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Subject: : Equipo Estrada

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P6/b6

P6/b6

Before folks start wintering elsewhere, we would like to assemble the first string of Equipo Estrada for a face to face meeting on Friday at 2:15. At that time we will devise a new task list to hit the ground running on this nominee in the 108th Congress, which in real time is just a few days away. The meeting will take place at Dirksen 152.

Hope you can make it.

The article below, if you have not read it, indicates how Senator Allard communicated the Estrada nomination.

Special Report: Election 2002

By Taking Initiative, GOP Seized the Day

by John Berlau

Dec. 10-23, 2002

Insight on the News

Pundits predicted 2002 would be the first time the growing number of nonwhites in the "emerging Democratic majority" would put the Democratic Party over the top. Instead, Republicans won handily and both sides still are trying to figure how the demographics played in Peoria.

The usual task of figuring out which groups voted for what party and in which numbers has been made harder by the fact that the Voter News Service, which conducts national exit polls for the TV networks, announced it would not release this year's results because of flaws in the polling data. It may

be months before other postelection polls are released. Still, a consensus has emerged that the traditional Republican white voters were more motivated to come to the polls than typically Democratic blacks and Hispanics. The New York Times credits (or blames) "white, rural, Republican-leaning voters" with providing the margin of victory in Georgia

and other states.

If so, that's only half the story, say activists across the country who stumped for Republicans. It's certainly true that Republicans intensified the ground-war effort to get their traditional base to the polls (see "Message Received," Nov. 26-Dec. 9) - a fact that the establishment media are beginning to acknowledge after initial efforts to explain away the 2002 election results as a 9/11 fluke. But this same media has barely noticed that Republicans also made significant inroads into Democratic territory by taking the message directly to black and Hispanic voters.

This year, for the first time, the GOP did more than just showcase a few of its black and Hispanic faces. Its candidates campaigned in black and Hispanic neighborhoods and related media outlets with the same message they took to white voters. "It was a dialogue instead of a monologue," says Richard Nadler, a consultant to the Kansas City-based Council for Better Government, who produced pro-Republican issue ads on radio stations in 12 states.

One of the most dramatic examples of success from this outreach was the campaign of conservative incumbent Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.). Many polls taken just before the election, including those by the respected pollster John Zogby, showed Allard losing to his Democratic opponent, trial lawyer Tom Strickland. Yet Allard won by a five-point margin. How did this happen? Many say Allard's efforts to court his state's Hispanics made the difference. According to a poll by Fox News/Opinion Dynamics, Allard won 29 percent of the Hispanic vote. (Although not an exit poll, the Fox surveys were conducted by phone in 10 battleground states on the eve of the election and on Election Day. About 900 voters were polled in each state). This was a big increase over his showing among Hispanics in the 1996 election, and four points higher than President George W. Bush's share of the Hispanic vote in Colorado in 2000. And, according to the Fox poll, Hispanics comprised 10 percent of Colorado's electorate, making them a crucial voting bloc.

Observers credit both Allard's campaign and the Colorado Republican Party for getting their message to Hispanics. "In the past, we really didn't get out and tell people what we were doing for the Latino community," says Ada Diaz Kirby, a Denver public-relations executive who was hired to help the Colorado GOP with outreach efforts. "This time we went after it very aggressively. We did it in Spanish. We did it in English. We worked with the media, and we knocked on a lot of doors. We exposed our candidates a lot more. I think we did everything we could do just to get our message out."

Last February, Allard hired Denver consultant Juan B. Botero as director of strategic outreach. Allard put ads on Spanish-language radio and TV stations and in newspapers, and spoke at Hispanic churches and events. About a week before the election, the senator attended a mariachi concert where he was endorsed by the Christian band Mariachi Vasquez, a family of musicians popular in the region. The Sunday evening before the election, Allard and his wife went to the Iglesia del Cristo el Shadai, a large Hispanic evangelical Protestant church in Denver, where Allard spoke and visited with churchgoers for three hours. The speech was carried on local Hispanic radio.

Botero said that Allard stressed the traditional Republican issues of tax cuts and economic opportunity. "[Allard] made the point at events that he really appreciates the contributions of the Hispanic community in terms of culture and how much they contribute to Colorado's economy," Botero tells Insight. "[Allard's message on taxes] hit home quite a bit because, for the

most part in the Hispanic community, they're working two jobs or several jobs to stay afloat, and they know that they're paying too much in taxes.

