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March 2, 2007

Immigration and the 2006 Elections

OVERVIEW

Social Justice organizations across the region have been confronted with increasingly emboldened anti-immigrant forces that attempt to divide progressives and win over moderates. Their attempt is based in part on blaming U.S. immigrants for the economic hardships many face in this country due to right wing policies that deepen the divide between the rich and poor. While promoting an international economic policy that exploits workers across the globe, decreasing funding nationally for public services, and capitalizing on the fear of terrorism to erode civil liberties, many policy makers and political forces have weaved in an overtly xenophobic agenda in an attempt to divert the public's attention by pointing fingers at new immigrants. Progressive organizations and individuals know that this is not a zero-sum fight for resources, services, and jobs, and that fences don't protect us from our own international policy. There are many groups working to take back the terms of the debate, focusing on human dignity, family and community, not profit, individualism and borders. Unfortunately, the electoral arena exacerbates the disconnect between social justice frameworks and the way issues are framed politically. It forces us onto a broader playing field where community struggles and justice issues become polling numbers, Party strategies, and talking points.

This report aims to share observations on how a number of candidate races in November 2006 played out across the western states on the issue of immigration. The intent is to highlight key messages disseminated during the elections, share stories from across the region, and compare some of those trends to the national political scene around immigration. In looking at these races we see an enormous amount of repetition of sound-bites and bullet points, but no strict adherence to Party lines. These fault lines within the Parties demonstrate the challenges of politicizing a complex issue, and resulted in the failure of either Party in gaining a clear advantage through politicization.

The messages crafted to speak to potential voters around immigration as an election issue are disconnected from the issues actually facing immigrants living in this country. As groups move forward with their social justice campaigns in 2007 there may be ways to bridge that gap and reconnect policy with the struggles on the ground. Many groups in the region are working to secure access to education regardless of immigration status and primary language, to assure worker protections and access to health care, and to reconcile the reality of those who are here in the U.S. with the limitations of current immigration law. Yet, none of these issues could be discussed seriously in this year's electoral climate.

While immigrant groups and their allies are working to change the terms of the debate at the grassroots level to enable a discussion rooted in human dignity and progressive values, they are also confronted with the reality of the political scene in this country. The

goal of providing an overview of a cross-section of races from this past fall is not to remind us of the hateful language we heard in debates and TV ads, but to try to sift through the language and break down the messages to see where there may be ways to link a grassroots social justice framework to the policy agendas of elected officials. This paper aims to serve as a tool to support groups in that endeavor as they develop strategies for policy advocacy.

METHODOLOGY

Near the end of the campaigns leading up to the elections of November 2006, information was collected from races from around the region in which immigration issues had become a point of debate. The hope was to be able to draw some connections between how immigration played out as a factor in the races, how the media addressed the issues, and how the tone pre-election would influence the tone of immigration discussions post-election. The sources consulted, in order to be able to pull out some of the main messages that were behind the attacks and promises the candidates were making regarding immigration issues, were predominantly campaign websites, campaign ads, and local and state media sources. The report will include an overview of how the races played out in various states, presented initially with very little commentary or analysis, and then will conclude with a few observations for the reader to consider.

THE 11 RACES MONITORED ARE LISTED BELOW:

<i>State/Office</i>	<i>Incumbent</i>	<i>Challenger</i>	
WA/ U.S. Congressional Dist.8	Reichert* (R)	Burner (D)	
WA/ U.S. Congressional Dist.5	McMorris* (R)	Goldmark (D)	
WA/ Senate	Cantwell* (D)	McGavick (R)	
ID/ U.S Congressional Dist.1			Sali* (R)/Grant (D)
WY/ U.S. Congress at Large	Cubin* (R)	Trauner (D)	
UT/ U.S. Congressional Dist.3	Cannon* (R)	Burrige (D)	
OR/ U.S. Congressional Dist.5	Hooley* (D)	Erickson (R)	
OR/ Governor	Kulongoski* (D)	Saxton (R)	
OR/ Statehouse Rep Dist.29	Riley* (D)	Rilling (R)	
NV/ Governor			Titus(D)/Gibbons*(R)
NV/ U.S. Congressional Dist.3	Porter* (R)	Hafen (D)	

*indicates winner

WASHINGTON

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: Incumbent- Richert* (R), Challenger- Burner (D)

