

Records Broken: Spanish-language Television Advertising in the 2002 Election

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MORE THAN \$16 MILLION WAS SPENT IN 2002 ON SPANISH-LANGUAGE POLITICAL TELEVISION ADVERTISING, SETTING ELECTION-YEAR RECORD

*Record Number of Candidates Ran
Spanish-Language TV Ads This Year*

*Nearly 9 in 10 Spanish-Language TV Ads Were Positive
Ads Were Far More Positive Than English Ads Nationally*

*Spanish-language ads comprised
only 2% of the market despite larger Hispanic
political participation each election cycle*

The 2002 mid-term national elections set new national records for political campaign outreach to the nation's growing population of Hispanic voters. More than \$16 million was spent by gubernatorial, Senate, House, and down-ballot candidates on Spanish-language broadcast television advertising this year.

Gubernatorial, Senate, and House candidates aired more than 16,000 spots. More candidates than ever before – three times the number in past elections – aired Spanish-language broadcast television ads inclusive of states that had never before seen wide-scale Hispanic outreach efforts.

RECORD NUMBER OF CANDIDATES USING SPANISH-LANGUAGE ADS

This year at least 20 gubernatorial candidates, six Senate candidates, more than a dozen House candidates, and dozens more down-ballot candidates (including a handful of candidates for Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General) and proponents and opponents of ballot initiatives across the nation utilized Spanish-language television advertising to reach Hispanic voters. Local station managers and national executives all report that a record number of candidates aired Spanish-language ads this year. By most accounts, three times as many candidates nationally ran Spanish-language television ads than in any previous election year, demonstrating growing confidence across the nation in the use of Spanish-language television as an effective tool to reach Hispanic voters.

In 2001, more than 24 candidates ran Spanish-language television ads including numerous mayoral candidates and two successful Democratic gubernatorial candidates, Jim McGreevey (NJ) and Mark Warner (VA). In 2000, more than 26 candidates ran Spanish-language television ads including three presidential candidates (Bush, Gore, and Bradley), eight Senate candidates, and a handful of House and down-ballot candidates.

GROWING MILLION-DOLLAR CLUB

Five candidates spent more than \$1 million each on Spanish-language television ads this year, a record itself. New York Independent Gubernatorial Candidate Tom Golisano

spent at least \$2.4 million, the Florida Republican Party and Republican Governor Jeb Bush spent at least \$1.8 million, Texas Democratic Gubernatorial candidate Tony Sanchez spent at least \$1.8 million, California Democratic Governor Gray Davis spent at least \$1.7 million, and New York Democratic Gubernatorial candidate Carl McCall spent at least \$1 million. Republican New York Governor George Pataki came close, spending over \$825,000 on Spanish-language broadcast television.

Segal's report was developed through interviews and data obtained in conjunction with the Wisconsin Advertising Project, a study funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG). CMAG monitors all political and issue advertising in the nation's top 100 media markets, including Spanish-language stations – covering 85% of the country's population – and provides cost estimates and information on the content, volume and targeting of media buys. CMAG does not monitor most advertising placed on local cable systems or local broadcast stations outside of the nation's 100 biggest media markets. Spanish-language ads aired on these stations and local cable systems may not be included in this data. This report includes all spending on Spanish-language television advertising through Election Day. *A more detailed report by Segal is forthcoming on the 2000 Spanish-language presidential campaign advertising aimed at Hispanic voters and the strategies behind the ads.*

Executives at local and national Spanish-language television companies estimate that spending on Spanish-language television ads this year surpassed \$20 million. While difficult to confirm, this information is not difficult to believe. A growing number of campaigns across the nation have begun to air Spanish-language ads on local cable in an effort to avoid costly statewide ad rates and better target Hispanic communities in certain regions. In addition, spending was high in some key competitive congressional races in areas outside of the top 100 media markets. Also, some large Hispanic television markets fall outside of the top 100 media markets, but inside some of the states with large Hispanic populations discussed in this report. Finally, cost estimates are conservative. Rising viewership is helping increase ad rates and ad sales revenues at the largest Spanish-language television networks and stations. No national ads were placed on any of the national Spanish-language broadcast or cable television networks in 2002.

