

7-8-1998

PRI Recaptures Chihuahua Governorship, Loses Race in Zacatecas to PRD

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "PRI Recaptures Chihuahua Governorship, Loses Race in Zacatecas to PRD." (1998). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/3934>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

PRI Recaptures Chihuahua Governorship, Loses Race in Zacatecas to PRD

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 1998-07-08

In key elections on July 6, the governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) recaptured the governor's seat in Chihuahua state from the conservative Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) but lost the gubernatorial race in Zacatecas to the center-left Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD). In a third election, the PRI scored an easy victory over its rivals in the gubernatorial election in Durango state.

The three elections initiated the 10 gubernatorial races scheduled for this year. Voters in the states of Aguascalientes, Veracruz, Puebla, Oaxaca, Tlaxcala, Tamaulipas, and Sinaloa will also choose new governors in elections scheduled for August, October, and November of this year. In the Chihuahua election, PRI candidate Patricio Martinez Garcia, a former mayor of Chihuahua city, took almost 50% of the statewide vote, compared with about 41% for the PAN's Ramon Galindo Noriega. State election authorities said only 50% of the state's voters participated in the election.

The PAN had wrested the Chihuahua governorship from the PRI in 1992, when the party's candidate was Francisco Barrio Terrazas, a popular former mayor of Ciudad Juarez. In sharp contrast to Barrio, Galindo was a weak campaigner and a lackluster candidate. In political advertisements, the PRI depicted Galindo, a former mayor of Ciudad Juarez, as a weak leader who failed to resolve a recent surge in crime and drug trafficking during his tenure in office.

Open primary said to benefit PRI candidate in Chihuahua

Meanwhile, Martinez also benefitted from his selection through an open primary, which contributed to strong participation by PRI rank-and-file members in the election. The selection of Martinez through a primary process was in stark contrast to the selection of PRI gubernatorial candidate Jose Antonio Olvera Acevedo in Zacatecas state. Olvera, who was appointed by the party leadership through the traditional "dedazo," lost the governor's race to PRD candidate Ricardo Monreal. Monreal, who had originally sought the PRI gubernatorial nomination, left the party when the PRI handed the nomination to Olvera (see SourceMex, 02/11/98).

Some political analysts said Martinez's victory in Chihuahua and Olvera's defeat in Zacatecas could force the PRI to totally abandon its system of appointing candidates in favor of a more democratic process before the presidential election in 2000. "In Zacatecas, the candidate was decided by the PRI leadership in Mexico City without any consultation with people in the state," said prominent political columnist Sergio Sarmiento. "In contrast, the PRI had an open primary in Chihuahua and was able to wrest the governorship from the PAN." Monreal's victory in the north-central state of Zacatecas is considered significant for the PRD because the party's strongest support has traditionally come in southern states.

The Zacatecas victory gives the PRD its second gubernatorial post, along with Mexico City. The Mexican capital is governed by Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, who was elected by a landslide in July 1997 (see SourceMex, 07/09/97). New Zacatecas governor pledges to form plural cabinet Monreal, who developed his own campaign strategy rather than rely on the PRD leadership, acknowledged in his victory speech that he maintains a semblance of independence from the party leadership. "My administration will be plural and citizen-based," Monreal said. "I will invite members of the PRD, PRI, and PAN to join my Cabinet." PRD leaders said the party will face a challenge in continuing to build support in Zacatecas for future elections. "The citizens voted for Ricardo Monreal Avila, not for the party," said PRD federal Deputy Demetrio Sodi de la Tijera.

In the Durango gubernatorial election, PRI candidate Angel Sergio Guerrero Mier took 40% of the vote, compared with 29% for Maria Rosario Castro Lozano of the PAN, 19% for Alejandro Gonzalez Yanez of the Partido del Trabajo (PT), and 8.8% for Maximo Gamiz Parral of the PRD. The PRI also retained control of the state legislatures of the three states, although the party failed to gain a veto-proof majority in Chihuahua and Zacatecas. The PRI won 16 of 22 directly elected seats in Chihuahua, compared with six for the PAN. Another 11 seats will be distributed based on the percentage of the vote received by each party. At least five of these seats are expected to go to the PAN, and one or two to the PRD.

In Zacatecas, the PRI took 11 of the 19 seats up for election, compared with six for the PRD, and one each for the PAN and the PT. The PRD received four of the 11 seats to be divided based on the percentage of the vote, bringing to 10 the number of PRD representatives in the state legislature. The PRI will have 16 members in the state legislature. In the mayoral races on July 5, PAN candidate Gustavo Elizondo won a tight race in Ciudad Juarez against Eleno Villalva Salas of the PRI. Elizondo's narrow victory in Ciudad Juarez, a traditional PAN stronghold, was influenced by strong support for the PRI candidate in the gubernatorial race. The PRI won mayoral elections in the state capitals of Chihuahua and Durango, the latter governed by the PT during the past six years.

The PRD won two key mayoral elections in Zacatecas, scoring victories in Zacatecas city and in Fresnillo. Meanwhile, in an election June 28, the PAN retained its majority in the Baja California state legislature, winning 11 of 16 directly elected seats. The PAN also retained the mayoral posts in the cities of Mexicali and Tijuana, but narrowly lost a bid to take control of the port city of Ensenada from the PRI. There was no gubernatorial election in Baja California, which has been governed by the PAN for two consecutive terms. (Sources: La Jornada, 06/16/98, 06/29/98, 06/30/98, 07/06/98, 07/07/98; Novedades, 06/30/98, 07/06/98, 07/07/98; Reuter, 07/05/98, 07/06/98; El Universal, 07/06/98, 07/07/98; Associated Press, 07/05-07/98; The New York Times, The Dallas Morning News, Los Angeles Times, 07/06/98, 07/07/98; El Heraldo de Chihuahua, El Diario de Chihuahua, El Sol de Durango, El Sol de Zacatecas, 07/07/98; The News, 06/30/98, 07/01/98, 07/06/98, 07/07/98, 07/08/98; El Economista, Excelsior, 07/06-08/98)

-- End --