We'll begin with Washington's 8th district U.S. congressional race, where the candidates used the language of bringing people out of the shadows, distinguishing between terrorists and immigrants, and supporting a legal avenue for immigrants to fill an

economic need. Darcy Burner, the Democratic challenger, wanted to address immigration in a way that was “fair, practical, safe, and grounded in the rule of law.” She supported increasing border security and surveillance technology, enforcement of existing law, and a crackdown on employers who hire undocumented workers. She thought undocumented workers should be encouraged to “come out of the shadows” by creating a path to legal residency that would be dependent upon a willingness to “work hard, pay taxes, obey the law, and go to the back of the line behind those who have been waiting for legal immigration.” Republican incumbent Dave Reichert explained on his website that we must “encourage undocumented individuals to get right with our government and register” so we can distinguish between those who are here with intent to do harm and those who are here “to better their lives and that of their families.” He went on to depict immigration as a necessary component of economic growth.

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: Incumbent- McMorris* (R), Challenger- Goldmark (D)

Peter Goldmark, the Democratic challenger in Washington’s 5th district Congressional race, was supportive of an immigration plan that would provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers in the U.S. on the condition that they be held accountable for paying taxes and penalties due prior to citizenship. Kathy McMorris, the Republican incumbent, along with voicing her support for border security, recognized the country’s economic interest in immigration, stating on her website the need to “keep our economy and workforce competitive in the 21st century by establishing a legal workforce.”

U.S. SENATE RACE: Incumbent- Cantwell* (D), Challenger- McGavick (R)

Also in Washington, Senator Maria Cantwell, supports tighter border security, but does not believe that building a fence is the solution or sends ‘the right message.’ She was attacked by her Republican opponent, Mike McGavick, for allegedly supporting extending Social Security benefits to undocumented workers.

IDAHO

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: Open Seat- Sali* (R), Grant (D)

Larry Grant, the Democrat from Idaho’s 1st district U.S. congressional race, saw employment as the major pull for migration to the U.S. His proposal, posted on his website, for creating a legal workforce involved requiring employers to certify that they are “paying a fair wage, that they cannot find an American to do the job, that the employee and ‘his’ family will not go on welfare while here, and that they will go home when the job is done.” He added that establishing a legal workforce would enable law enforcement to concentrate on border security, not immigrants. Republican Bill Sali also explained on his website the importance of employer sanctions and attempted to distinguish between immigrants and “the terrorists” who are not coming here for education, health care, nor jobs. He even states his support of “legal immigration in reasonable numbers,” pending immigrants’ pursuit of his model of “Americanization,” first proving that they have “learned our language and civics, are willing to obey our laws, and will contribute to our country,” as his own father once did.

WYOMING

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: Incumbent- Cubin* (R), Challenger- Trauner (D)

Gary Trauner, the Democratic challenger in Wyoming's U.S. Congress-at-Large race, also stressed the importance of his family's history of immigration from Russia and Germany. He noted that in the U.S. "our strength is built on our acceptance of people from all countries and their positive contributions to our communities and way of life." Trauner posted an extensive explanation of his position on immigration on his website.

Unlike the statements of his peers who ran for office in the region, Trauner openly acknowledged the complexities of the issue. He went beyond simply indicating complexity into actually explaining some of the interconnected global and local influences and impacts. He cautioned against 'demonization' and simplistic arguments, and added, "as long as there is a demand in this country for the cheap labor that illegal immigrants provide, coupled with poverty and miserable living conditions in other countries, no fence controls will completely stop people determined to have a better life in the richest country in the world." He even linked the disparities causing the push-pull to the relationships between the U.S., multi-national corporations, underdevelopment, and the race to the bottom. As part of his proposed "integrated effort" on immigration, he would have liked to see the U.S. have a positive influence on the standard of living in other countries, and the inclusion of provisions such as worker protections and environmental standards in future trade agreements.

Trauner's lost his race to Barbra Cubin, who did not address immigration directly on her website, but within a two sentence section on border security stated, "On September 11th the terrorists used our own flawed immigration laws against us to help them murder thousands of American citizens." This statement mirrors her history as a Congresswoman. She did not vote on the Immigration Law Enforcement Act of 2006, but did vote for the Secure Fence Act of 2006, a 2005 Border Security bill, and has supported the interests of the U.S. Border Control on 83 percent of her votes in 2005-2006 (Project Vote Smart). As quoted in the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, at an immigration forum she voiced her support of a border fence, stating "we can have no effective policy until we close the borders." The potential upside is that this was a very close race and Cubin may need to be reminded of how many of her constituents voted for the candidate with the most progressive view of immigration out of all eleven races studied for this report.