We

emphasized quite a bit that families are working one out of every three years just to pay off their federal taxes." Allard also emphasized his support for Bush's proposed American Dream Downpayment Fund to help renters purchase their first home. When the Republican Party was attacked as being the party of the rich, Botero said the Allard campaign and the Colorado GOP would counter, "Did you come to this country to be poor?"

Allard also stressed the blocking by Senate Democrats of Miguel Estrada, the

president's nominee for a federal judgeship and a highly respected Hispanic attorney. For more than a year, the Senate Judiciary Committee had refused to give Estrada even a hearing. "Here's a guy that comes in from Honduras when he's a teen-ager, knows no English, learns English, goes to Princeton and then to Harvard," Botero says. "We made it very clear that the only people opposing Miguel Estrada's nomination in the Senate were Democrats." Others who succeeded among Hispanics include Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who picked up 56 percent of the Hispanic vote, according to the Fox poll. While Florida has a high population of Republican-leaning Cuban-Americans, this was a 7 percent improvement from President Bush's exit-poll performance in 2000, meaning that Jeb Bush probably picked up a substantial portion of non-Cuban Hispanics as well. The victorious Texas Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate and governorship won between 33 and 35 percent of the Hispanic vote even though a Hispanic was running for governor as a Democrat.

And Colorado's Kirby says the conservative message wasn't compromised, just taken to more people. "Basically, our message is the same," she says. "It's just that we're starting to get better at telling people what we stand for and what we can help them with. We're going out in the street. I went to some of the poorest Hispanic neighborhoods and I knocked on doors. ... We always had the right message, but we just weren't getting the message out, and I think now we've gotten really aggressive in doing that."

This time, many Republican campaigns and issue groups also were aggressive in campaigning in black neighborhoods and reaching out to African-American media. For years, consultants have been telling Republicans that actively courting black votes was a waste of time. Since African-Americans vote so overwhelmingly for Democrats, they argued, better not to increase turnout by

stirring up the pot. But after two election cycles of ads on black radio implying Republicans were all but Klansmen, many activists say, they decided

that Republicans had to get their message out in the black media and in black neighborhoods. All sorts of Democratic ads calling Republicans racist ran in 1998 and 2000 on radio stations with mostly black audiences, predicting doomsday scenarios if Republicans won. One particularly strident ad featured the sound of cars dragging Texas lynching victim James Byrd and suggested that, as governor, George W. Bush was responsible for his death. This was despite the fact that Byrd's killers were caught promptly and sentenced to death during Bush's tenure.

Several GOP activists and campaigns decided that this year they not only wouldn't leave Democratic fear-mongering unchallenged, they would pre-empt it. In Kansas City, Republican activist John Altevogt, with Nadler and businessman John Uhlmann as consultants, formed the Council for Better Government (CBG) to launch a series of radio and TV ads directed to

African-Americans in 12 battleground states including Colorado, Missouri, Georgia and North Carolina. Running during popular radio programs such as the Tom Joyner Morning Show, the ads featured blacks criticizing the Democratic Party and praising GOP ideas.

"Before my kids were born, I was a Democrat, but soon I started to wonder," a black man said on one of the spots. "Our leaders called school choice a Republican conspiracy, but they sent their own children to private schools. Mine went to schools I chose, and Republican charter-school laws helped me do it. ... Democrats advised me to scorn wealth; Republicans taught me to get some. I'm the first member of my family to vote Republican, but I won't be the last."

Other ads from the CBG talked about how military readiness declined under Clinton, hurting black soldiers, and continued the theme that the Social Security system forces blacks to pay "reverse reparations" because many blacks die before they can collect it. The Republican GOPAC political organization stopped running spots such as these and disavowed responsibility under pressure from Democrats, but many admired the fact that

they dared lay it out straight.

Working with the CBG was Star Parker, a conservative black motivational speaker and Radio America commentator who is a former welfare mother. She recorded answering-machine messages talking about the parties' differences on abortion, education and Social Security.

Did these ads and other GOP outreach efforts to blacks work? Well, something clearly happened with the black vote. For instance, there were not the usual

number of black voters for Democrats that the Dems counted on to carry them in Missouri and the states of the old Confederacy, but the lack of exit-poll

data makes it hard to tell at this stage whether fewer turned out to vote or

a higher share voted for Republicans. The Fox poll does not show that the GOP got a higher share of the black votes in most of the states it surveyed.