ADS ALMOST ENTIRELY POSITIVE

More than 88% (roughly 14,000 spots) of Spanish-language television ads aired in 2002 were positive. Only two percent (about 400 spots) of Spanish-language television ads aired nationally were negative ads and less than ten percent (more than 1,500 spots) were ads that contrasted candidates' records. By comparison, the Wisconsin Advertising Project found that only about 40% of all ads aired this year by House, Senate and gubernatorial candidates were positive.

There are many factors that account for the unusually positive nature of ads geared toward Hispanic voters. First, a large portion of Hispanic voters are first-time voters. Candidates and the parties continue to seek a positive long-term relationship with Hispanic voters and therefore continue to introduce themselves in positive ways.

Second, negative ads do not test well. While the Democratic National Committee and Sierra Club effectively used negative Spanish-language television ads in 2000, strategists interviewed for this report said that recent polling and focus groups have both concluded that Hispanic voters respond poorly to existing styles of negative ads.

Despite the mostly positive nature of ads nationally, a handful of competitive races featured negative Spanish-language ads. Democratic challenger Henry Cuellar ran negative ads against Republican Congressman Henry Bonilla in their Texas U.S. House race. In addition, two Democratic U.S. House candidates in New Mexico, State Senators Richard M. Romero and John Arthur Smith, ran negative ads against their Republican opponents on Spanish-language broadcast television. Local races saw negative ads as well. In California's 80th Assembly District, two Hispanic candidates, Republican Bonnie Garcia and Democrat Joey Acuña, launched attacks using Spanish-language television ads. However, negative English ads were the choice of campaigns in states with large Hispanic populations across the nation. For example, Texas Governor Rick Perry ran an ad attacking his Democratic opponent Tony Sanchez in English, but made a calculated decision not to air the same ad in Spanish.

ORIGINAL ADS VERSUS ADS FROM ENGLISH

More ads aired in 2002, than ever before, were specifically created by candidates and parties to reach Hispanic voters. Dozens of ads were created with messages and images intended to resonate with Hispanics. Many candidates hired media consultants to create unique ads that would only be aired on Spanish-language television stations. The Spanish-language television programs that Spanish-speaking Americans watch are markedly different from national television broadcasting for the non-Hispanic audience. Dominant cultural differences are evident when comparing broadcasts. The 2002 election data show us that more candidates now understand what many corporations have understood for more than a decade: the importance of advertisements specifically created for Hispanic viewers.

SOME SPANISH-LANGUAGE ADS RAN ON ENGLISH STATIONS

A few candidates ran Spanish-language or bilingual spots during the network and affiliate news programs on English-language ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX affiliates. For example, Democratic Candidates for Senate and Governor in New Mexico, a state which has a large population of longtime Hispanic citizens and a constitution that recognizes two official languages, aired Spanish-language advertisements during English broadcasts on English networks.

EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS MET

Notwithstanding unprecedented levels of Spanish-language television advertising in this year's election, there still appear to be candidates and parties who promise this community more than they deliver. On a number of occasions in 2002 candidates and party organizations created Spanish-language television and radio advertisements and released them at news conferences only to never use them or save them for limited airings in the final days of the campaign.

NATIONAL SPENDING COMPARISON

Spending on Spanish-language ads this year accounted for less than two percent of political television ad spending nationally. According to the Wisconsin Advertising Project, more than \$1 billion was spent on all political ads nationally. Yet, Spanish-language ads accounted for only \$16 million of all political advertising. This is despite the fact that Hispanics comprised between five and seven percent of voters nationally in recent election cycles and 12.5% of the U.S. population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Voter News Service. It is important to note that Spanish-language ad spending only occurred in statewide races in only 8 states and in other campaigns in 16 total states this year, while all other political advertising occurred much more widely. Even in states with big spenders on Spanish-language ads such as New York Gov. (less than 3.5%), Colorado Sen. (less than 2%), and Texas Sen. (less than 1%), spending on Spanish-language advertising was only a small fraction of total political ad spending.