UTAH

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: Incumbent- Cannon* (R), Challenger- Burridge (D)

The strict enforcement language wasn't found just in regard to border security, but also around employment and employer sanctions. Christian Burridge, the Democratic challenger for Utah's 3rd district U.S. congressional seat, equated comprehensive reform with strict enforcement of illegal hiring practices. He endorsed cutting off the income source of undocumented workers, followed by a new border patrol program. He believed bringing unlawful activity out in the open would ease the border regulation and enforcement efforts. He did not label anyone as 'illegal' or criminal, but instead placed

the blame on 20 years of operating under a broken system. He made a statement on his website that some immigrants should be deported and some should apply for guest worker programs, but doesn't explain specifics as to who would do what or how this would happen. He didn't advocate for citizenship for all, but did think that 'some' should be able to petition for a change in status "as long as they pay a fine, enter the status adjustment process at the back of the line, learn English, and take the necessary classes to become citizens" (Deseret News 10/15/06). He wanted employers to have access to Internet-based technology to verify the identity of those they hire.

His Republican opponent, incumbent Chris Cannon, agreed that employers should be provided with tools to check the legal status of potential employees, and added that the government should accept legal and financial responsibility for enforcement of such an employer verification system.

Although some of the Cannon's language differs from that of Burridge, there are many shared views. Cannon actually more clearly outlined his stance on the issues, which could be helpful for groups who may see him as a potential target or ally. Beyond border security and technology, Cannon spoke of putting laws and policies in place that would enable immigrants to legally "help us meet the demands of a growing economy." Cannon called for a more workable, transparent process for people to enter legally, not just for low-wage jobs, but for high-tech positions as well. As for those already here, they would be allowed legal re-entrance after paying a fine and exiting the country in an 'orderly' manner.

OREGON

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: Incumbent- Hooley* (D), Challenger- Erickson (R)

Unlike Chris Cannon in Utah, the Republican challenger in the race for Oregon's 5th district U.S. congressional seat, Mike Erickson, said he believed immigrants should do the jobs that they came here to do (instead of higher paying construction jobs for example). While attending an anti-immigrant rally sponsored by Oregonians for Immigration Reform (Oregon's anti-immigrant group), Erickson attacked his opponent, Democrat Darleen Hooley, for co-sponsoring legislation that would "allow illegal immigrants to receive Social Security benefits."

GUBERNATORIAL RACE: Incumbent- Kulongoski* (D), Challenger- Saxton (R)

In the Oregon gubernatorial race, challenger Ron Saxton began his primary race taking an extreme hard-line anti-immigrant stance. He even stated his opposition to access to public education for undocumented children. He later backed off from this stance, but remained anti-immigrant during the general elections and vociferously supported implementation of the REAL ID Act at the state level. He attacked incumbent Ted Kulongoski, claiming that under Kulongoski's governorship undocumented workers had been able to obtain driver's licenses and use them to cast fraudulent votes. The Secretary of State, Bill Bradbury, quickly condemned these allegations and affirmed that in 15 years of general elections and more than 10 million votes cast, there were only 10 investigations into citizenship and only 2 of those 10 were prosecuted (The Oregonian 10/3/06). Saxton's

accusations were part of a series of fear-based TV ads and radio spots warning of the “175,000 illegal immigrants” in Oregon and the money that the state has spent on their behalf. His campaign sent out a mailer depicting shadowy figures looking as though they are trying to cross a fence with the headline, ‘Illegal immigration: A Serious Problem Facing Oregon.’ His website stated that as governor he would stop state government from issuing drivers licenses to ‘illegal immigrants’ and that he believed Oregon should comply with Federal identification standards, “The law is the law and if laws are on the books they ought to be enforced.”

When Saxton was asked to answer questions as to the possibility of his employing undocumented workers on a farm he co-owned through the ‘90s, he responded by saying he had no knowledge of the immigration status of the employees working on the farm at that time, in part because he claims to not have been involved in hiring, but also because, in his mind, immigration just wasn’t an issue in the ‘90s. He attempted to refocus his critique on government, not farmers, “I’m in favor of farm labor... I’m in favor of people immigrating to this country. I’m in favor of having it done in a way that’s legal.” (The Oregonian 10/12/06). Kulongoski’s campaign manager responded to Saxton’s hypocrisy stating, “Just about anybody knows people aren’t coming here for driver’s licenses. They’re coming here for jobs” (The Register-Guard 10/15/06).

