

GINGRICH BLASTS "FANTASY" ROMNEY IMMIGRATION POLICY

By Daniel Malloy
January 25, 2012

DORAL, Fla. – Newt Gingrich defended his immigration policy and declared his intent to win a majority of the Latino general election vote in an occasionally testy interview with Jorge Ramos, of Spanish-language network Univision, this morning.

Gingrich's chief rival for the Republican presidential nomination, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, is scheduled to appear this afternoon for Univision's candidate forum. Ramos asked Gingrich about Romney's use of the term "self-deportation" for some illegal immigrants in Monday's debate.

Gingrich linked his answer to Romney's newly released tax returns as he twisted the knife into his foe.

"I think you have to live in a world of Swiss bank accounts and Cayman Island accounts and automatic \$20 million income a year with no work to have some fantasy this far from reality," he said.

Gingrich, the former U.S. House Speaker from Georgia, is campaigning in Florida ahead of the state's Jan. 31 Republican primary, in which Latino voters are a key bloc – and both Gingrich and Romney both are courting them today in South Florida.

Ramos pressed Gingrich on his own immigration plan, which includes a path to legal status for illegal immigrants who have been here for 20-25 years. That stance has drawn some ire from conservative immigration hawks, but Ramos came from the opposite view, pointing out that Gingrich's plan would exclude most of the estimated 11 million people here illegally. Of the rest, Gingrich said, "I'd urge them to get a guest worker permit."

Gingrich pledged to reform the visa system – including giving an H1 visa to every immigrant with an advanced degree in science or technology.

On the DREAM Act, a long-pending bill that would give a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants who came here as children and go to college or serve in the military, Gingrich reiterated that he only supports the part that applies for the military. Romney in Monday's debate said he shared that view.

Ramos also broached Gingrich's marital infidelity, an issue that returned to the headlines last week in South Carolina when his second wife, Marianne, gave interviews in which she said Gingrich asked for an "open marriage."

At the time Gingrich was having an affair with his now-wife, Callista, while Gingrich helped lead the charge in the House to impeach President Bill Clinton for lying about an affair with a White House intern.

Ramos asked if it was "hypocritical" to attack Clinton "for doing the same thing."

Gingrich disputed the characterization.

"The fact is I've been through two divorces," Gingrich said. "I've been deposed both times, under oath. Both times I told the truth in the deposition. ... I know it's a felony. Bill Clinton, who is a lawyer, who is a Yale Law School graduate, he knew he was lying under oath. He knew it was perjury. He knew it was a felony."

Asked about his Cuba policy, Gingrich said he would not bomb or invade the Communist country but would take the same approach the U.S. and its allies took against the Soviet Union

"It's psychological warfare," Gingrich said. "You want to say to the younger generation of the dictatorship: 'You have no future propping up a dictatorship. You have a wonderful future if you're willing to become a democracy.'"

Ramos said a new Univision poll shows President Barack Obama, in a hypothetical general election matchup, taking 70 percent of the Latino vote to Gingrich's 22 percent.

Gingrich said a poll this early does not matter and said his goal would be to get a majority of the Latino vote in the general election, by stressing "values," job creation and Latin American policy.

"I have a hunch that by this fall we may do better than any Republican except Reagan," he said.