

For example, Morales' decision as Texas State Attorney General to end race considerations in admissions decisions, financial aid awards and tutoring support eliminated the aspirations for many Latino and African-American college applicants. It further depletes the state's resources for medical and legal professionals. Morales continues to justify his decision in terms of creating a race-neutral environment, but fails to consider that many colleges and universities continue to use admissions tests like the SAT, LSAT, and MCAT - instruments that many experts would argue are hardly race-neutral.

Yet for all his political experience and Harvard training, it seems rather unfortunate that Dan Morales has opted to embark on a strategy of character assassination rather than focus on key issues represented by the candidates. So far, Morales' practice of raising doubts about Sanchez's alleged money laundering activities and using his wealth to buy the election have proved ineffective. Key federal agencies cleared Sanchez of such allegations years ago, and Morales has yet to produce anything other than self-serving skepticism to prove his point.

Undoubtedly, the Republican Party is thoroughly enjoying the cockfight between the two Latino candidates, which may inadvertently lead to stronger support for their unopposed candidate, Gov. Rick Perry. But Gov. Perry cannot afford to get comfortable as the election draws near. Last-minute efforts by the governor to learn a few choice words in Spanish are not likely to help him overcome some key realities about Latinos in Texas, such as:

- Latinos voters are more likely to support a Latino candidate, especially a Democrat with the right message.
- State contracting trends for Latino businesses continue to be poor under Perry's watch.
- Gov. Perry has been reluctant to sign hate crimes legislation and to initiate reforms for increasing homeowners insurance rates, considered among the highest in the nation
- Gov. Perry would like to put an end to school funding equity, legislation that Latinos fought hard to enact in Texas.
- Gov. Perry refuses to raise taxes to improve teacher pay, although Latinos support tax increases for such purposes.
- Gov. Perry's unequivocal support for state-mandated student testing amid escalating Latino dropout rates, more hiring of teachers not certified to teach in their subject matter, and the tremendous barriers that students encounter in transferring from low-performing schools.