Kulongoski had not made immigration a campaign issue initially, and had nothing posted on his website, but responded to Saxton’s attacks with fear. His campaign quickly sent out a mailer, which, instead of affirming existing laws and human rights, outlined Kulongoski’s hard-line stance/record on immigration. Although Kulongoski had once called the President’s plan to deploy National Guard troops to the Mexican border a “political gesture that would do little to resolve immigration issues” (Statesman Journal article quoted on democraticgovernors.org), he listed “Troops to the Border, Crackdown on Driver’s Licenses, Supports Increased Employer Sanctions, and Leading the Anti-Fraud Effort” as his immigration record accomplishments. Even though he attempted to sound tough in response to Saxton, the small print on the flyer doesn’t reveal any drastic changes in his policy. He claims to support stepping up enforcement of employer sanctions and that Oregon will comply with Federal ID laws.

STATE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE RACE: Incumbent- Riley* (D), Challenger- Rilling (R)

Also in Oregon, Terry Rilling, the Republican Challenger in the race for State Representative of House District 29, drew upon the driver’s license issue, stating that he would like to pass a law that keeps people from getting driver’s licenses without proof of citizenship. His more general statement on immigration was, “I have nothing against Hispanics or any other race, I have a problem with things that are hurting our country” (The Oregonian 10/19/06). Chuck Riley, the Democratic incumbent, stood by the Secretary of State’s study that found undocumented immigrants weren’t voting, and voiced his support of increased penalties for coyotes, helping employers identify illegal immigrants and penalizing those who hire them. He sent out a mailer on immigration advocating ‘common-sense solutions,’ specifically through ‘tougher penalties for illegal immigration’ and by ‘securing our nation’s borders.’ Riley saw immigration as primarily a national problem, but voiced interest in working locally to ‘make it easier for employers

to know a worker's legal status and for law enforcement officials to deport people convicted of crimes if they are not in the country legally' (The Forest Grove News-Times 11/1/06). Riley may be interested in learning more on the dangers of racial profiling and local level police enforcement of immigration law.

NEVADA

GUBERNATORIAL RACE: Open Seat- Gibbons* (R), Titus (D)

Both law enforcement and ID issues have blurred the lines between state level and federal level immigration issues. The final state level race monitored was the gubernatorial elections in Nevada. In an e-mail response to an inquiry as to her stance on immigration issues, Democratic candidate Dina Titus responded to harsh attacks from her Republican opponent, Jim Gibbons, regarding statements she had made involving access to driver's licenses. She wrote, "I believe that we must enforce the laws currently on the books. In Nevada, undocumented people cannot get driver's license or Medicaid." After attacking Titus' immigration stance, Gibbons found himself in a similar situation to that of Ron Saxton when he was accused of employing an undocumented housekeeper, even though he himself had voted for employer sanctions.

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL RACE: Incumbent- Porter* (R), Challenger- Hafen (D)

Tessa Hafen, Democratic challenger in Nevada's 3rd district Congressional race, was vocal in her opposition to allowing undocumented immigrants to receive Social Security. She was attacked heavily by her opponent, Republican incumbent Jon Porter, but responded with heightened ferocity, calling his ads sleazy, false, deceptive, and comically misleading. She labeled him 'Pinocchio Porter' and Bush's 'Yes-man'.

In an October 5th, 2006 press release she fired back with:

"On Jon Porter's watch, illegal immigrants are free to continue storming America's borders and employers who hire illegal workers are not penalized despite breaking the law... Unlike my opponent, I will fight for policies that not only secure America's borders but that also address illegal immigrants already here in this country who are taxing our community's services and resources. And I will make sure that employers are held accountable for hiring illegal immigrants and that our laws are enforced."

Then, on October 30th, she added:

"Under the strict reforms I support, no one here illegally gets a free ride or any guarantees. Those who want to stay in our country will face tough penalties, including thousands of dollars in fines and a requirement that they know English."

Hafen attacked Porter for supporting Bush's guest worker program and amnesty, or what she termed a 'so-called path to citizenship.' Although Porter did vote recently for the Immigration Law Enforcement Act of 2006 and the Secure Fence Act of 2006, from 1995 to 2004 he supported the interests of the American Immigration Lawyers Association in 71 percent of his votes (Project Vote Smart).

