



THE TEXAS SENATE

December 11, 2008

The Hon. Charles E. Schumer, Chairman
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee
SENT VIA FACSIMILE

Dear Chairman Schumer:

In recent elections, Texas Democrats have re-organized, re-energized, and renewed our commitment to elect our nominees. We have come a long way.

Of those in the Democratic coalition in the state, there is no emerging demography more important, with more unrealized potential, than Latino voters in Texas.

Unfortunately, while we have made great strides to help ourselves, we have seen little enthusiasm toward recognizing that our efforts are worth investing in.

We are doing our part. The Texas Democratic Party and key allied groups spent millions of dollars in support of Democratic efforts in Texas. In the election which just concluded, our voter contact efforts included over 2.2 million pieces of direct mail and 1.4 million phone calls. Over 25 percent of our efforts were aimed squarely at Latino households.

In Harris County alone (Houston), 70,000 Latinos were targeted, receiving 5 mail pieces and 6 GOTV calls.

In Dallas County, we used direct support for Sheriff Lupe Valdez, the only Latina sheriff in the United States, as a driving force to turn out Latino voters across the county, to the benefit of the entire Democratic ticket.

Those are only two of many examples which demonstrate that we are doing our part. There is wide recognition among Texas Democrats, however, that we're not doing enough – but we're doing what we can afford to do, and to expand our efforts will take the investment of those who, so far, have not been there.

Leadership is showing the way. As Senators, as leaders in the Latino community in Texas, we have a responsibility to “speak truth to power” and to show our folks the way for the future.

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P.O. BOX 12068, CAPITOL STATION, AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

We are offended by the lack of investment in Texas, specifically the lack of institutional support given to our colleague and friend Rick Noriega in the recent United States Senate campaign. The heat of election night had not cooled before the speculation began about DSCC support for several Anglo candidates in future races. This is not only disrespectful, it's shameful.

This election, 1.6 million Latinos voted, comprising 20% of the overall vote. Across the country, Latino voters turned states from red to blue in Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, Florida, and Virginia. The same will be true here in Texas very soon.

In a statewide Democratic primary race in Texas, it is impossible to win without Latino support. A Latino candidate will always have the advantage in a low turnout race. In the future, greater numbers of viable, qualified Latino candidates will be running for statewide office in Texas. We intend to make sure of it.

Rick Noriega has an impeccable pedigree to run in Texas. He is an old-fashioned Democrat—a family man, a man of faith, a combat-decorated veteran, a legislator, with an Ivy-league education and time spent defending the border. He has a heart for the people, impeccable Democratic credentials and is an awesome retail campaigner. To some who chose to sit on the sidelines in this election, those characteristics were apparently not enough - he is not wealthy or white. We have always believed Democrats are better than that, and we intend to do everything we can to ensure that in the future, we are better than that.

Chairman Schumer, when speaking at a 2007 Texas fundraising event in San Antonio you said, **“The eyes of Texas are upon us, but the eyes of the DSCC are upon Texas.”** During this same event, you also alluded to the fact that the DSCC considers Texas to be in play as a possible pickup state, noting that it would take \$15 million to run a full-fledged campaign against Cornyn.¹

Institutions such as the DSCC continually raise millions from Texas contributors for the benefit of Democrats across the country. Texas Democrats, especially Rick Noriega, did not benefit from Texans' generosity. Yet, in the 2002 race between the Democratic nominee Ron Kirk and candidate John Cornyn, the DSCC spent \$4.5 million on ads in support of Kirk. Kirk was able to garner 43% of the vote. Rick Noriega was able to garner 43% of the vote in his race against Cornyn, the incumbent, without any financial support from the DSCC. If just half of the amount spent on Kirk had been invested in the Noriega campaign, we might well be discussing the transition of the first Latino US Senator from Texas.

¹ Burnt Orange Report, April 22, 2007, “Mikal Watts Raises Texas Record for DSCC: \$1.1 Million”

Even if the DSCC had merely returned to Texas the \$1.1 million raised in San Antonio alone, it would have gone a long way toward a Noriega victory. State Senator Mario Gallegos, for his part, could not even get multiple phone calls made to the DSCC returned, in his efforts to discuss the situation.

The DSCC's decision is shameful and disgraceful, and we will do everything we can to prevent this disrespect from happening again. For the face of the US Senate to represent the true face of America, we must all work together to invest in quality candidates such as Rick Noriega, not take a walk when our candidate is not a member of the millionaires club.

We have invested in Texas, and will continue to do so. Please consider joining us in investing in these efforts as well.

We look forward to a more constructive dialog with you in the future. Meanwhile, feel free to call either of us any time.

Sincerely,



Mario V. Gallegos
Texas State Senator



Leticia Van de Putte
Texas State Senator

cc: The Hon. Robert Menendez
The Hon. Ken Salazar
Congressional Hispanic Caucus
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