

d-day blog

CA-32: Competing Launch Parties

monday, march 16, 2009

Judy Chu followed Gil Cedillo's campaign kick-off with a kickoff of her own, and friend of Calitics Todd Beeton was there.

Judy Chu's event was held in a smaller venue than Cedillo's and had fewer attendees but had a few things going for it that Cedillo didn't. First was the visibility. Chu had bands of young people out on the street with signs cheering on Chu urging cars to honk in support. Also, while there was no member of congress on hand to tout Chu as Xavier Becerra did for Cedillo, Chu had a larger and more diverse group of local leaders speak on her behalf ranging from State Contoller John Chiang to Assemblymen Ed Hernandez and Mike Eng (Judy's husband) to Hilda Solis's sister Irma. While Cedillo spoke to a room full of primarily hispanic supporters (I'd say 90+%), the mix of Asian, hispanic and white faces there to support Judy and speak on her behalf was notable. While Cedillo is trying to tap into the majority hispanic population in the district (60% hispanic vs. 20% Asian), Judy Chu, having served on the Monterey Park City Council, in the Assembly and now on the Board of Equalization, already has a voting base in the district that spans all ethnic groups. Cedillo on the other hand has never represented any part of this district before.

Pretty interesting that Hilda Solis' sister not only showed up, but announced that "my whole family supports Judy Chu." The new Secretary of Labor isn't going to make an endorsement in this race, but that's about as close as it gets. And it's important, especially when combined with the Cal Labor Federation endorsement.

There's kind of a competition between who is the candidate of exclusion versus inclusion in this race. Chu says that she's the only one in the race from the district (that's not true; Emanuel Pleitez was born there, and Baldwin Park USD Board member Blanca Rubio lives there as well), and that a carpetbagger shouldn't be allowed to come in from out of town; Cedillo

clearly is using his ethnic identity to make the point that the candidate should be representative of "our community." Both are exclusionary messages.

Meanwhile, Chu levied the first attack of the campaign by highlighting a Roll Call story about Cedillo doing a Washington fundraiser at the offices of the C2 Group, a lobbying firm in DC. Their clients include Fannie Mae, Amgen, Comcast Corp., the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers and the American Beverage Association. What's more interesting about that fundraiser is that half a dozen Democratic Congressmembers are sponsoring it, including Rep. John Salazar (D-Colo.), chairman the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' political action committee. Will Cedillo get substantial CHC funds for this race?

It would be good to know where these candidates stand on the issues of the day, and a political campaign is a great way to make that known. There's a special election in the state on the same day as the primary - how do Chu and Cedillo stand on Prop. 1A? What about the AIG bonuses? At some point, it would be good to see the race turn to actual issues instead of sniping and exclusionary politics.