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## NEVADA GAMBLES ON NEW VOTER MOBILIZATION STRATEGIES FOR LATINOS AND WINS

***New Report from The Century Foundation Recommends  
Expanded Use and Assessment of GOTV Activities***

**New York, March 26** —In this year’s highly contested race for the presidency, Latino voters have received unprecedented media attention as a group that could hold the balance of the election in its hands. However, Latinos can only realize their potential to become a major force in American politics this election year and beyond if they participate in numbers commensurate with their dramatically increased presence in the population.

In a new report from The Century Foundation, Democracy Fellow Tova Andrea Wang looks at this year’s Nevada Democratic Caucus as a case study for how to mobilize Latino voters, who have historically had low participation rates in elections. In ***New Strategies for Latino Voter Mobilization: The Nevada Democratic Caucus as a Case Study***, Wang reviews and assesses the strategies pursued by Nevada’s Democratic Party to boost the participation of Latino voters throughout the state, but particularly in and around Las Vegas, where the vast majority of Latinos work and live. She reports that the party’s efforts seem to have paid off: some 20,000 Latinos participated in the caucus and Latinos comprised a much higher proportion of the electorate than in elections past. In the report she describes what transpired with respect to Latino voters and suggests ideas that advocates and academics might look at going forward to increase the participation of this historically marginalized group of voters.

Wang reports that the party employed a number of creative, nontraditional approaches for promoting voter registration, engagement, and education among Nevada’s Latino community. The strategies included:

- conducting voter outreach activities in places where Latinos work, as well as in businesses with a large Latino clientele, rather than relying solely on the usual door-to-door canvassing of homes;
- holding at-large caucuses in the Las Vegas hotels and casinos where many Latinos work;
- doing voter registration at Latino social gatherings and sporting events, where potential voters were in an enjoyable, relaxed environment, and even establishing a soccer team, “Los Democratas,” which played games in a major Latino league;
- holding several mock caucuses around the state—many in Spanish—to teach Latinos about the process and how to participate;
- creating a Spanish-language Web site to inform visitors about the caucus process;
- creating a Spanish-language telephone hotline, which was available in the weeks before the caucuses and on voting day; and
- using a Hispanic marketing firm rather than a political consulting firm to create materials uniquely targeted to the Spanish language audience.

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Wang recommends that a number of these practices be expanded to other states with significant Latino populations, particularly using the voters' workplaces as bases for mobilization activities and voting; mixing political outreach with social activities; and conducting educational "dress rehearsals" for voter participation, such as the mock caucuses held in Nevada.

Wang acknowledges that it is difficult to know if the relative success of these strategies employed in the Nevada Caucuses will ultimately result in long-term, increased participation by Latino voters, but she believes that the results were encouraging enough for others to look closely at the Nevada model and to replicate some of the activities. She concludes that there is still much work to be done to ensure that this population achieves its political potential, so that it is important to study success models. As the Latino voting bloc continues to increase, she writes, such analysis will be of enormous value to all key players in the political process.

*New Strategies for Latino Voter Mobilization* is the latest issue brief in a series about the 2008 primaries written by Tova Wang. This and other election related briefs can be downloaded from The Century Foundation Web site at [www.tcf.org](http://www.tcf.org) or its election policy site at [www.reformelections.org](http://www.reformelections.org). For more information or to arrange an interview with Wang, contact Christy Hicks at [hicks@tcf.org](mailto:hicks@tcf.org) or (212) 452-7723.

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