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MAY WE ALL HAVE A PROPEROUS NEW YEAR

RECEIVED CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY San Bernardino

JAN 09 2008



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Volume 21
Number 9

HISPANIC NEWS

The Inland Empire's only Hispanic-owned English language newspaper

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RIVERSIDE ICON HONORED BY CITY COUNCIL



Mayor Ron Loveridge, right, presented a resolution from the City of Riverside to John Sotelo, center, for his longtime community activities in the Riverside's Eastside, the first Hispanic to be elected to the Riverside City Council, and his efforts as councilperson to improve race relations, adoptions of the city's first affirmative action plan, and support of major city developments. Sotelo was recently presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Hispanic Image Awards Dinner. (l to r) Son, Michael Sotelo, daughter, Phyllis Sotelo Salinas, and son Ken Sotelo. Photo by IEHN

The Riverside City Council meeting was filled with community activists, long-time friends, civic leaders, and family siblings to witness the belated recognition of John Sotelo, a native son and icon in the Riverside's Eastside, one of the many Latino residential areas within the city's boundaries.

Spokesperson Ofelia Valdez Yeager spoke on the accomplishment of John Sotelo, as he sat in a wheelchair alongside his sons, Michael and Ken Sotelo and daughter Phyllis Sotelo Salinas.

Yeager initially commented that while a student at UCR in 1967, her car was always in need of repairs, and she found Sotelo's Shell station and auto repair shop. Yeager would ask Sotelo not to charge her a lot of money, due to her being short of funds, and he would always response, "don't worry."

Sotelo served on the city council from 1963 to 1973, during the terms

of three mayors, E.V. Dales, Ben H. Lewis, and William C. Evans, and intermittently worked with 16 councilpersons.

Yeager elaborated on Sotelo's accomplishments: improving community relations due to tensed race relations; a city's affirmative action plan; traffic reforms on Sedgewick and 14th Street; purchase of Bordwell Park; established Villegas Park; rental of the Islander Club Recreation facilities; construction of the "new" Riverside Library; acquisition of the city's auto center; the construction of the current city hall (he never got to serve at its new location); established the Sister City Program; and initiated the donation of a fire truck, ambulance and nine police cars to a city in Mexico.

In her research, Yeager found that Sotelo was highly regarded by community leaders including William

Continue on page 6

TERESA PARRA VOTED S.B. BOARD PRESIDENT



San Bernardino City School District Board of Trustees unanimously elected Teresa Parra president for a two year term, Danny Tillman as vice president and School Superintendent Art Delgado as secretary.

Parra was elected to the San Bernardino School Board in 2001, and re-elected in 2006. She served a two-year term as board vice president.

Parra, a mother of four children, has been actively involved in community activities, including elementary school PTA president, vice president and president of the district PTA council, neighborhood association president, Cesar Chavez Committee, NALEO, Latino School Board Association, California School Board Association, and chair of the Federal Government Relation Committee, among others. She has completed San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy and NALEO National Education Fund Institute.

In a previous statement, Parra said, "There are many areas in the education system that we, as board members, must be acquainted with. The awareness of successful academic programs and

Continue on page 3

LATINO, AFRICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN COALITION UNITES BEHIND UCR'S SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

RIVERSIDE, CA - In an unprecedented show of community support for a medical school at UC Riverside, a coalition of Latino, African, and Native American leaders held a press conference December 12 adjacent to the Hinderaker Hall.

"The future health of the people of California, as well as the health of our state's economy will be driven by a culturally competent, language proficient health care workforce," said Dr. Manuela Sosa, a retired dentist and Dr. Ernest C. Levister, president of the J. W. Vines Foundation.

"By bringing awareness to the need for a medical school at UC Riverside, we hope to encourage the wider Inland Empire community to follow in our footsteps." Said Levister, an ardent advocate for diversifying medical schools and longtime mentor to many young students.

