

Election Point and Counterpoint Number One

A Hispanic Political Tide?

by **Linda Chavez**

Bob Dole received a smaller proportion of the Hispanic vote than any Republican presidential candidate in 25 years, and that is bad news for the GOP.

Hispanics are one of the fastest-growing segments of the population. About 9 percent of the population today, they will likely be the largest minority group in the United States in the next decade or two.

Hispanics are both socially conservative and increasingly

middle class, and, in recent years, far more likely than blacks to vote Republican. In 1984, Ronald Reagan won almost 40% of the Hispanic vote.

This year, however, only 21% voted for Bob Dole. His record of support for Hispanics could not overcome their growing suspicion that the GOP is becoming the anti-immigrant party.

Last year's Congressional debate on reducing legal immigration, led by Alan Simpson in the Senate and Lamar Smith in the House,

didn't help. Neither did the recently enacted limits on welfare benefits for legal immigrants, which Republicans supported. And too many Republicans have been quick to fan the nativist flames, blaming immigrants for taking American jobs and increasing crime.

Though the vast majority of Hispanic voters were born here, and though many of them share concerns about illegal immigration, they fear that increasing antipathy toward newcomers may reflect anti-

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GOP Wizards Miss the Point on Immigration

by **Samuel Francis**

Somewhere over the rainbow, the wizards of the Republican party are

Linda Chavez is president of the Center for Equal Opportunity. This op-ed was published in The New York Times on November 18, 1996 and is reprinted by permission.

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gathering to ponder the real meaning of the 1996 election, and as usually happens in the Republican zone of Rainbow Land, the wizards have managed to miss the point completely. Last week, at least two wizards came up with exactly the wrong lessons for the GOP to follow on immigration reform.

Wizard Number One, Linda Chavez, chimed in with a column in *The New York Times* arguing that the party ought to shuck any inclinations it harbors of restricting immigration and "resist those who want to

continue the fight to cut back legal immigration." But of course Miss Chavez is always arguing for more immigration and less opposition to it.

Miss Chavez is sort of the Stupid Party's Chiquita Banana, the token Hispanic female whose job it is to be splashed across Republican billboards to prove the party is not as backward and benighted as its foes claim. When Miss Chavez says she's for more immigration, that's like Bob Dornan saying he's for more bombers.

Then there was Wizard

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Hispanic bias. Nearly two-thirds of Hispanics say they believe that "much of the anti-immigrant sentiment and immigrant-bashing unfairly focuses on Mexican immigrants," according to a recent poll by the liberal Southwest Voter Education Project, based in Texas.

Many Hispanic voters in California are still angry about the divisive 1994 gubernatorial campaign in which Republican Gov. Pete Wilson resorted to demagoguery on the immigration issue.

Republicans may not win a majority of Hispanic votes anytime soon, but they could recapture the numbers who supported Ronald Reagan but abandoned Bob Dole.

A recent national study of more than 4,800 Hispanic adults conducted by researchers at the City University of New York identified a generation gap in party preference that should encourage Republicans. Although Hispanics in general were much more likely to consider themselves Democrats than Republicans, those in younger age groups, particu-

larly those 18 to 24 years old, showed far less loyalty to Democrats.

Support for the GOP was stronger among better-educated and higher-income

"Republican congressional leaders would do well to resist those who want to continue the fight to cut back legal immigration."

Hispanics. As Hispanics continue to move into the socioeconomic mainstream, more of them may gravitate toward the GOP and its philosophy — provided that the party doesn't push them away.

For starters, Republican congressional leaders would do well to resist those who want to continue the fight to cut back legal immigration.

And rather than focusing so

much rhetoric on making English the official language of the United States, Republicans should support efforts to teach English to new immigrants and their children. What bilingual education programs need is not less money but more emphasis on teaching English, which Hispanic parents overwhelmingly support.

Republicans could also become more involved in helping immigrants become citizens, taking an active role in citizenship education classes or volunteering to teach civics and English. Republican officeholders could speak at citizenship ceremonies, praising immigrants for their desire to become Americans.

The GOP cannot afford to cede Hispanic support to the Democrats. Orange County, California, proved to be vulnerable this year, and in Florida and Arizona Hispanics helped tip the state results in the presidential race. This should convince Republican leaders that it's time to mend some fences with Hispanic voters.

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Number Two, Paul Gigot of *The Wall Street Journal*, who also argues that the Republicans need to purge themselves of any proclivities to restrict immigration. Yet Mr. Gigot, like the wise and lovely Miss Banana, has been arguing this position for years.

But what makes their arguments a bit more noticeable these days is that they're right

that the Republicans lost the Hispanic vote by a larger margin than ever. The loss, they argue, is due to Republican opposition to immigration. Therefore, pronounce the wizards in triumph, the Republicans ought to give up their flirtation with restricting immigration.

Both Miss Chavez and Mr. Gigot are of the neo-conser-

vative persuasion, however, and the logic of their argument is typical of the neo-con mind. By the same logic one could argue that the Republicans should never have opposed labor unions, or welfare, or affirmative action and quotas, or Big Government at all, because those positions antagonized various constituencies that were

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then lost to their rivals.

This, of course, is what is always wrong with neo-con logic, and if you follow it, you invariably wind up back in the liberal wing of the Democratic party, which is where most neo-cons started out from.

“Republicans need to end immigration by arousing a new middle American majority against it...”

In regard to immigration and the Hispanic vote, the logic is especially fallacious. In the first place, the Republicans as a whole have not opposed immigration very noticeably. Neither Bob Dole nor Jack Kemp was known for efforts to restrict immigration at all, and Mr. Kemp even went out of his way to oppose California’s Proposition 187 in 1994.

