



CAUSA News

Oregon's Immigrant Rights Coalition

****Post-Election Special****

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Latinos Vote For Change Nationwide

On Election Night, America witnessed an historical moment. The first African American and son of an immigrant was elected President of the United States. In addition to gaining a wide majority of electoral votes, President Elect Barack Obama took over 50% of the popular vote. He is the First Democratic candidate since 1976 to do so.

Nationwide, the impact of the Latino Vote was significant. According to state exit polls, over two thirds of Latino voters cast their ballots for Barack Obama, providing him with an important edge over John McCain, particularly in swing states.

Latino participation in this year's election was turbo charged in large part by the issue of immigration and civil rights. And although the economy was the primary driving force among most voters, the issue of immigration was a significant influence of Latino voters in choosing Senator Obama and his message of change.

One clear revelation from election results was that anti-immigrant forces fared poorly nationwide. Americans by a large majority rejected their politics of scapegoating, bigotry and hatred. The rejection of their platform last Tuesday night added to their failed attempt earlier this year to get an anti-immigrant candidate nominated to the Republican Presi-

dential ticket. The scathing defeat of their candidates and citizen sponsored measures hostile to Latinos and Immigrants shows that Americans want a different direction for this country.

In Colorado, incumbent Republican Marilyn Musgrave, a fierce outspoken critic of immigration, was defeated by Betsy Markey by a double digit majority. In Pennsylvania, Hazelton Mayor Lou Barletta, a long-time ally of the anti-immigrant movement, failed to unseat Representative Paul Kanjorski. In South Carolina, Senator Elizabeth Dole was defeated handily by Kay Hagan. Dole gained a reputation of being an obstacle to Comprehensive Immigration Reform. Although it is too early to know the exact role that Latino voters played in defeating anti-immigrant candidates and measure, one thing is for certain, their message of hate was rejected by the majority of Americans.

With the significant impact of the Latino vote on this election it is critical for Democrats to understand that the one time notion that Latinos don't swing elections has now been proven false. Latino voters are expecting President Elect Obama and the Democrat controlled Congress to follow through with their promises and pass fair and just immigration reform.

The Oregon Story

In Oregon, Latino Voters are expected to have had a considerable impact on races much like they did nationally. The exact influence of the Latino Vote won't be known for several months, however national trends suggest that of Oregon's 70,000 registered Latino voters, over 70% likely cast ballots. Organizing and Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts within the state is expected to have pushed Latino Voter participation up considerably from years past.



Last month, voter's guides were mailed to over 8,600 Latino voters in six Oregon cities including Woodburn, Gervais, Salem, Keizer, Independence and Medford. These six cities contain the core base of Latinos that make up the membership of CAUSA, PCUN (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United) and Voz Hispana Causa Chavista. Of the 7,500 Latinos receiving voters' guides, 3,500 were new voters that had been registered this year. With the explosion of new Latino Voters in Oregon, there is no doubt that Latinos were poised to have a significant impact on Oregon's election.

CAUSA partnered with the broad coalition of community organizations and education advocates under the banner of Parents and Teachers Know Better to defeat Measure 58. The Measure would have hindered the ability of their children to learn and grasp the English language, thereby having a detrimental impact on their future. Oregonians defeated the measure by a 56% to 44% margin sending the message to Bill Sizemore and his allies that decisions about their children's education should be made by the people closest to the classroom.

In statewide congressional races, candidates who either had anti-immigrant stances and/or stood as obstacles to fair and just immigration reform were also defeated. In Oregon's 5th Congressional District, Republican Mike Erickson lost to Democrat Kurt Schrader. For the U.S. Senate, Jeff Merkley defeated incumbent Republican Senator Gordon Smith. Smith lost the support of Latinos after pledging to support Comprehensive Immigration Reform and then voting against it last year. Oregon Senator elect Merkley will now join Senator Ron Wyden, a supporter of Fair and Just Immigration Reform, in Washington D.C. in January. While Clackamas County residents in District 51 got rid of one of the Oregon State Legislature's most outspoken critics of immigration and ally to anti-immigrant group, Oregonians for Immigration Reform. Linda Flores (R-District 51) was defeated by Democrat rival Brent Barton.

These changes in leadership at both a state and federal level will certainly benefit future efforts to further the rights of immigrants and pass important legislation like just and humane immigration reform.