"Cultural competence is

fundamentally based on the humanitarian tradition of medicine," said Dr. A. J. Rogers, president of the J.W. Vines Medical Society, a component of the National Medical Association, (NMA). He also stated that if we are to be open-minded about the future of healthcare in our region, our state and our nation, we need to understand that recognizing people

Continue on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

CSUSB NAMED AMONG TOP 100 INSTITUTIONS GRADUATING HISPANICS Pg 2

NATIONAL LATINO VOTE EXPECTED TO TOP NINE MILLION IN 2008 Pg2

REP. BACA VOTES FOR MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF Pg 3

SECRETARY OF STATE DEBRA BROWN REPORTS HALF-MILLION NEW CALIFORNIA REGISTERED SINCE LAST PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY Pg 3

CHRISTMAS IN THE INLAND EMPIRE Pg 4 & 5

HATE GROUPS HIJACK IMMIGRATION DEBATE Pg 7

CSUSB NAMED AMONG TOP 100 INSTITUTIONS GRADUATING HISPANICS

SAN BERNARDINO, CA—The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education has once again named California State University, San Bernardino to its Publisher's Picks list as one of the top 100 four-year institutions in the United States in graduating Hispanics.

The list, which appears in the magazine's Nov. 19 issue, also lists 19 other California State University campuses along with colleges and universities from throughout the United States. Annually, the magazine lists institutions of higher learning that have solid records in recruiting, enabling and graduating Hispanic students. The list is based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics as well as formal and informal inquiries.

"We're pleased that CSUSB has once again been recognized by 'Hispanic Outlook in Education' magazine," said Cal State San Bernardino President Albert Karnig. "The magazine's designation is an acknowledgement of our commitment to diversity, which helps our students and, as they enter the workplace, improves society."

Earlier this year, two of the nation's leading publications that evaluate colleges and universities

across the country listed Cal State San Bernardino among their top colleges for 2008.

Cal State San Bernardino received for the fourth straight year the "Best in the West" designation by the Princeton Review, and it was once again included in U.S. News & World Report's 2008 edition of "America's Best Colleges." The U.S. News & World Report rankings also listed CSUSB among its best master's-granting universities in the west.

The federal government has recognized Cal State San Bernardino as a Hispanic Serving Institution, a reflection of its Hispanic enrollment of 35 percent from a total student body of more than 17,000.

Academically, Cal State San Bernardino offers two concentrations and a minor in ethnic studies and in liberal studies in the field of Chicano/Latino studies. That program focuses on language, history, politics, economics, education, immigration and the impact of Chicanos/Latinos in the United States for a broader appreciation of their contributions to modern-day society.

Cal State San Bernardino provides a major economic boost for the Inland region, contributing \$532 million in expenditures to California's economy, supporting more than 10,000 jobs in the state and producing more than \$625 million to the state economy from alumni earnings. The university also generates more than \$28 million in taxes and for every \$1 the state invests in the university, CSUSB generates nearly \$5 in additional community spending.

For information on Cal State San Bernardino, contact the university's Office of Public Affairs at (909) 537-5007 and visit <http://news.csusb.edu>.

NATIONAL LATINO VOTE EXPECTED TO TOP NINE MILLION IN 2008

TRPI analysis projects a 20% increase from 2004 due to naturalization and Latino youth coming of voting age. Small shifts in the Latino vote may have a significant impact in many states.

Los Angeles, CA — The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute at the University of Southern California projects that 9.3 million Latino voters will go to the polls in the 2008 presidential elections. That is an increase of over 1.7 million voters or an increase of approximately 23% compared to 2004.

Table 1
Projected National Latino Vote in 2008*

Year	Turnout
1980	2,453,000
1984	3,092,000
1988	3,710,000
1992	4,238,000
1996	4,928,000
2000	5,934,000
2004	7,587,000
2008*	9,320,277

"As the U.S. Latino population surges, we are seeing increases in registration and voter turnout due to

increased naturalization numbers by Latino immigrants beginning in the 1990s and Latino youth coming of voting age" said Harry Pachon, Ph.D., President of TRPI.

