blocks that can be manipulated by envy and resentment, and used to overthrow the predominantly white, middle-class America they despise. A good example in this category is George Soros, the international felon and billionaire kingpin who wants to remake America as a

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socialist state. As Soros hireling Frank Sharry explained in a May 2011 interview with *The Tennessean*:

The Latino vote is going to transform American politics, even in the South. Imagine coalitions of Latinos, African-Americans and liberal whites turning states that are now ruby red into states that are purple or even blue.

Another group in this category is one for which ideology often figures in the mix, but for which it is not the primary motivator. We will call them “ethno-nationalists.” These are individuals who preach “ethnic solidarity” and who make no bones about assigning their primary allegiance to their particular ethnic group. They view politics through a racial prism and see mass immigration mainly as a tool by which they intend to propel themselves and their kinsmen into political power.



Los Angeles Mayor Anthony Villaraigosa won election with the solidarity of a united Hispanic voting bloc. Villaraigosa routinely advances the interests of Latino “ethno-nationalists” at the expense of native Los Angelenos.

Numbers of people translate into political power, even in non-democratic states. American history has many narratives of ethnic or national groups that rose to political ascendancy with the help of immigration, beginning with the Puritans. So it is that Hispanics, Asians, and Arabs, who until the 1970s accounted for almost non-existent minorities within the larger U.S. population, are eager to replicate that success and play a larger political role now that their numbers are rising due to mass immigration.

By far the largest of these newer ethnic groups is

the Latino ethno-nationalists, or “LENs.” It consists of a broad collection of Latino politicians, bureaucrats, reporters, bloggers, pundits, corporate executives, academics, professional political consultants, interest group leaders, and activists that together comprise a class of political elites. Despite revealing displays of their ethnocentric bias, they occupy a privileged position in the mind of other elites that shields them from the kind of criticism that would be directed at non-Hispanic whites and even blacks for displaying similar biases. In other words, in the political orbit there is a huge double standard at work when it comes to ethnocentrism.

LENs already have enormous influence in politics, but they are impatient for more. They see U.S. immigration policy, which continues to admit large numbers of Latinos, as the means by which they can speed up their acquisition of power. They back amnesty and “a path to citizenship” for illegal immigrants and oppose effective immigration law enforcement from their own self-interest, and regardless of the harmful effects such policies may have on the U.S. Hispanic population — native-born and immigrant alike.

One example of a LEN is Cecilia Muñoz, the recently appointed head of the Obama Administration’s Domestic Policy Council. The daughter of Bolivian immigrants, Muñoz is a Berkeley-educated leftist whose life work experience prior to joining the Obama Administration consisted of serving as vice-president of the National Council of La Raza, the nationally known race-based group that

lobbies for mass immigration and helps fund MEChA. In 2000 Muñoz was the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation “genius” award that came with a generous \$400,000 prize — all thanks to her work on immigration.

Another is Anthony Villaraigosa, who as noted above, won his race for Mayor with overwhelming support from Los Angeles’ large Mexican-American population. Despite admitting to an extra-marital affair with a female reporter and being accused of corruption for accepting free tickets to concerts and sporting events, scandals that would have ended the careers of most poli-

ticians, the Mayor was chosen by President Obama to chair the 2012 Democratic National Convention. Villaraigosa himself has ambitions for even higher office.

It is important to understand that although LENSs like Munoz and Villaraigosa are left-wing Democrats, the same drive for political power motivates LENSs on the right of the political spectrum. So, for example, former Bush Administration official Alfonso Aguilar and GOP political consultant Leslie Sanchez are of the same mind as their left wing compatriots when it comes to immigration policy prescriptions like amnesty, which would massively increase the size of the U.S. Latino population.

These Republican-leaning LENSs currently are having fits over the GOP presidential candidates' opposition to amnesty, and especially over Mitt Romney's embrace of E-Verify, the federal work authorization system that would screen illegal immigrants from jobs and therefore induce them to return to their home countries, i.e., self-deport. The Republican LENSs spout the same rhetoric and assumptions as their left wing counterparts and never hesitate to warn the Republican Party and Republican candidates that they risk alienating the Latino vote by standing up for the firm but humane enforcement of immigration laws.

These warnings have appeared regularly in the media the last several months. But in contrast to past GOP presidential primary candidates, these warnings have been politely ignored by the current crop of GOP presidential candidates, who remain at pains to take a tough stand against illegal immigration. Is it, as most pundits agree, that the candidates feel compelled to pander to the GOP's conservative base because they are worried about being outflanked on the right? Or are there other factors at work?