Florida

Republican Governor Jeb Bush sailed to re-election in part as a result of his strong showing among the state's Hispanic voters. The Florida Republican Party and the Bush campaign aired more than \$1.8 million in positive Spanish-language television advertisements (more than 900 spots) in support of Jeb Bush in Miami, Orlando and Tampa. His opponent, Democratic businessman Bill McBride, relied upon support from the Florida Democratic Party which aired under \$150,000 in positive Spanish-language television advertisements (more than 250 spots) in the same markets. The Party's McBride ads, which only began airing during the final two weeks of the campaign, also touted two other down-ballot candidates.

In Florida U.S. House races, 8th District Democratic challenger Eddie Diaz ran almost \$60,000 in Spanish-language television ads in his losing campaign against Republican Congressman Ric Keller. Republican Mario Diaz-Balart was elected to Congress in the 25th District largely populated by Cuban Americans, spending over \$110,000 on Spanish-language broadcast television advertising.

California

Democratic Governor Gray Davis spent more than \$1.7 million on positive Spanish-language television advertising in his successful re-election campaign in the general election across the state. He also aired more than \$200,000 in the primary, according to his campaign. Davis' high level of spending on Spanish-language television ads was more than any previous candidate has ever spent in a California Governor's race. In addition, the ads were more sophisticated than ads previously run in California statewide campaigns and were specially designed for the Hispanic market. Davis aired these ads, and nearly \$100,000 in positive radio ads, in the Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Fresno, and Sacramento media markets. Davis' opponent, Republican businessman Bill Simon spent more than \$250,000 on Spanish language ads during 2002 but aired few ads in the final two months of the campaign. Simon's Republican primary opponent, former Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan, spent more than \$55,000 on Spanish-language primary ads.

Republican State Senator Bruce McPherson spent more than \$300,000 on Spanish-language television ads in his unsuccessful bid to defeat incumbent Hispanic Democratic Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante. Newly-elected Democratic Congresswoman Linda Sanchez credits strong support within the Hispanic community in the new Los Angeles-area district for her election. She aired nearly \$85,000 on Spanish-language broadcast television ads in the Los Angeles market. Her sister, Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, was featured in one of Gray Davis' Spanish-language television spots.

New York

Republican Governor George Pataki was re-elected with a large percentage of support from among the Hispanic community in New York despite having spent less on Spanish-language television advertising than either of his opponents. Pataki spent at least \$820,000 on more than 550 spots. His opponents, Independent billionaire businessman Tom Golisano (at least \$2.4 million during the general election, nearly 650 spots) and Democratic State Comptroller Carl McCall (at least \$1 million during the general and primary elections, nearly 850 spots) both spent more and aired more spots but were unable to crack Pataki's strong support within the community. McCall's Democratic primary opponent, Andrew Cuomo, spent almost \$75,000 on Spanish-language ads in the primary.

Texas

Polls indicate that Democratic businessman and gubernatorial candidate Tony Sanchez captured a clear majority of the Texas Hispanic vote, with help from more than \$1.8 million (nearly 5,000 spots) in Spanish-language television advertising. His victorious opponent, Republican Governor Rick Perry, spent a significant amount on Spanish-language broadcast television – at least \$630,000 (more than 900 spots).

Republican Land Commissioner David Dewhurst was elected Texas Lieutenant Governor in a hotly contested race. Dewhurst spent more than \$300,000 on Spanish-language television ads during the campaign.