The potential impact of a Latino voting bloc is particularly high in states with large concentrations of Latinos. For instance, in California, it takes a mere 3.1% of Latino voters to cause a 1% shift in the state's presidential election results. Similarly, in Florida only 4.5% of Latino voters are needed to create a 1% statewide shift in the vote.

Even in non-traditional Latino states, such as Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Washington, we will see thousands of new Latino voters in 2008. Rudy de la Garza, TRPI Vice President, notes however that, "even with such substantial increases, Latinos must significantly increase their rates of registration and voting in order to influence the election's results".

For added information regarding the report, contact Dr. Harry Pachon or David Estrada at (213) 821-5615 or visit the website: <http://www.trpi.org>

Table 2
Percentage (%) of Latino Vote Needed to Make a 1% Difference in Selected Statewide Elections (2004)

	Total Votes Cast	1% of Vote	Total Latino Vote	Margin of Error*	1% Shift**	Electoral Votes	Latino Vote 2008 (Projected)
Arizona	2,239,000	22,390	296,000	6.10%	3.80%	10	413,980
California	12,807,000	128,070	2,081,000	2.60%	3.10%	55	2,619,387
Colorado	2,097,000	20,970	165,000	6.90%	6.40%	9	192,002
Florida	7,372,000	73,720	824,000	4.60%	4.50%	27	1,063,184
Illinois	5,672,000	56,720	294,000	6.50%	9.60%	21	465,106
New Jersey	3,693,000	36,930	277,000	6.50%	6.70%	15	257,516
New Mexico	837,000	8,370	276,000	6.40%	1.50%	5	296,248
New York	7,698,000	76,980	613,000	4.60%	6.30%	31	645,863
Texas	7,950,000	79,500	1,533,000	3.30%	2.60%	34	1,856,079

PROTECT YOUR VASCULAR HEALTH—STOP SMOKING

(NAPS)—You probably understand smoking is a risk factor for cancer and heart disease, but you may not know how smoking affects your entire body's circulation system. Vascular surgeons have found that people who smoke or who have smoked are more likely to develop diseases of their arteries and veins than those who do not or have not.

Veins and arteries make up the vascular system that carries life-giving, oxygen-rich blood to all your vital organs, the brain and legs and arms. **Keep your circulation system young: Don't smoke.** Smoking causes sticky

plaque in veins and arteries and is a major risk factor in developing vascular diseases such as carotid artery disease (stroke), abdominal aortic aneurysm and peripheral arterial disease.

If you smoke or have smoked, talk with your doctor about your risk factors. If you have evidence of vascular disease, see a vascular surgeon, who has the expertise to give the best diagnosis and treatment, including medical management and noninvasive procedures.

For information or to find a vascular surgeon, visit the Web site at www.VascularWeb.org.



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Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.

Ambrose Redmoon

HISPANIC NEWS

The Inland Empire's only Hispanic-owned English language newspaper

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REP. BACA VOTES FOR MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF New Legislation Provides Tax Relief for 20,175 Households in the 43rd Congressional District

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Joe Baca (D-Rialto) voted for legislation that offers more than \$50 billion in middle-class tax relief and saves 20,175 households in the 43rd Congressional District from paying higher taxes under the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT). H.R. 4351, the AMT Relief Act of 2007, is fiscally responsible and fully paid for, and was approved by a vote of 226 - 193.

“Families in California have seen the cost of health care, gasoline and a college education skyrocket while their homes have lost value,” said Rep. Baca. “I am proud to vote for a plan that cuts taxes for middle class families and saves over 20,000 households in the 43rd Congressional District from paying the Alternative Minimum Tax.”

The Alternative Minimum Tax was originally designed to ensure very wealthy individuals do not avoid paying income tax. The tax now threatens to impact middle-class families, and would raise taxes on 23 million Americans if Congress failed to take action.