One reason may be that although Latino voters as a group clearly lean Democratic, polls consistently indicate that, contrary to the claims of LENSs, their main concerns are jobs and the economy, and immigration is well down the list. And when it comes to actually voting on immigration-related issues, the record shows that, if anything, they are more likely to share the views of non-Hispanic whites from the same economic and social background.

This was apparent as long ago as Proposition 187, the 1994 California citizens' initiative to bar illegal aliens from getting state-funded benefits. According to exit polls, Prop. 187 won 31 percent of the Hispanic vote, while winning by a landslide 60 margin overall. LENSs were shocked at the size of the Latino vote in favor of 187, despite an intense, lavishly funded advertis-

ing campaign that blanketed the airways with ads depicting Prop.187 as a naked attack on Hispanics as an ethnic group. Even more alarming was the fact that prior to launching the advertising campaign, polls showed 60 percent support for 187 among Hispanic voters in California.

The way that Hispanic-Americans continue to vote on anti-illegal immigration and related ballot measures refutes LEN claims about Latino voter alienation. For example, President George W. Bush was widely touted for the comparatively high support he received from Latino voters as a Republican, which LENSs linked to his support for things like amnesty and bilingual education. Thus, when Bush ran for reelection in 2004, he won a very respectable 43 percent of the Latino vote in Arizona. But in the very same election, a ballot measure requiring proof of citizenship for voting and public benefits, which opponents labeled "anti-immigrant" and "anti-Hispanic," won 47 percent of the Latino vote according to exit polls. Two years later, an Arizona ballot referendum declaring English the official language won 48 percent of the Latino vote while winning by a landslide 74 percent margin overall. A ballot measure denying in-state tuition or financial aid to illegal immigrant students passed by only a slightly lower 71 percent of the overall vote.

More evidence that the self-interested positions popular with LENSs carry little weight with Latino voters came in the 2008 presidential election. Republican Senator John McCain won widespread praise from LENSs and their media allies for his well-publicized effort to help pass an amnesty bill in the Senate in 2006 and again in 2007. As the GOP presidential nominee, McCain carried his home state of Arizona with 54 percent of the vote in the 2008 presidential election. But McCain won just 41 percent of the state's Latino vote, 2 percent less than Bush had won four years before. And in the very same election in which McCain was winning 41 percent of the Latino vote, 56 percent of Arizona's Latino voters were against a ballot proposition to weaken the state's tough anti-illegal immigration law.

Despite the evidence that LENSs are misrepresenting Hispanic-Americans' real views on immigration, they go right on issuing the same worn-out anathemas against any Republican who rejects amnesty and pledges to enforce the immigration laws. Their most recent electoral embarrassment occurred in the Florida GOP presidential primary. Despite repeated warnings that Mitt Romney was alienating Hispanic voters by opposing amnesty and embracing the E-Verify system that Romney said would cause illegal aliens to "self-deport" and return to their home countries, Romney won 54 per-

cent of Florida's substantial GOP Hispanic vote.

But an even bigger stumbling block for LENSs is the growing number of Latino Republican office holders who take the same stand against amnesty and for immigration law enforcement that their conservative colleagues do. Several were elected to office in the GOP 2010 electoral landslide. For example, New Mexico's newly elected Republican Governor Susana Martinez has made repealing a law letting illegal aliens get driver's licenses in her state, an issue she campaigned on, a priority. Florida's newly elected Republican U.S. Senator Marco Rubio opposes amnesty and supports official English. And Nevada Republican Governor Brian Sandoval has spoken out in favor of Arizona's tough laws cracking down on illegal immigration.

In Texas, Tea Party favorite Ted Cruz hopes to win the GOP nomination to succeed Kay Bailey Hutchinson in the U.S. Senate. In stark contrast to Hutchinson, Cruz has made stopping illegal immigration a major cam-

paign issue. The recent emergence and electoral success of many of these conservative Latinos is no fluke. Below them are a growing number of Hispanic Republican office holders at the state and local level who take a dim view of identity politics, and who hold the same positions on immigration as the community of taxpaying, law-abiding Latino voters from which they sprang.

These conservative Latino political leaders, confident in their ability to succeed on their own in the political marketplace, have shown their courage by bucking the LENSs' stereotype when it comes to immigration issues. Their courage and leadership is another reason why the Republican presidential candidates are turning a deaf ear to the warnings of Republican-leaning LENSs. The growing influence and example of these new Hispanic leaders within the Republican Party and on the national stage pose a real threat to the immigration policy ambitions of the LENSs and their allies across the political spectrum. ■