As Housing Secretary under President Bush, Kemp even refused to enforce federal laws against illegal immigration, and only in the last weeks of the campaign this year did he and Dole dwell on illegal immigration. As for Bob Dornan, whose defeat by Hispanic voters Mr. Gigot cites as proof of his argument, he too was an outspoken foe of restricting legal immigration.

So a candidate’s position on immigration, pro or con, has nothing to do with whether His-

panics voted for him or not. What does have something to do with it is the rising racial solidarity that Hispanics are beginning to forge and the political punch into which that solidarity is translated.

Support for restricting immigration does not mean antagonism for Hispanics, but that’s how race-conscious Hispanics are seeing it. They see it that way because their racial consciousness leads them to identify with immigrants, not with the nation of which they have legally become part.

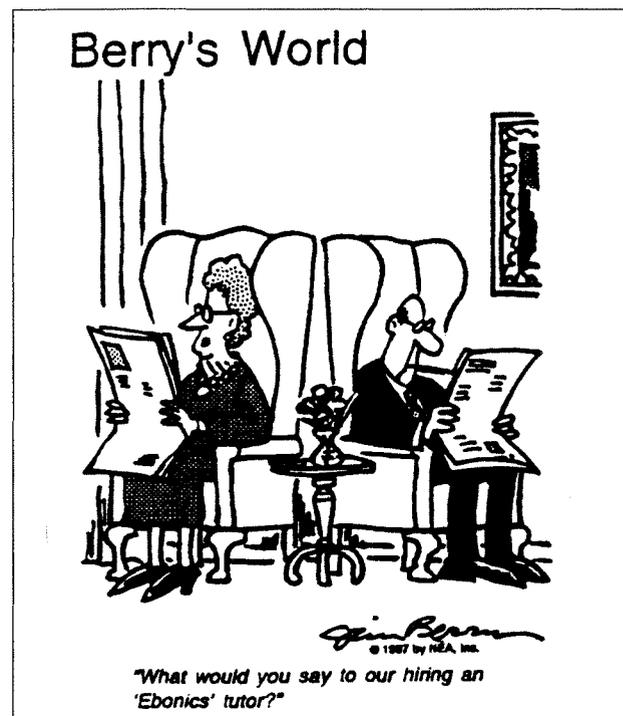
Moreover, it’s not just immigration that leads them to desert the GOP; it’s also Republican positions on other issues, like ending welfare for illegal immigrants and abolishing affirmative action programs from which Hispanics now gain. In other words, the racially conscious Hispanic minority has now learned to play minority politics, and insofar as the Republican party as a conservative party won’t play that game, Hispanics won’t vote Republican any more than other groups that play it.

The leftward political drift of Hispanics was predictable long before this election. Indeed,

I have been predicting it for some years, and so did, among others, author and conservative journalist Peter Brimelow in his 1995 book, *Alien Nation*. “Current immigration policy,” he wrote, “is inexorably reinforcing Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition.”

Which brings us back over the rainbow where we started. Under the rainbow, in the real world as opposed to fantasies of wizards like Miss Chavez and Mr. Gigot, the Republicans need to end immigration by arousing a new middle American majority against it before they either turn themselves into liberal Democrats by pursuing flawed neo-con logic or permit uncontrolled immigration to destroy their chances of ever winning again.

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Election Point and Counterpoint Number Two

An Anti-immigration Reckoning?

by Paul A. Gigot

Two years ago a few of us right-wing free-market eccentrics argued that shouting about immigrants might give Republicans a short-term edge but would backfire in the long run. It looks like the long run is shorter than even we thought.

At least the Pat Buchanan-National Review-California Governor Pete Wilson wing of

the GOP has some explaining to do amid the political wreckage of 1996. Hispanic voters moved sharply toward the Democrats this year, and a backlash against the GOP's immigrant-bashing seems the likeliest reason.

The yawning Hispanic gap is the most alarming news for Republicans this year. Ronald Reagan used to get one of every three Hispanic votes, but Bob Dole won only one out of four.

President Clinton increased his margin this year among Hispanic voters by 15 percentage points over 1992, to a 51-point chasm. Only Asian Americans swung harder (by 19 percentage points to a mere five-point Clinton deficit), according to exit polls.

If Republicans want a reason to worry, they can anticipate the fast-growing Hispanic population voting Democratic

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Right-Wing Immigrationists

by Scott McConnell

What's the point now, anyway? Their illegal immigration bill is already on the books, as if it will do any good."

So wrote *Wall Street Journal*

Paul Gigot is a columnist with The Wall Street Journal. This column appeared in their November 22, 1996 edition and is reprinted by permission. © 1996 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved.

Scott McConnell is a columnist with the New York Post. This article is reprinted by permission from their December 4, 1996 edition.

columnist Paul Gigot, warning congressional Republicans against revisiting last year's aborted effort to reform legal immigration. Some days earlier former Reagan aide Linda Chavez had delivered the identical message on the *New York Times* op ed page.

For those who didn't save the clips, I'll summarize. The election returns have spoken; Hispanics voted heavily Democratic in Texas, Florida and California, defeating even Bob Dornan in Orange County. Because Hispanics are going to be entering the United States in huge numbers for the foreseeable future, it would be

political suicide for Republicans to do anything that might displease them. Legislation that would limit future Hispanic immigration would be particularly stupid; but so would attempts to mandate the use of English in government business, or excessively literal efforts to enforce the nation's existing immigration statutes.

And though Chavez and Gigot don't say so, if Hispanic activists are to be believed, attempts to roll back racial preference schemes are also a bad idea.

To support his point, Gigot notes that the sunny-disposi-

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