REFLECTIONS

Post-election analysis and polling show that Democrats may have been more successful this election cycle in winning back the Latino vote after a rightward swing in 2004, but immigration policy does not affect only Latino voters. Border security issues focus predominantly on the Mexico-U.S. border, but the motivation behind the push to build a fence to keep out those who don't fit the definition of a 'real American' affects people of color, immigrants, allies, and anyone who has been or could at some point fit into policy makers' definition of 'the other'.

Although there was a whole gamut of anti-immigrant positioning, few candidates spoke to human rights values or how the rights of all people, regardless of citizenship status, are guaranteed in the Constitution. Campaign literature and commercials played into racist stereotypes and fears. From mailers depicting shadowy figures climbing fences to TV ads with ominous voiceovers and images alluding to overpopulation and an out of control 'storming' of the borders, it was hard to avoid exposure to the tone of white fear of 'the other.'

Candidates from both Parties attempted to define a "good-American" or a "real American" as a hardworking, family oriented, law-abiding, tax paying individual with an understanding of U.S. civics and English. As we have seen with other wedge issues, the fact that the above definition does not describe many people living in this country has no bearing on politicians' agenda of upholding it as a "norm." Anyone who did appear to fit that definition of a "real American" was to become the scapegoat for a struggling middle class that has been marginalized by a globalized economy and the Conservative economic agenda.

FALSE DICHOTOMIES

One of the ways immigrants are depicted as outsiders is through the 'tax-payer burden' lens. The strategy is to divide those who feel the burden of paying taxes from those who are in need of the social services funded through taxes. The main false assumption in this claim is that immigrants do not pay taxes and that they receive a disproportionate share of benefits. Even so, many candidates from across the country adopted this lens and incorporated it into their campaign strategy.

Tessa Hafen in Nevada, Darleen Hooley in Oregon, and Maria Cantwell in Washington, were all accused of wanting to award Social Security benefits to undocumented immigrants. This allegation was widespread across the country. Factcheck.org counted at least 29 Republican ads accusing Democrats of wanting to "give Social Security benefits to illegal immigrants," even though "nobody's proposing paying benefits to illegals, not until and unless they become U.S. citizens or are granted legal status" (factcheck.org). The October 10th article "Republican Campaign Theme Debunked: Social Security for Illegal Immigrants" cited the McGavick/Cantwell race as one example, and followed up on Jon Porter's allegations in Nevada. When contacted by factcheck.org to substantiate the claims made in ads stating that Hafen supported "giving Social Security to immigrants for work they did illegally," Porter's campaign cited a September 21st debate

in which Hafen said, “As far as immigration; that was a tough bill in the House that would’ve made illegal immigrants felons. I support what President Bush and the Senate have tried to do.” The article goes on to explain that Porter himself had endorsed parts of the same bill and was quoted in the Las Vegas Sun saying, “I support looking at options at some point for the 12 million people living in the shadows” (factcheck.org). Maybe this session Porter will be inclined to build on this statement and explore those options, as he is the only one in the three races noted above to use the debunked Social Security line of attack and win his election; an election in which his opponent took the strongest ‘tough on immigration’ stance of all the Democratic candidates monitored for this report.

The reality of immigrants as a necessary workforce came out during the elections in a very personal way for some candidates. Both Jim Gibbons and Ron Saxton may have personally benefited from immigrant workers, documented or otherwise. Saxton did not win his bid for Governor of Oregon, but many of the Republican candidates who were successful (i.e. Sali, Cannon, Reichert) did acknowledge the economic advantages of an immigrant work force. It’s true that the U.S. has a history of guest worker programs that exploit workers and place them in a position of indentured servitude with the expectation of a quick departure when they are no longer seen as cost-effective. A new guest worker program does not address the full range of social inequities facing the immigrants in this country, but a recognition of the economic influence of the immigrant population by these politicians may be a step towards a comprehensive immigration package that is at least broader than some of the ‘enforcement only’ rhetoric that came out during the campaigns.

