



GOP BEATS DEMOCRATS TO SPANISH-LANGUAGE AIRWAVES

Wall Street Journal Washington Wire
April 21, 2014

Republicans are beating their Democratic opponents to the Spanish-language airwaves in 2014, seeking to make early and positive impressions on the growing Hispanic community.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott on Monday became the fourth Republican gubernatorial candidate to announce a Spanish-language commercial, joining New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez and Republican nominees Bruce Rauner in Illinois and Greg Abbott in Texas. None of their opponents have begun advertising on television yet.

The ads from Mr. Scott and Ms. Martinez are biographical and share American Dream-like themes of support for entrepreneurship and small business. Mr. Abbott began advertising in Spanish even before he won the primary in early March with a spot featuring wife Cecelia Abbott, a granddaughter of Mexican immigrants. Mr. Rauner's Spanish-language ad last month said he would create jobs and improve schools and attacked Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn's leadership.

"You can expect to see many of our governors build their coalitions for re-election with multi-language ads and outreach," said Jon Thompson, a spokesman for the Republican Governors Association.

Mr. Scott's \$500,000 ad campaign signals an aggressive push for Hispanic voters. In his 2010 campaign, he didn't begin advertising in Spanish until October, and he spent about \$1 million total. In an unusual feat by a statewide Republican candidate, he narrowly carried the Hispanic vote, according to exit polls.

Mr. Scott, who isn't fluent in Spanish, speaks the opening line of the spot in Spanish before a narrator takes over. The ad doesn't mention his support for a bill that would allow the children of illegal immigrants to pay in-state college tuition rates. Mr. Scott's position on the bill, which also limits overall tuition hikes, represents a sharp reversal from his position in the 2010 GOP primary advocating a sweeping crackdown on illegal immigrants.

As the 2014 campaign progresses, Democrats are expected to try to maximize their traditional advantage with Hispanic voters by promoting comprehensive immigration reform.

There are roughly 20 House districts held by Republicans or up for grabs where Democrats think immigration could play a role in the 2014 campaign. A Democratic super PAC, House Majority PAC, ran Spanish-language ads last year targeting California Rep. Gary Miller, Colorado Rep. Mike Coffman and Nevada Rep. Joe Heck.

"Republican Congress's failure on this bipartisan priority will come back to haunt them this fall," said Rep. Steve Israel, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said in a written statement.