The Temporary Tax Relief Act of

2007 protects 23 million middle-class families from being hit by the Alternative Minimum Tax and includes a series of other provisions that provide tax relief to working families, including helping 12 million children by expanding the child tax credit. In addition, the Temporary Tax Relief is fully paid for and does not add to the deficit. The bill will grow America's sagging economy with tax relief to promote innovation and high-paying jobs.

“Democrats have brought fiscal responsibility back to Washington,” added Rep. Baca. “Instead of skyrocketing budgets and tax breaks for the wealthy few, we are practicing fiscal restraint and working to provide tax relief to tens of millions hard-working, middle class families.”

The legislation also restores fairness to the tax code and closes wasteful tax loopholes. The Temporary Tax Relief Act prevents hedge fund managers and CEOs from escaping income taxes by using offshore tax havens as unlimited retirement accounts, while middle-class families play by the rules and pay their fair share of taxes.

TERESA PARRA VOTED S.B. BOARD PRESIDENT

Continued from page 1

support systems and external educational resources the better we are prepared with our responsibilities at the board level.”

In a telephone interview, Parra said that major areas of priorities would include high school dropout rate, alternate education programs for middle and high schools students, improving the high school AYP and API test scores, and

current board's directions cohesively working with the superintendent, cabinet and staff in developing future district goals and objectives

Parra stated that all students in our district should be provided equal opportunities and highest quality of education in preparation for higher educational careers.

LATINO, AFRICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN COALITION UNITES BEHIND UCR'S SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Continued from page 1

cultural identities is a lifelong endeavor of working toward inclusion.

“Our collective show of support for the medical school and the mission statement set forth by Chancellor Robert Gray is a positive leap into our forward journey,” said Sosa.

“It is important to level the playing field, not to change admission or graduation standards but to give students of color the opportunity to develop their skills to their fullest potential,” said Levister.

According to Dr. Rogers, a significant body of research indicates that a workforce that more closely mirrors the racial and ethnic diversity of the state will increase access to care and improve the quality of care that

is delivered. “When thinking of a diverse health workforce, we think of providers who bring an understanding of cultural health beliefs, and methods that respect those beliefs, into the healthcare system. We also know that physicians of color typically provide more care for the poor and uninsured and more frequently practice in areas with shortages of providers than their non-minority peers.”

As such, he said, building a more diverse cadre of physicians, nurses, dentists and allied health professionals is a crucial strategy for improving the health of underserved communities in California.

For further information, please contact Irma Flores at 951-684-2585.

SECRETARY OF STATE DEBRA BROWEN REPORTS HALF-MILLION NEW CALIFORNIA REGISTERED SINCE LAST PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

SACRAMENTO, CA – Five-hundred thousand more Californians are registered to vote than there were at this time before the last Presidential Primary Election four years ago, according to the Secretary of State's newest Report of Registration released today.

The report, with data gathered 60 days before a statewide primary election, reflects updates to voter registration rolls, including the removal of those who have passed away, moved out of state, or has been determined to be ineligible to vote, as well as the addition of new registrants.

When compared to the same period before the last presidential primary, registration lags behind California's population growth. While the overall registration number has grown, the percentage of people who are eligible to vote and actually registered to vote has dipped from about 68.4% to just below 67.3%. The drop is partly due to better tracking and removal of so-called “deadwood” from the voter registration rolls.

“Californians have a chance to shape the presidential race with the earlier primary election, and the critical first step is registering to vote,” said Secretary Bowen, the state's chief elections officer. “There are still 31 days left to register to vote before the registration period closes January 22.”