ELECTORAL POLITICS

Gibbons and Saxton weren’t the only candidates who were confronted with their realities intersecting with their policy proposals. Congressman Steve Chabot in Ohio was turned away from the polls when his Ohio driver’s licenses did not qualify as proper identification. South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford was similarly turned away on his first attempt to vote, also due to an address discrepancy on his driver’s license. Closer to our region, the daughter of Colorado State Senator Andy McElhan was denied her learners permit when the DMV refused to accept her U.S. passport as proof of citizenship. The attempt to link voter-fraud allegations and security/anti-terrorism efforts to immigration has resulted well known erosions of civil liberties and now a new nightmare of ambiguity as the deadline for implementation of the Federal REAL ID Act nears.

REAL ID is just one component of a myriad of legislation effecting immigrant rights and justice. The complexity and intricacy of immigration boxed into a legislative framework has underscored the difficulty of developing clear concise messaging by either side of the political aisle. Immigration has, in part, failed to yield clear results as wedge issue due to the way in which the framing of the issue has divided both Parties. For example, on the right, nativists and those with certain business interests disagree, and on the left, immigrant right’s advocates and certain sectors of labor disagree. There are many common themes and trends around the way immigration was addressed by candidates throughout the region but there are no clear lines dividing the political Parties. In other

words, while one might think that Republicans were always hard-line and Democrats liberal, when it comes to immigration policy, Party is not a predictor of an individual candidate's stance on immigration. With such an intricate combination of local, national, international, social, economic, and political issues reduced to the political term 'immigration reform' and converted into thirty second ads and flyer bullet points, it was still too complex for either Party to develop a succinct message to unite their base.

Both the Democratic and Republican Parties released polling information and strategy memos regarding the framing of immigration during the lead up to the elections emphasizing the popularity of a comprehensive approach. In the last couple of years we've seen the term 'Comprehensive Reform' adopted by various players in the political debate on immigration, but at this point it seems to have come to mean, in the political arena, any policy approach broader than border security.

In an article outlining how the Democratic Party could win over moderates while supporting progressive principles, Jim Kessler, the Vice President for Policy at Third Way (a Strategy Center for Progressives www.third-way.com) explains how immigration differs from previous wedge issues and proposes that Democrats advocate immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship. The goal of "Flanking the Immigration Wedge" was to give guidance to progressive elected leaders and candidates who wanted "to preserve their Hispanic base but feared alienating middle-class white voters in the process," in essence, bridging the potential gap between these groups that a wedge issue would create. His insight into how immigration differs from other wedge issues that have been used in the past is that it is "not a pretend issue." The example he provides is "partial birth abortion," which affects "at most 8 out of every 10,000 abortions." He describes this as an issue that may have symbolic meaning to many Americans, but no practical meaning in the number of abortions that occur each year. He saw immigration as affecting only border communities at the time of the last major immigration debate in politics in 1986, but sees immigration as an influence in almost all communities today. He says voters are torn: they believe undocumented immigrants to be "hard working, decent people" and want them to have the rights that come with citizenship, but they also believe these same people to be "lawbreakers" and "a burden to taxpayers." He suggested candidates focus on fairness to taxpayers and earned citizenship through paying back taxes and a fine, while emphasizing that immigrants are here to work, not for government benefits.

A Republican Party memo in May of 2006 stated that polling showed the public in strong support of a comprehensive approach to immigration reform emphasizing both security and compassion. The three policy reforms proposed in the memorandum consist of a border security component, a path for immigrants to lawfully and safely enter the U.S. to work, and a "compassionate, practical and equitable" way for undocumented immigrants currently residing in the U.S. to legally enter the system.

The polling and strategy work by both Parties at the national level influenced the messages of many candidates, but as the examples in this report demonstrate, so did many other factors. Regionally most of the states are closer to the Canadian border than

the Mexican border and most have a strong pull for immigrant workers in agriculture and technology. Still, within the region there are vast differences, between Wyoming and Nevada for example, so the local politics and the economic, demographic and geographic characteristics of the candidates' constituency also greatly influenced the shape of the debate and the issues discussed.

POST-ELECTIONS

The focus during a candidate's election turns to specific individuals and their success or failure to appeal to voters. After the heated rhetoric slips into the past, we are left with elected officials working together to implement policy during the legislative session. This setting can alter the tone of the debate, but it is in no way completely disconnected from the electoral process.