➔ **FOR MORE NEWS AND INFORMATION, VISIT CAUSA'S BLOG at WWW.CAUSABLOG.ORG**

Fighting Anti-immigrant Measures in Columbia County

On November 4th, there was very mixed news in Columbia County: of the two anti-immigrant measures on the ballot, voters supported one while simultaneously rejecting the other. CAUSA had joined with the Rural Organizing Project and Basic Rights Oregon in an aggressive campaign this fall to educate voters on the harmful consequences of these measures.



Canvass Training session in Columbia County

Local ballot measure 5-191, which would have forced construction sites to put up enormous anti-immigrant signs was defeated by a resounding 61 to 39 percent margin. However measure 5-190, which requires the county to impose a \$10,000 fine on businesses who hire undocumented workers, passed by 57 to 43 percent.

We are pleased that this rural community rejected the bigotry and xenophobia of Measure 5-191. This is a remarkable victory given how effective the right has been nationally in using these anti-immigrant policies to drive a wedge into rural and working class communities.

And at the same time, we are deeply disappointed by the passage of Measure 5-190. We are concerned about the devastation that measure 5-190 will cause the local economy. And the immigrant community has already started to be targeted by scapegoating and racial profiling.

Measure 5-190 is rife with drafting errors, and we have already begun to explore all the options available to Columbia County businesses that will be harmed by this measure.

We want to acknowledge the hundreds of volunteers who spent thousands of hours knocking on doors, making phone calls, and hand-writing postcards. Our efforts are the number one reason that voters rejected measure 5-191.

Regardless of the election results, we are coming out of this fight with stronger, more powerful organizations:

- Local community groups have now identified thousands of their neighbors and elected leaders as allies that can broaden
- Local, ongoing work for justice.
- Staff and volunteers have increased capacity, experience and skills to run targeted, impactful issue campaigns
- The immigrant community in Oregon is stronger because allies in the GLBT community and labor stood up and played a critical role in the campaign.
- Community members have a deeper analysis on the solutions needed to fix our immigration system.

Here are two comments from local community leaders that give us inspiration as this struggle moves forward.

“Columbia County can and will do better than this ballot measure. This chapter of the battle ends here tonight but the struggle to bring justice to all workers continues on other fronts.” -- Campaign co-chair Craig Frasier

“Our stand is on the side of social justice and with that we are on the side of history. A measure such as this will not withstand the light of knowledge and ultimately will fail like all other attempts to set one against another.” -- Community member Ernie Klostermann

Measure 5-190 is just one more example of failed piecemeal immigration policies. Measures like this have failed around the country, and they will fail again Columbia County. A true solution to our immigration system must be enacted on the national level. Our opportunity to enact meaningful, workable reform has been renewed with the Obama Administration and we have formed a transition team with our national partners to make this reform a priority in the first 100 days of the new administration.

Passage of Measure 190 is another reminder that we have a long way to go in winning people's hearts and minds for immigrant justice. We must find a way to address the growing economic insecurity of the entire community, or the impulse to blame and scapegoat groups will continue to grow.

The tremendous progress made in this campaign wouldn't have happened without the time, energy and resources devoted by a number of organizations besides CAUSA: Rural Organizing Project, Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity, Basic Rights Oregon, Western States Center, Oregon Education Association, SEIU Local 49, SEIU Local 503, Association of General Contractors, and Defend Oregon. We express deep appreciation for the time and resources donated to this effort, and invite allies to join our ongoing work for justice.

New Director Joins CAUSA Staff



Last Friday was Aeryca Steinbauer's last day as CAUSA's Coordinator. She was honored to lead the organization for the last 3 years.

In that time, CAUSA has experienced inspiring highs – such as mobilizations with tens of thousands of immigrants, as well as heartbreaking losses, like the denial of driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants in Oregon. Under Aeryca's dedicated leadership, CAUSA has emerged stronger and with more technical, communications, and organizing capacity.



We are also pleased to announce that Francisco López is assuming the position of Director. Francisco, a Salvadoran immigrant, brings decades of organizing experience to the organization. Most recently, he orchestrated a highly successful voter registration/organizing campaign with CAUSA member organization, Voz Hispana. Francisco is excited to get started leading CAUSA's continued work in defending and advancing immigrant rights.