The registration totals for the six qualified political parties and voters who have declined to state their political affiliation are:

Political Party	Dec 7, 2007		Jan 2, 2004	
	# Registered	% of Total	# Registered	% of Total
American Independent	320,435	2.07%	287,412	92%
Democratic	6,598,773	42.66%	6,450,624	43.16%
Green	132,501	0.86%	162,354	1.09%
Libertarian	81,906	0.53%	86,118	0.58%
Peace and Freedom	57,013	0.37%	71,441	0.48%
Republican	5,190,179	33.55%	5,330,536	35.67%
Decline to State	2,990,143	19.33%	2,433,134	16.28%
Miscellaneous	97,601	0.63%	123,412	0.83%
TOTAL	15,468,551	100%	14,945,031	100%*

* 2004 total also includes voters affiliated with the Natural Law party, which is no longer qualified in California.

Both of the major political parties have seen their registration percentages fall as more voters decline to state a political affiliation. Nearly 20% of California registered voters choose not to affiliate with any political party.

Nearly 43% of California voters are registered Democrats. Alameda, Imperial, and San Francisco counties have the highest percentages of Democratic voters. Almost 34% of registered voters are Republicans. The counties with the highest concentration of GOP voters are Placer, Modoc, and Sutter.

The American Independent and Democratic parties will allow decline-to-state voters to vote in their parties' presidential primaries. The other four political parties have “closed” primaries. No decline-to-state voter can request more than one party's ballot, and if a decline-to-state voter does not request a specific ballot, a nonpartisan ballot with only ballot measures and nonpartisan offices will be provided.

The bulk of California's voters are clustered in Southern California, in Los Angeles (3.9 million voters), Orange (1.5 million voters), San Diego (1.3 million voters), San Bernardino (724,682 voters), and Riverside (711,703 voters) counties.

By law, voter registration updates must occur 154, 60, and 15 days before each statewide primary election, and 60 days and 15 days before each general election. There is one off-year update released in February of non-election years.

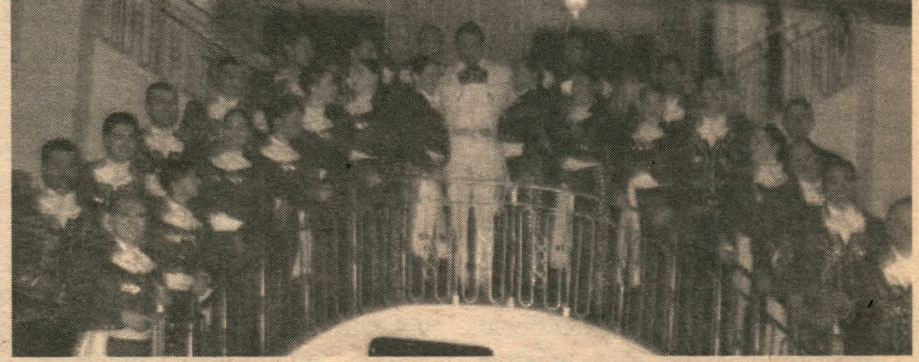
Fewer people are on the voter rolls than in September 2007, when the 154-day Report of Registration was released.

The complete December 7, 2007, Report of Registration is on the Secretary of State's website at http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_u.htm. Hard copies are available to the media upon request through the Secretary of State's Communications Office at (916) 653-6575.

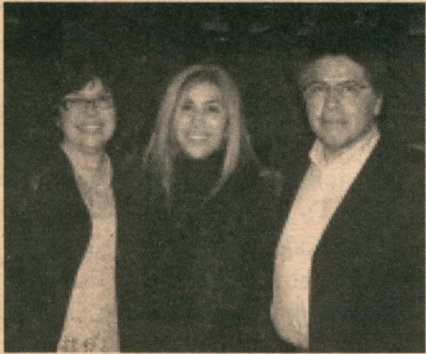
The last day to register to vote in the February 5, 2008, Presidential Primary Election is January 22, and the last day to sign up for a vote-by-mail ballot is January 29.

To view this and other Secretary of State press releases, go to: http://www.sos.ca.gov/executive/press_releases/news_releases.htm.