Although there was not as much success as some politicians had hoped in mobilizing their base through the use of anti-immigrant messaging, they did put the language out there and may be pushed by anti-immigrant groups to hold themselves accountable. Minority republican legislators in Oregon have already introduced a package of House bills titled the "2007 Sensible Immigration Reform Package: An Oregon Solution to an International Problem." Co-sponsor Kim Thatcher asked constituents to hold their elected officials accountable, referring to Democratic Candidates in the House and Senate who campaigned in 2006 with hard-line stances against "illegal" immigration (The Oregonian 2/9/2007). The bills introduced include proposals to give local police more authority in enforcing federal immigration laws, to adopt English as Oregon's official language, to comply with the federal REAL ID Act, to deny those without documented citizenship access to benefits other than those allowed by federal law, amongst others.

These proposals in Oregon demonstrate the connection between the themes and patterns highlighted from the elections and the debates and proposals to expect during the 2007 legislative session. The key arenas where campaigns against immigrants are playing out, or will most likely develop, are around services and benefits, including education and social security, language access, ID requirements, local and state level immigration law enforcement, employer sanctions, and citizenship.

Oregon is not the only state seeing or expecting proposals of anti-immigrant legislation. Immigration and immigration related battles are popping up across the region, from Larry Craig's 'Fugitive Operations Team' in Idaho¹ to (as of yet, unsuccessful) efforts in Utah² to repeal undocumented students' access to higher education. There has also been a surge in resistance across the country to state level implementation of the REAL ID Act. A handful of states³, including Wyoming, Utah, Montana, and Washington already have active legislation against REAL ID or are considering measures this session declining participation or urging Congress to overturn the law before the 2008 deadline. In Idaho⁴,

¹ Fox-12 News Boise, ID http://www.fox12news.com/Global/story.asp?S=5837119&nav=menu439_1

² Salt Lake City Weekly, January 18, 2007

³ Seattle Times, <http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl>, and USA today, http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20070131/a_realid31.art.htm

⁴ Post Register, <http://www.headwatersnews.org/pr.realID020507.html>

“Butch” Otter, who voted in favor of REAL ID in Congress, is so far keeping quiet on the issue as the state’s new governor.

There are new examples almost daily, and too many to cover each of them here. Hopefully groups from each state will have time to connect as the sessions wind down to compare stores and share successful strategies. The struggle for social justice and immigrant rights does not end with the legislative session, but it is a time when elected official are on the clock and constituents are mobilized. There may be enough momentum and interest with policy makers and constituents for immigrant groups and allies to make the most of the energy around these issues and be able to both be prepared for attacks while at the same time working to pass inclusive human dignity and social justice legislation.

NOTES ON FURTHER RESOURCES

You can find more information on immigration and the 2006 elections at www.immigration2006.org, along with links to outside articles and analysis of 15 gubernatorial and federal level races from across the country.

The websites of the Immigrant Solidarity Network and the National Council of La Raza have resources around policy and legislation (immigrantsolidarity.org and www.nclr.org).

Information on candidates voting records, public statements, interest group ratings and more can be found at www.vote-smart.org.

If looking for information on funding from anti-immigrant groups, immigration is a relatively 'new' issue for groups who do campaign contribution analysis, but the Federal Election Commission (www.fec.gov) does have this information available if you know the Political Action Committee of the group you are looking for.

Opensecrets.org offers clear, organized information on campaign funding by candidate, contributor, and issue (although immigration is not yet specifically listed as one of their issues). For state level races, try www.followthemoney.org.

Most groups openly list their endorsements, although that does not necessarily translate into financial support. The FEC site did not show that the PAC of FAIR (the country's leading anti-immigrant policy institute www.fairus.org), United States Immigration Reform PAC (www.usirp.com), had contributed in 2006 to any of the candidates monitored for this report, but their website did clearly list endorsement of Sali in Idaho, Erickson in Oregon, McMorris and Reichert in Washington, Cubin in Wyoming, and Porter in Nevada (The Oregon group, Oregonians for Immigration Reform also openly endorsed Saxton and Rilling).

Center for New Community provides maps and contact information for state and local anti-immigrant organization at www.buildingdemocracy.org. They also released an article recently (January 1st, 2007) citing the Minutemen as major contributors to anti-immigrant candidates, and noted a shift in their focus from border watch to policy with their two PACs.

If interested in a closer look at the Republican memo on polling and the Third Way's article for Democrats, they are accessible through the following links:
www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/06preelection/kessler.php - (dem)
www.westernstatescenter.org/ImmigrationMemo.pdf - (rep)

Further analysis of the framing of immigration by progressives and conservatives can be accessed through: <http://www.rockridgeinstitute.org/research/lakoff/luntz>