Parker argues that, even if there was a lower black turnout, it still represents a victory of sorts because it shows Republican efforts helped convince blacks that Democrats are not the saviors they crack themselves up to be. In fact, a few days before the elections, John Judis, coauthor of the

much-heralded book *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, blasted the Republican ads in a *New Republic* article as part of "this year's GOP efforts to suppress the minority vote." But Parker counters that the ads never urged blacks not to vote, and that if blacks decided to stay home after learning the differences between the parties, this was an informed choice.

"Staying home on Election Day is a response," Parker tells *Insight*. "I want to stand against those who say we suppressed the black vote. We did not have

dogs, we were not moving polling places, we did not have hoods on our heads.

What we did was inform them of what Democrats represent, and they made a clear choice. They chose not to go to the polls and vote for Democrats."

Parker adds that the ads were a first step for Republicans. The black voters

who couldn't make themselves vote for Democrats this time should be ready

affirmatively to vote for the GOP in 2004, she says. Judging from the outreach efforts, individual campaigns and state parties agreed that the GOP

should be telling blacks what it has to offer. In the race for the U.S. Senate in Missouri, where many of the CBG ads were running, former Rep. Jim Talent campaigned in black neighborhoods and churches in his successful but very close race to unseat Democratic incumbent Jean Carnahan. He brought popular black Republicans such as his House colleague Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma to talk about his work on tax cuts for inner-city business districts and support for school choice.

Responding to those consultants who say Republicans only should spend resources on getting their traditional base, Talent campaign manager Lloyd Smith says no segment of voters can be written off. "The key is, yeah, you get your base out, but you don't ignore all the other elements of the voting

population," Smith tells Insight. "If you just write off a segment of the population, or even if you just write off a geographic area of a city or state, you're not doing the voters a service, and you're probably not doing the right political thing, either. This is a case where doing the right thing politically is also doing the right thing for the people who you're trying to represent."

Even in Georgia, where state party chairman Ralph Reed is credited with turning out white rural voters to vote GOP as never before, minority voters were not overlooked. Victorious Republican U.S. Senate candidate Saxby Chambliss and winning gubernatorial candidate Sonny Perdue campaigned in Hispanic neighborhoods, according to Sora Chavez McFarlane, the Hispanic outreach director for the Georgia Republican Party. And 300,000 brochures for blacks were sent out in which Eddie Slaughter, president of the Georgia chapter of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, touted Chambliss' efforts as a member of the House of Representatives in getting the U.S. Department of Agriculture to settle discrimination claims made by black farmers, state party spokeswoman Elizabeth Dewberry tells Insight.

And

Slaughter also touted Georgia Republicans for GOP ads on black radio stations.

Black farmers also may have played a role in former Republican Rep. Mark Sanford's defeat of incumbent Democratic governor Jim Hodges in South Carolina. As Insight previously reported, Hodges refused to speak out against a county "smart-growth" program backed by environmental groups such as the Sierra Club that had enraged black farmers by proposing to turn their

land into "preservation areas" that couldn't be developed (see "'Smart-Growth' Plan Riles Black Farmers," Sept. 16). Sanford had told Insight that he would protect private-property rights and opposed "the idea of government dictating who can basically do what with their land." He added

that if there are "shenanigans" with local governments "trying to downzone land so they can buy it cheaper, I would say that that's not right and try to take corrective measures." After Insight's story brought the issue to national attention, Sanford met with representatives of the farmers as part of an aggressive outreach effort

to court blacks. Although Fox News did not poll the South Carolina race, the

general consensus is that Hodges did not get the number of black votes he needed either because fewer African-Americans turned out or more voted Republican.

LaVerne Neal, who owns land in a proposed "preservation area" and whose son, Joe Neal, is a Democratic state representative and chairman of the Legislative Black Caucus, tells Insight that Sanford talked to her for 20 minutes on the phone and that she was very impressed. "He touched on a lot of things I was interested in," she recalls. "I think he'll make a good governor if he sticks to what he said he was going to do." Mrs. Neal, 72 and a lifelong Democrat, would not reveal to Insight for whom she ended up voting. And that, after all, is every citizen's prerogative.

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