Interview with Rep. Jose Aliseda of the Hispanic Republican Conference (VIDEO)

The following interview with Texas Representative Jose Aliseda is one of a series of interviews conducted by VOCES Action and TexasGOPVote with members of the Hispanic Republican Conference in the 82nd session of the Texas Legislature. Rep. Aliseda is a member of the Texas House of Representatives from House District 35 representing the counties of Atascosa, Karnes, McMullen, Live Oak, Bee, Goliad, Jim Wells and part of Bexar County. Video and a transcript of the interview are included.

I asked Rep. Aliseda about about his values and what shaped those values. He also said we are seeing more Hispanics voting Republican because the political philosophy for Republicans is more in tune with Hispanic values, such as strong family values, a good work ethic, and fiscal conservatism. We also discussed the importance of Voter ID legislation, in which he explains that it's really an issue of having a safe election system and is not about race.

Mr. Aliseda, like myself, is an immigrant from Mexico. It took him 13 years to become a US citizen. He is a freshman in the House of Representatives who ran on pro-life platform, creating employment as well as a no new taxes pledge. He won the election because the people pay attention to those values and they know he is standing strong for those values. As a Republican, he recently stood on the floor defending the Voter ID bill. During that time on the floor Democrat Rep. Rafael Anchia was trying to deliberately confuse the issue of Voter ID with race. Rep. Aliseda explained the issue has absolutely nothing to do with race and said Americans want to believe that their election system is at least as safe as renting a movie at Blockbuster. He explained to the people that he himself is an immigrant and reminded the legislators who opposed the bill that in Mexico there is a voter ID that includes not only a photo but a thumb print as well.

The membership of the Hispanic Republican Conference has been growing. Originally it was formed by the House’s five Hispanic Republicans but has since been joined by other State Representatives whose districts have at least 30% Hispanic constituents. The Hispanic Republican Conference will be addressing some issues that have been controversial in parts of the state with large Hispanic populations.

Hispanics make up 36% of the Texas population and this percentage is growing. Hispanics share Republican conservative values of fiscal responsibility, faith, hard work, family values, and are pro-life. VOCES Action has been educating and empowering Americans with Hispanic backgrounds, and who hold conservative values, to make more responsible and informed voting decisions.
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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW:

Adryan Boyne: Can you tell us about your values and what has shaped those values?

Jose Aliseda: My values are conservative. I think that having two parents that are both strong and moral, growing up in the midwest, I grew up in Illinois, my religion helped shape my values, and then my education. Going to school, paying attention to things that are going on around me, I think they helped me become conservative, so I consider my values conservative.

Adryan Boyne: Now I know that this is first time that we have in the House of Representatives a few Hispanic Republicans, and actually you are a member of the Hispanic Republican Conference. Most Democrats believe that Hispanics should be Democrats, do you agree with that, why or why not?

Jose Aliseda: Well, I think Hispanics have traditionally been Democrats because they say they were born Democrat, but I disagree, I think that the political philosophy for Republicans is more in tune with what I think are Hispanic values, strong family values, good work ethic, financially and fiscally conservative, so I think that if Hispanics really payed attention to the values the Republican Party has in its platform, they would follow the Republican Party. If they saw the Democrat Platform and really understood the values the Republican Party has in its platform, they would follow the Republican Party. And I think that's a good thing about having Republican Hispanics.
Adryana Boyne: Mr. Aliseda, tell us about the people in your district. What are the issues that they are concerned with?

Jose Aliseda: I can tell you what I ran on. I ran on a pro-life platform, which I think was important to the people in my district, Hispanic and non-Hispanic. I ran on employment, we’re still experiencing pretty high unemployment in my district, and some of the other issues of course are fiscal responsibility, one of the biggest problems we’ve had this particular session is that we’re dealing with the budget shortfall of several billion dollars, so we need to know how we’re going to allocate the resources. I ran on tax structure, I ran on a tax reform pledge, Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike feel like we are paying too much in taxes, and we don’t know where our money is going and whether it’s being spent wisely, so I think those are the same values across the state. I bet if you talk to my Anglo Republican colleagues, they ran on similar issues. So the issues are the same whether you are Hispanic or Anglo in this particular election cycle.

