1-11-2006

Social Development Secretary Leaves Post to Join PAN Presidential Campaign

LADB Staff

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

Recommended Citation
https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/4942

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.
Social Development Secretary Leaves Post to Join PAN Presidential Campaign

by LADB Staff
Category/Department: Mexico
Published: 2006-01-11

President Vicente Fox lost another member of his Cabinet after Social Development Secretary Josefina Vazquez Mota resigned to take a lead role in the campaign of presidential candidate Felipe Calderon Hinojosa, who is representing the governing Partido Accion Nacional (PAN). The election will be held on July 2, 2006. Vazquez Mota had served in the administration since the beginning of Fox's term in office.

Finance Secretary Francisco Gil Diaz, Education Secretary Reyes Tamez, Health Secretary Julio Frenk Mora, and Transportation and Communications Secretary Pedro Cerisola are the only holdovers from the initial list of Cabinet appointments. The most frequent changes have occurred in the Secretaria de Energia (SENER), which has been led by four different secretaries: Ernesto Martens Rebolledo, Felipe Calderon Hinojosa, Fernando Elizondo Barragan, and Fernando Canales Clariond.

PAN campaign ethics in question

Vazquez Mota's departure was not without controversy. Some members of the opposition Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD), and Partido Convergencia por la Democracia (PCD) raised concerns that the outgoing secretary would use lists of donors obtained during her tenure at the Secretaria de Desarrollo Social (SEDESOL) to support Calderon's campaign. "This was a move that could violate campaign ethics," said PRI Deputy Heliodoro Diaz Escarraga. "Without doubt the information will be used in favor of the PAN candidate."

Vazquez attempted to ease concerns by the opposition parties by pledging not to use any inside information in favor of Calderon. Just as controversial was the appointment of Ana Teresa Aranda Orozco to succeed Vazquez Mota at SEDESOL. Aranda, who assumed the Cabinet post after heading the federal Sistema Nacional para el Desarrollo de la Familia (DIF), is said to have been imposed by first lady Marta Sahagun.

Critics see Aranda as a puppet of Sahagun, who has attempted to dictate the administration's policies regarding social welfare, including the management of SEDESOL and other agencies. Vazquez Mota argues that Aranda was not the most qualified candidate for the job, and her appointment to SEDESOL was motivated by her connections to Sahagun. "If I knew Aranda was going to succeed me, I might not have resigned," Vazquez Mota said in a quote published by the Agencia de noticias Proceso (apro).

The appointment of Aranda was followed by the resignation of three deputy social-development secretaries, reflecting further discontent with the decision. The feud between Vazquez Mota
and Sahagun dates back to the beginning of the administration, when Sahagun was presidential spokesperson and not yet married to Fox. Vazquez Mota contends that Sahagun attempted to impose her agenda on SEDESOL operations.

Apro reported that Vazquez Mota believes that Sahagun may have blocked her bid to succeed Santiago Creel as interior secretary when he resigned to seek the PAN presidential nomination in June 2005. That post was eventually filled by then labor secretary Carlos Abascal Carranza. Some opposition members say a change in leadership at SEDESOL will make little difference in the manner in which the Fox government conducts policy. "The situation is going to be the same whether Josefina Vazquez Mota or Ana Teresa Aranda heads SEDESOL," said PRD Deputy Pablo Gomez Alvarez. "The Fox government will still manage social programs any way it wants." (Sources: Agencia de noticias Proceso, La Crisis, 01/05/06; Associated Press, Notimex, 01/06/06; La Cronica de Hoy, 01/09/06; El Economista, 01/05/06, 01/06/06, 01/09/06; El Financiero, 01/06/05, 01/10/06; El Universal, 01/06-08/05, 01/10/06; La Jornada, 01/10/06)

-- End --