CHRISTMAS IN THE INLAND EMPIRE
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CHRISTMAS IN THE INLAND EMPIRE



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Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino Assisted Housing – Public Housing Program

Applications are being accepted by the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino to fill vacancies for the Public Housing communities located throughout the County of San Bernardino. To be eligible, a family must be within the income limits set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Allowable income limits vary according to family size and are updated annually. Income limits are based on the annual median income for the County of San Bernardino.

The Housing Authority currently has vacancies available for 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom size units. Any applications not used to fill immediate vacancies will be placed on a waiting list to fill future vacancies.

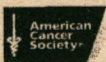
All applications are screened for income eligibility, credit worthiness, rental history, and criminal history activity. Final eligibility will be determined just prior to a family being offered assistance.

If you would like to receive an application you may visit our website at www.hacsb.com or write to PO Box 1787, San Bernardino, CA 92402. Applications are also available at our Management Offices located at 772 S. Pine Street, Colton, CA., 92324; 13088 Monte Vista, Chino, CA 91710; 402 Alder St., San Bernardino, CA 92410; 1738 W. 9th St., San Bernardino, CA 92411; 131 E. Lugonia, Redlands, CA 92374; and 421 S. 7th St., Barstow, CA 92311.



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RIVERSIDE ICON HONORED BY CITY COUNCIL

Evens, previous member of the Board of Utilities and former mayor, Ray Butler, a former opponent, and Henry Coil, who served on the city council, individually corresponding with Sotelo, stating that his presence in the city council created a new era of interrelationships between the various groups in Riverside and a greater recognition of the Hispanic community.

Yeager said that Sotelo's political involvement was acknowledged by a visit to his home by Robert Kennedy prior to the day he was killed in Los Angeles.

Nati Fuentes, a retired community activist, recognized Sotelo as an Eastside leader who organized groups to fight for recognition and improvements in their residential area. "John was our leader and we looked up to him. He motivated us to fight for our rights, and to date is a role model to me and our community."

Mayor Ron Loveridge presented Sotelo with a city resolution commending him on his years of service to the community, the first Hispanic to serve in the city council,

and his accomplishment in the advocacy for equal rights in housing, employment, voting rights, education and quality of life for the Eastside community.

In October 5, 2007, Sotelo was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Hispanic Image Awards Dinner.

Growing up in Riverside, Sotelo's father took him to civic meeting, and always encouraged him to get involved in his community. His father also impressed on young Sotelo in the advantages of working for oneself.

When he got the call, Sotelo served in the Navy during WWII. Once the war was over, Sotello recalls, he returned to find more respect given to Hispanics who had fought in the war, as if they had earned their acceptance by fighting for the United States.

Sotelo graduated from General Motors Institute in Michigan and opened a service station, garage and tow service in Riverside.

As a business owner Sotelo began to break down the discriminatory practices and division between the Hispanic and various communities in

the city. He immediately became active in the NAACP, MAPA, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, American Legion Post 740 and the Eastside Neighborhood Council, and in national, state and local election campaigns.

Sotelo helped petition for a new Riverside City Charter for greater minority representation. Victory was short-lived. After the new charter was established, he was stricken with polio. Before he had time to recover, he was asked to run for city council.

Sotelo ran and was elected to the city council, a new dawn due to his involvement in politics: the first Hispanic in the city's history. He recalls forcing himself to walk each day fighting the polio while confronting the prejudice he faced on the outside. He also had the support of his community and especially his wife, Ramona and his family. Due to his continued advocacy, Sotelo's precinct recorded the highest percentage of registered voters.

This was the time when Hispanics could swim in the Fairmount Park pool on the days prior to the pool being drained.

Council members did not trust Sotelo and they doubted his abilities. Sotelo said he finally earned their respect, through words and deeds.

"You and I were both born in the City of Riverside," Sotelo told one of his fellow council members. "This flag is mine and it is yours."

Presidents Johnson, Nixon, H.W. Bush and Reagan met with Sotelo to recognize his community service and/or to discuss vital issues.

