

May 19 Primary Set for Solis' Seat

By Rachel Kapochunas, CQ Staff

Voters in California's 32nd District will head to the polls May 19 to choose a successor to Democratic former Rep. [Hilda L. Solis](#), whom the Senate [confirmed last month](#) to serve as Labor Secretary.

Republican Gov. [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#) on Tuesday [set the special election](#) for July 14, which places the primary on May 19, in accordance with state law. The primary will coincide with a statewide special election in which California voters will cast ballots on [six propositions](#), including one to increase the state's "rainy day fund."

For the election to succeed Solis, candidates of all parties will run on a single ballot in the primary and if one candidate receives a majority, he or she will be declared the winner outright. If no candidate receives a majority, the top vote-getter from each party will advance to the special general on July 14.

But the primary is likely to determine the winner. The eastern Los Angeles-area district is heavily Democratic and voters last November supported [Barack Obama](#) over [John McCain](#) 68 percent to 30 percent. Republicans failed to field a candidate against Solis in her past three re-election contests.

Democrats [Judy Chu](#), chairwoman of the state Board of Equalization and state Sen. [Gil Cedillo](#) are [the front-runners](#) to succeed Solis. A third Democratic candidate, former Obama transition member [Emanuel Pleitez](#), is also running.

Cedillo and other Hispanics say there is a desire to continue Hispanic representation in the district. Solis, like Cedillo and Pleitez, is Hispanic.

The district is 62 percent Hispanic, 18 percent Asian and 15 percent white.

Chu, who is Asian-American, argues she possesses strong crossover appeal. She has amassed key endorsements from the labor community and touts her support from various local officials.

Republican businesswoman [Teresa Hernandez](#) has launched a campaign for the seat.