Former Democratic Dallas mayor Ron Kirk was defeated in the Senate though more than \$185,000 worth of Spanish-language television ads was aired by the Texas Democratic Party on his behalf. Kirk's opponent, Senator-elect John Cornyn aired limited amounts of Spanish-language broadcast television ads in the state's top media markets. One of Cornyn's only Spanish-language ads was simply a translation of an English ad he was airing across the state.

Colorado

Republican Senator Wayne Allard outspent Democratic ex-U.S. Attorney Tom Strickland by 3-2 on Spanish-language television advertising (\$90,000 - \$60,000) in his successful re-election campaign. Republican Governor Bill Owens spent \$25,000 on Spanish-language television ads and was re-elected by a wide margin. The relatively modest spending may blur a strong lesson learned from this election cycle: candidates in a growing number of states are beginning to make Spanish-language advertising a permanent part of their campaign communications strategies. For the first time, multiple statewide candidates in Colorado spent tens of thousands of dollars on Spanish-language

television ads and the Democratic and Republican parties both initiated large-scale Hispanic outreach efforts.

New Mexico

Democratic Governor-elect Bill Richardson, the former Congressman and Clinton Administration Energy Secretary, soundly defeated his Republican opponent with significant support from the state's very large Hispanic population. Richardson aired more than \$155,000 in Spanish-language broadcast television ads this year while his opponent, John Sanchez, who is also Hispanic, aired very few ads in Spanish.

Republican Senator Pete Domenici was re-elected with broad support in the state. Domenici outspent his opponent, former Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission and Democrat Gloria Tristani, on Spanish-language television advertising \$180,000 to \$55,000.

Total spending by Republican and Democratic U.S. House candidates in New Mexico surpassed \$100,000 in Spanish-language television advertisements this year. Republican Congresswoman Heather Wilson, Democratic State Senator Richard M. Romero, Democratic State Senator John Arthur Smith, and Republican State Representative Steve Pearce each spent thousands on Spanish-language ads in either the Albuquerque or El Paso markets in the 2002 election.

Illinois

Spanish-language television advertising in Chicago is not new, but Democratic Governor-elect Rod Blagojevich spent more than \$180,000 on these ads during his campaign hoping to ensure elevated support among Hispanic voters. The only other significant spending on Spanish-language ads in the gubernatorial race this year was \$30,000 spent by his Democratic primary opponent Paul Vallas.

Meanwhile, Illinois Democratic State Senator Lisa Madigan aired more than \$85,000 in Spanish-language television ads in her successful campaign for the state's Attorney General.

Maryland

Both candidates in the Maryland gubernatorial race, Republican Congressman Bob Ehrlich (the Governor-elect) and Democratic Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, aired limited amounts of Spanish-language television ads.

FUTURE GROWTH IN SPANISH-LANGUAGE ADS

The rapidly growing Hispanic voter population has spurred the growth in political advertising used to reach these voters. Many of the nation's leading Hispanic advocacy organizations estimate that by 2004 as many as 1 million new Hispanic citizens will be registered to vote.

New television avenues for reaching these voters are emerging with the continued growth of Univision and Telefuturo, Telemundo, Azteca, and other independent formats that reach millions of the nation's Hispanic viewers. Growth in this area will provide

candidates, parties, and interest groups with new opportunities to reach targeted groups of Hispanic voters. This will also require expansion of the Hispanic Voter Project's research efforts for the 2004 election.

Significant spending on Spanish-language television ads by Al Gore and George W. Bush in key battleground states in 2000, and the significant national attention paid to their efforts, helped contribute to the confidence in this advertising format that has led to this year's records. Candidates and consultants gained new insights into the importance of this specialized advertising in districts or states with close elections and a large number of Hispanic voters. While spending in 2000 was impressive during that year, the millions of dollars spent by individual candidates this year far outpaced what the presidential candidates spent. Political media consultants interviewed for this report unanimously agreed that spending on Spanish-language ads in the 2004 Democratic presidential primaries and the general election will outpace 2002 despite a new campaign finance law limiting the use of soft money that went into effect after Election Day.

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