Tabasco Election a Test for Madrazo, Lopez Obrador Ahead of 2006 Vote

LADB Staff

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

Recommended Citation

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.
Tabasco Election a Test for Madrazo, Lopez Obrador Ahead of 2006 Vote

by LADB Staff
Category/Department: Mexico
Published: 2003-10-29

The center-left Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD) won a majority of seats in the state legislature in the southern state of Tabasco in elections on Oct. 19, seizing control from the former governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). The PRD also came out ahead of the PRI in several mayoral races in the state.

The elections were considered by some a test of the influence of two potential candidates in the 2006 presidential race, Mexico City Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador of the PRD and PRI president Roberto Madrazo Pintado. Madrazo and Lopez Obrador, both natives of Tabasco, campaigned heavily in the state on behalf of the candidates of their respective parties.

Madrazo was able to garner support for PRI candidates primarily in the capital city of Villahermosa and surrounding areas, but was unable to overcome the influence of Lopez Obrador in outlying areas. Among the winners was the Mexico City mayor's brother, Jose Ramiro Lopez Obrador, who won the mayoral race in the city of Macuspana. Madrazo's only symbolic victory came in the mayoral race in Villahermosa, where his protege Florizel Medina handily defeated Adan Augusto Lopez, who had received strong support from Lopez Obrador.

Tensions remain high between PRI, PRD

The latest election came against a backdrop of growing animosity between the PRI and the PRD following the most recent gubernatorial election. That race was originally held in October 2000, with current PRI Gov. Manuel Andrade defeating PRD rival Raul Ojeda Zubieta by a slim margin. The PRD and other opposition parties challenged the results of the election, charging outgoing governor Roberto Madrazo of conducting an extensive campaign to bribe and coerce voters to cast their ballots for the PRI (see SourceMex, 2000-10-18).

In 2001, a federal electoral tribunal found enough evidence of irregularities to throw out the results of the election and order a new round of balloting (see SourceMex, 2001-01-10). Andrade won a special election in August 2001, again defeating Ojeda Zubieta (see SourceMex, 2001-08-08). The PRD and PRI are likely to face off in another disputed gubernatorial race in Tabasco in 2006.

For now, the PRD was encouraged by its performance in the state legislative races. The party took 11 of the 21 directly elected seats, compared with nine for the PRI and its coalition partner, the Partido Verde Ecologista Mexicano (PVEM). The center-right Partido Accion Nacional (PAN) won the other seat.

Based on the proportion of the vote received by each party, the PRD was assigned another six seats, the PRI five, the PAN two, and the PVEM one. PRI officials downplayed the importance of...
the PRD victories, attributing the strong showing of the center-left party to the "Lopez Obrador factor." They noted that the PRI took all six of the Tabasco seats in the federal Chamber of Deputies during the July congressional elections. Two of these seats, they noted, had been in the hands of the PRD during the previous Congress. The PRI said it would challenge the results of several disputed state legislative and mayoral races in Tabasco, prompting PRD president Leonel Godoy to pledge to defend his party's victories. "We are going to put together an army of lawyers to defend these victories," said Godoy.

PRI also loses ground in San Luis Potosi

The PRI also had less than satisfactory results in the mayoral elections in the central state of San Luis Potosi, also on Oct. 19. In that election, the PRI not only failed to oust the PAN from the mayoral seat in the state capital but also saw a decline in the number of cities under its control to 28, compared with 44 after the 2000 election. The PRI received 39% of the total vote in San Luis Potosi, a decline of more than four percentage points from 2000.

The main beneficiary of the poor PRI performance was the PAN, which won elections in 21 municipalities, compared with only 11 in 2000. The recent races in San Luis Potosi continue a trend for the PRI, which lost the gubernatorial race to the PAN in the midterm elections in July of this year (see SourceMex, 2003-07-09).

The three major parties will continue to test their strength in 10 gubernatorial elections in 2004. Seven of those states Durango, Chihuahua, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, and Puebla are currently governed by the PRI. Of the three other states, Tlaxcala and Zacatecas are in the hands of the PRD, and Aguascalientes is governed by the PAN.

Several influential senators have been mentioned as potential representatives of their parties. Prominent among these are PRI Sens. Enrique Jackson Ramirez in Sinaloa and Fidel Herrera in Veracruz, PRD Sen. Jesus Ortega in Aguascalientes, and PAN Sen. Javier Corral in Chihuahua. PRD Deputy Amalia García, also a former president of the party, is said to be interested in seeking the gubernatorial seat in Zacatecas. (Sources: El Financiero, 08/05/03, 10/21/03; Milenio Diario, 07/31/03, 10/22/03, 10/23/03; La Jornada, 10/23/03; Unomasuno, 10/20/03, 10/24/03; El Universal, 10/20/03, 10/22/03, 10/24/03; La Cronica de Hoy, 10/21/03, 10/23/03, 10/24/03; Agencia de noticias Proceso, 05/21/03, 10/20-23/03, 10/27/03)

-- End --