Adryana Boyne: Voter ID is very important for the integrity of our voting process, yet many people, especially Democrats, confuse this issue with immigration. What are your thoughts, and what is your role on voter ID legislation.

Jose Aliseda: You say they confuse the issue, they deliberately confuse the issue. They want to make it a race issue, and it’s really an issue about having a safe election system. You ask me my role, I have a key role in this particular session. I was the only Republican that was able to go up there and close on the voter ID issue because I had experienced it, as a prosecutor, I had prosecuted voter fraud cases, not necessarily voter impersonation cases, but voter fraud cases. Wherever I went in my district, they couldn’t understand how people could do anything without an identification. You need an identification to rent a movie, how is it that they couldn’t understand how people could do anything without an identification. You need an identification to rent a movie, how is it that our voting system is any different. So what has happened is, and this issue much like any of the other big issues that we’re going to be dealing with, the Democrats have tried to confuse it with a race issue, and it has nothing to do with a race issue, it has a lot to do with what makes common sense in a society that, here we are 2011, and there is nothing you can do without an ID. Why, because we have impersonation in every aspect of American society. One of the big crimes de jour is identification theft, where they can get credit cards and other things with your name. You don’t think that’s happening with voting, I think it is. Why would we have groups like ACORN going out and registering the Dallas Cowboys football team in Nevada, or why would we have Mickey Mouse as a voter, because people see the possibility to register people and perhaps voting. If you don’t have an ID to prove who you are, that could happen, and if it doesn’t happen there, it can happen in some other form, like mail-in ballots, but we need to make sure our election system is safe. I don’t want to confuse it with a race issue. In fact, in my speech on the floor, I didn’t mention race or ethnicity one time. I talked about ACORN, and I talked about Americans wanting to believe that their election system is at least as safe as renting a movie at Blockbuster.

Adryana Boyne: Mr. Aliseda, one of the things that I do with VOCES Action is I educate and empower the Latino community with conservative values, but I also do a lot of that in Spanish, and I really feel very grateful that during this time, we have a few of you that also speak Spanish very well, and I’ve seen you on Spanish TV many times. Can you just share a little bit about whether you think it’s important, like in Texas there are still a lot of people who speak Spanish, to communicate in Spanish when you are running a legislation and how that has helped the community.

Jose Aliseda: One of the beautiful things about knowing two languages is that you can communicate to people in two different languages, and I’m a Mexican immigrant to this country, unfortunately at 54, I’ve been slowly losing my Spanish because I don’t practice it very often, but people need to understand that there’s no shame in knowing two languages, in fact, it’s an advantage. On the other hand, in this country, if you’re going to do well, you need to speak English, and any successful individual speaks English well, and I think an even more successful can speak both languages, or three or four, you go to Europe, and people there know several languages. I was fortunate, when I came here, I already knew Spanish, and it helped me because I learned it early. It’s more difficult as they get older, and unfortunately, if you don’t practice anything, you lose it. I think it’s important that people understand that recent immigrants, like myself, that
there are people that are successful that can do both, speak English and Spanish.

Adryana Boyne: Would you like to add something else about what you would like to tell the people of Texas, now that you have been working in this session, something that is important for you?

Jose Aliseda: This is really why I'm here, I think we have something very special in this country. They call it the American Dream, whatever you want to call it, and you have to take care of it. It is something that if you don't work hard to keep it, then we're going to be just like any other nation in the world. People are coming here, and they come here illegally and legally, because of the opportunity here, and if you don't cherish it, if you don't appreciate it, if you don't try to take care of it, then it's not going to be a special place anymore. I appreciate everything this country has given me, the opportunities it has given my family and myself, probably more so than someone that was born here. I've had the good fortune of traveling to 14-15 other countries, and this is a very special place. We need to take care of it.

Adryana Boyne: Exceptional. Thank you Mr. Aliseda, and thank you very much for serving the people of Texas.

Jose Aliseda: Thank you.

By Adryana Boyne at Apr 29, 2011 1:45 PM
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We are very proud that Rep. Aliseda defended the photo ID bill. It's true in Mexico everyone has a photo ID and no one complains there. Congratulations Adryana!

Another awesome interview!

Posted By Patricia (not verified) at 2011-05-02 22:51