



Politico: Judy Chu leader in race for Hilda Solis seat

By Dan Abendschein on January 7, 2009 12:42 PM

The race to replace incoming Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis in the 32nd District has caught the attention of the national politics website **Politico.**, which argues that Judy Chu is the leading candidate in the race.

The reason? Politico suggests that the many Latino politicians who may run will split the Latino vote, leaving the 20 percent of Asians in the district to vote for Chu. Gloria Romero has said she will run, and Ed Hernandez and Gil Cedillo have both said they are interested.

The deciding factor could end up being the white non-Hispanic vote, says Politico:

The non-Hispanic white vote -- roughly 15 percent of the population -- is concentrated in the eastern part of the district and looms as the wild card. What I don't get though, is if Politico is correct that people will vote along racial lines, how does it account for how Chu would win the race in a runoff? The process will be an open primary, which is where the Latino vote would split, but the Latino with the most votes would face Chu in a runoff, assuming she did not get a majority.

Also, what if people don't vote along racial lines? Politico considers the possibility (even though it undermines the basic thesis of the article):

Andre Pineda, a Democratic consultant in Southern California, said racial allegiances are not as strong as they might seem.

"I don't think it's so much ethnicity as it is politics," he said. "This is a formerly white, working-class district that became Latino and somewhat Asian."

In a related note, another candidate has announced his intentions to run for the seat, though he is an unknown in the race. His name is Emanuel

Pleitez, and he has been involved in the Obama-Biden transition team. From his press release:

Emanuel Pleitez was born and raised in the Eastside of Los Angeles. He graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in El Sereno and earned his B.A. from Stanford University. Pleitez currently serves as a member of the Obama-Biden Transition Team for the Treasury Department. He previously worked in the offices of then-Los Angeles City Councilmember Antonio Villaraigosa and under U.S. Senators Tom Daschle and Hillary Clinton on the Senate Democratic Steering and Coordination Committee. In the private sector, Pleitez has worked as a Financial Analyst in the Securities Division at Goldman Sachs and currently resides in El Sereno.

UPDATE: Ed Hernandez will not run for the seat, and has endorsed Chu. More on this tomorrow.

UPDATE II: I have been corrected (see comments). The primary system works whereby the top Democratic will take on the top vote-getting Republican (if there is one). That means if Chu can be top Democratic (possibly by splitting the Latino vote) she will easily beat the Republican. If there is no Republican, Chu wins straight out without a majority, no runoff necessary.