

Romero's in Cong-32 Exit Clears the Way for Chu-Cedillo Match Up

By David Dayen d-day

I have to admit that this is kind of unexpected. Not only did State Sen. Gil Cedillo announce his intention to run for Congress in the seat soon to be vacated by incoming Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, but Gloria Romero, who was widely expected to run for the seat, abruptly decided to bow out, endorsing Cedillo and announcing her intention to run for State Superintendent of Public Instruction instead. Here's a bit from Romero's statement:

I have evaluated the wonderful opportunities before me and have chosen to listen to my heart.

My passion is education. I understand that education is the civil rights issue of our time -- the great equalizer in America . My commitment -- particularly now as the Chair of both the powerful Senate Education Committee and Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee on Education -- is to lead the Senate's effort to transform and hold accountable our state's public education system. It is for this reason that I have chosen to decline to run for Congress and to pursue my dream of becoming California's next Superintendent of Public Instruction [...]

I endorse Senator Cedillo and look forward to working with him to continue the "change we can believe in" both in California and Washington in these troubling times.

And here's a bit from Cedillo's:

State senator Gilbert Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) today confirmed his intention to run for the 32nd congressional seat being vacated by Rep. Hilda Solis, the Obama administration choice for Secretary of Labor.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for Latinos and the working people of East Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley. Hilda Solis has been a strong leader on labor and economic issues for the 32nd District. As a candidate I seek to continue that focus, creating a competitive workforce, securing access to affordable healthcare and

investment into public safety and transportation," shared Cedillo.

This changes the calculus of this race a bit. Gloria Romero represented most of this district in the State Senate. Gil Cedillo actually does not. In fact, Judy Chu has represented maybe more of this area than Cedillo has. Chu has already grabbed the endorsements of local Assemblymen Kevin DeLeon and Ed Hernandez. And if more Hispanics join the field, that could certainly chip away at Cedillo's support among low-information voters. One of the Calderon brothers may still jump in. And Dante noted last week that [Emanuel Pleitez](#) may run.

This kind of makes [this astroturf piece](#) by Paul Hefner, playing down expectations that Chu could win in a divided race and playing up Romero's chances while disclosing midway through that he WORKS for Romero, look ridiculous in retrospect. (What's even funnier is the dueling astroturf comment in that piece from Judy Chu's former chief of staff.)

I would be careful with assuming that ethnic support is monolithic. The last special election we saw with an ethnic divide, in CA-37, was decided more because of strong labor support for Laura Richardson than identity politics, though it never stopped Richardson from trying to frame the entire race that way. Chu absolutely can garner support in Latino areas, as much as Cedillo can in Monterey Park. Labor's endorsement is going to mean a lot.

On the merits, I would say that Cedillo would certainly be a strong progressive with a particular interest in immigration policy, and Chu has a good background through the Board of Equalization on taxes and economics. Hopefully we'll have both of them on Calitics in the near future to discuss their candidacies.

(P.S. This [HuffPo article](#) about the new Progressive Change Campaign Committee suggests that they might play in CA-32. That ship has pretty much sailed, though if they got on board with Sen. Cedillo it may make some sense.

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