Sotelo, retired three years ago, stated, "I see the progress we have made and I think maybe it wasn't wasted time." However, after overcoming health issues, the workaholic businessman has continued to oversee his business enterprises.

Sotelo and his wife, Ramona, now deceased, were married in 1948, and parents of four siblings, 14 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

John Sotelo is the recipient of numerous national, state, and local awards and commendations for a lifelong dedication to country, state, and the City of Riverside.



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HATE GROUPS HIJACK IMMIGRATION DEBATE

By Mark Potok, New America Media

When it comes to debating immigration, the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) has a knack for finding a place at the table to pitch its position.

In the past six years, FAIR officials have testified at least 30 times before Congress, and they have been quoted by the mainstream media more than 500 times so far in 2007. Earlier this year, the group played a key role in defeating bipartisan immigration reform legislation in Congress. In short, FAIR is taken seriously as a legitimate commentator.

It shouldn't be.

Despite its frequent turns in the media spotlight, FAIR has a 20-year track record of bigotry and extremism that has led the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to classify the organization as a hate group. The latest issue of the SPLC's quarterly Intelligence Report delves into FAIR's history of bigotry and white supremacy. These are some of the findings:

* FAIR was founded in 1979 by John Tanton, who has compared immigrants to "bacteria" and warned that high birthrates will allow Latinos to "take over" America. Still a member of

FAIR's board, Tanton also operates The Social Contract Press, listed as a hate group for many years by the Southern Poverty Law Center because of its white supremacist writings.

* FAIR has accepted more than \$1 million from the Pioneer Fund, a racist foundation devoted to eugenics and to proving a connection between race and IQ. While others have returned the fund's money after learning of their background, FAIR President Dan Stein had no qualms about it, telling a reporter in 1993, "My job is to get every dime of Pioneer's money."

* Key staff members at FAIR have ties to white supremacist groups. For example, Joseph Turner, who was hired by FAIR in late 2006 as its western field representative, led a nativist hate group called Save Our State. Turner also defended white separatism on Save Our State's electronic bulletin board.

* FAIR has successfully spread racist conspiracy theories, including the bogus claim that Mexico has set its sights on "reconquering" the Southwest and the notion of a secret plot to merge the United States, Canada and Mexico.

While much of this information has been available for years, it has not

affected FAIR's standing in the media. However, FAIR left little doubt about the way it does business this past February when a top official met with the leaders of Vlaams Belang, a Belgian political party that under its previous name, Vlaams Blok, was officially banned by the Belgian Supreme Court as a racist and xenophobic group. The meeting was held to seek the Europeans' "advice" on immigration.

This meeting led the Southern Poverty Law Center, which monitors hate group activity, to take another look at FAIR. Upon completing the investigation, it was obvious that FAIR qualified as a hate group. Early next year, when the SPLC's annual hate group list is published, FAIR will be on the list.

The listing of FAIR as a hate group is significant because FAIR is the hub of the American nativist movement. Its position on immigration is rooted more in its anti-Latino and anti-Catholic beliefs than in policy concerns.