Where Do We Go From Here? *By Francisco López*



The November election represented a defining moment for the Latino community in Oregon and the United States. Regardless of how you voted, now is the time to celebrate the election of our first African-American president. He is the child of an immigrant from Africa and a woman from Kansas. As many of you know I am an immigrant who came as a refugee from the war in El Salvador. I am now a Salvadoran-American. Early in the year I had the chance to meet privately with Senator Obama during his visit to Salem. I was so inspired that evening that I shared the

story of my visit with my oldest son. My son asked why Obama was so special, and then I shared with him the fact that Senator Obama was the son of an immigrant and a white woman from Kansas. Then my son

reacted and said to me that Senator Obama is like he and his brother. At that moment I knew that Senator Obama represents the new face of America. I asked myself many times during the last few years how there can be hope in the midst of such hardship toward the immigrant community in the United States. There is a very popular saying in Mexico that reminded me what this election was all about: *"la esperanza es lo ultimo que se muere"* - hope dies last. Hope is very much alive among the people of civil society organizations in Oregon and the United States. This is a great inspiration.

The movement that President-elect Obama started is an opportunity for deep racial reconciliation and social justice for all. This is an opportunity to welcome the immigrant in our midst. Now is the time to reject a culture of hate and build a culture of hospitality and reconciliation. But this is also an opportunity that demands a strong leadership from all of us. Many of us have been inspired to work from the bottom up and build a change that we can believe in. We are committed to assist our elected representative to work on a Comprehensive Immigration Reform program that will help 12 million of undocumented immigrants to come out of the shadows and start the path towards citizenship.

CAUSA Needs Your Help!

CAUSA's challenges and responsibilities don't end during economic hardship or at the end of General Elections. To the contrary, they only grow. And because our hopes and aspirations for the future speak to our highest values, they shouldn't be put on hold. Your support for CAUSA helps us concentrate our lobbying and communications efforts on important issues affecting immigrants at both the state and federal level.

State

- Educate our Oregon State Legislators about the impact of Drivers License restrictions for immigrants
- Educate state, county and city level elected officials about the positive contributions of immigrants in our state
- Address the employment, educational, housing, health care needs of Latino immigrants in our state

Federal

- Stopping raids in the first 100 days of the new administration
- Passing just and humane Immigration Reform
- Renegotiation of NAFTA and CAFTA
- Promoting respect for Latin American countries right for Democracy
- Stopping federal level anti-immigrant legislation

➔ Use the enclosed envelope or make a secure donation online by visiting CAUSA's website at www.causaoregon.org and clicking on

That's why we're asking for your support. You've stood with us in good times and bad. You've empowered us. As a result, we've had a **real impact** on legislation in Oregon. We're counting now, as always, on your friendship and trust.

BE A HOPE BUILDER FOR THE LATINO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY BY MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO CAUSA TODAY

CAUSA

700 Marion St NE
Salem, OR 97301



CAUSA's New Address

Last month CAUSA moved its base of operations to the First Congregational Church in downtown Salem. We are excited to be deepening our partnership with the First Congregational Church in future efforts to improve conditions for immigrant families in Oregon. One project we will be working on together is the formation of a new *Family Resource Center* for the immigrant community.

Please send all donations and future correspondence to: **CAUSA, c/o First Congregational Church, 700 Marion St NE, Salem OR 97301.**

CAUSA Board of Directors

Basic Rights Oregon

Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC)

Juventud Faceta

La Union Chavista de América (LUChA)

Latinos Unidos Siempre (LUS)

Mano a Mano Family Center

Mujeres Luchadoras Progresistas

OCIMO

Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)

Rural Organizing Project

Salem-Keizer Coalition for Equality

UNETE

Communications Corner

By Erik Sorensen, CAUSA Communications

Since our last newsletter, CAUSA has joined two more online social networks. CAUSA now has pages on both Facebook and Myspace. CAUSA's Facebook page has been a real success with well over 100 friends joining to receive news and information. For those with Facebook, Myspace or YouTube pages, you can link to CAUSA by visiting our blog at www.causablog.org

CAUSA continues to expand its reach into media markets around the nation. Posts from CAUSA's news blog are continuing to be featured on national news websites like Reuters, Chicago Sun Times and USA Today.



Stay up to date with current immigration news by visiting our blog at www.causablog.org or by linking off our website at www.causaoregon.org. If you can't visit regularly, consider receiving our blog posts in your email. For more information visit www.causablog.org.

If you have a personal story or a pro-immigrant commentary to contribute to CAUSA's blog, please submit them to: erik@causaoregon.org. Include your name, email, phone, city and state with your submission and we will notify you when we publish your article.

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