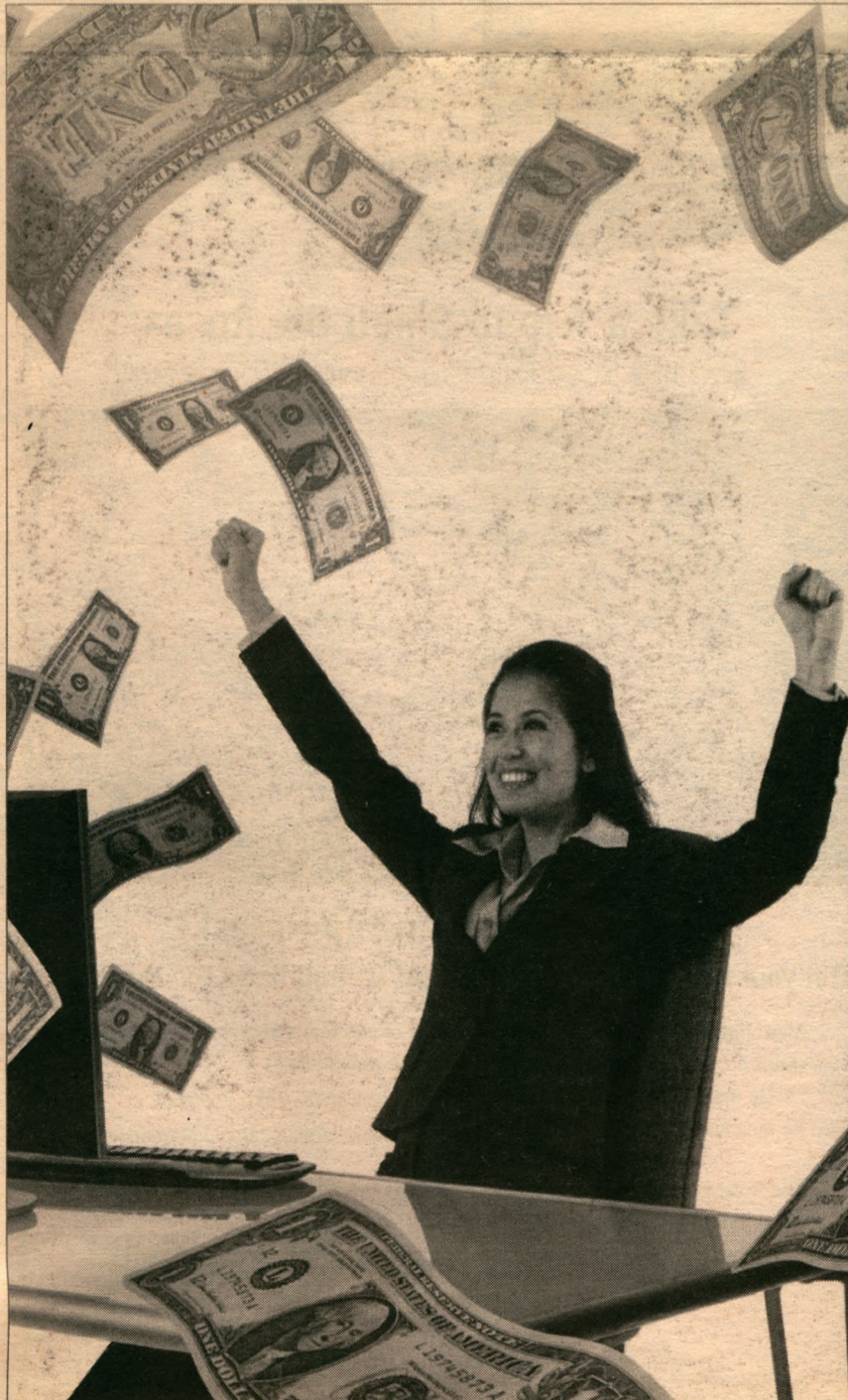
Remarkably, FAIR has infiltrated the mainstream and shaped the immigration debate in this country. This group, more than any other, has contributed to the rancid turn the national immigration

discussion has taken. With FAIR fanning the flames of xenophobic intolerance, hate groups and hate crimes directed at Latinos continue to rise in America.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has documented a 40 percent increase in the number of hate groups since 2000, an increase that SPLC analysts attribute to the anti-immigrant fervor that is sweeping the country. The FBI recently released statistics showing a 35 percent rise in hate crimes against Latinos since 2003.

This country deserves an open and honest immigration debate. However, the debate has proven to be a fertile ground for hate groups looking to spread their racist beliefs under the guise of immigration reform. That is why it is crucial for the American public to understand the background and motives of the groups shaping this debate, such as FAIR. The nation's immigration debate is simply too important to be poisoned by a bigoted group manipulating it for its own xenophobic reasons.

Mark Potok is the director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project, which investigates hate groups, and the editor of the SPLC's Intelligence Report.



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