

ATTENTION

All On-Campus Residents

ALL current on-campus residents are required to complete the Housing Decision 2002 process to renew or cancel their housing for the fall 2002 - spring 2003 academic year.

WHEN: March 4 (8 a.m.) - March 8 (5 p.m.)

WHERE: On the Residence Life Homepage (www.reslife.tamu.edu)

Candidates support border-area agenda

PHARR, Texas (AP) — Democratic gubernatorial candidates Tony Sanchez and Dan Morales told a crowd of about 2,000 Sunday they supported a border-area-agenda that included raising wages for public workers and expanding the Childrens Health Insurance Program.

"I'm in agreement one hundred percent," Sanchez said. "I'm in the campaign so all in Texas — including children — can have a dignified life."

Said Morales, "As governor of the state of Texas, I am going to continue fighting for your very important interests and I believe we can make things much better."

Morales and Sanchez limited their answers to Spanish before the lively Spanish-speaking audience assembled for an "accountability session" by Valley Interfaith, a consortium of 45 churches and schools in deep South Texas. The candi-

dates were asked whether they approved a platform of issues important mostly to the poor along the Mexican border.

The group is leading the get-out-the vote drive among the mostly Hispanic voters in South Texas. Volunteers say that so far this year they have added 25,000 Rio Grande Valley voters to the roles.

"I didn't like the way Dan Morales said Spanish can't be even with English," said Felipe Banuelos, a 45-year-old school bus driver who became a citizen three years ago.

After Sunday's 90-minute session, Morales said he felt there were some forums in which Spanish was appropriate.

He defended his decision to use both languages Friday, saying he wanted to reach as many voters as possible.

"The vast majority of Texans prefer to communicate in English. This is Texas, this is the United States of America, and

our primary language is English," he said.

The two were among more than 30 politicians, including U.S. Senate candidates Ken Bentsen and Ron Kirk, who pledged to support granting legal status to working, tax-paying immigrants.

Kirk Watson, a candidate for attorney general, answered "yes" when asked if would enforce laws meant to approve living standards in colonias and work for health care for the poor, including undocumented immigrants.

U.S. Reps. Ciro Rodriguez, Ruben Hinojosa and Solomon Ortiz also said they supported the agenda.

The few candidates who did not answer in Spanish inserted some Spanish phrases into their answers, including state comptroller candidate Marty Akins who said he believed "el sueño Americano" (American Dream) should be for all.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Low temperature spread over Texas

(AP) — Freeze warnings in effect overnight along Texas coast and as far as the Rio Grande Valley record lows were expected early Monday for even the northern parts of South Texas.

Lows across South Texas were expected to range from 19 to 32 before warming in the 50s by afternoon. Precipitation is expected before Tuesday, when heavy fog are expected.

Afternoon temperatures Sunday ranged from a high of 32 at Paris to a high of 38 at Del Rio. The "warm spot" in the eastern half of the state was 41 degrees at Killeen and Lufkin.

Sunday's low was a chilling 5 degrees at Dallas.

It was sunny, but cold in Texas on Sunday after High clouds were across the southern part of the state — generally south of Eagle Pass to Victoria, Beaumont. Other high clouds were moving from the south over the Panhandle.

Bitter gubernatorial battle steals the spotlight from Senate race

DALLAS (AP) — They are neck-and-neck in the polls, but the three Democrats vying for Phil Gramm's Senate seat seem to be losing the battle for the public's attention.

The spotlight has shone instead on the gubernatorial tug-of-war between Tony Sanchez and Dan Morales, who have clashed on everything from affirmative action to the number of debates they will have.

"The gubernatorial race is sucking all the oxygen," said Jerry Polinard, longtime political science professor at the University of Texas-Pan American.

While Sanchez spends his millions on TV ads and Morales criticizes his opponent's campaign tactics, Senate front-runners Ron Kirk, U.S. Rep. Ken Bentsen and Victor Morales are running a peaceable campaign that borders on dull.

Even their debate Friday night was not much of a debate, with each candidate politely stating his position and barely acknowledging his competitors.

Dallas voter Marlyss Skipwith can name both candidates for governor, but she has trouble with the Senate race.

"I know Ron Kirk because he's from here, but some of the other ones I'm not as familiar with," said Skipwith, 50.

Analysts say they expected more fireworks in a high-stakes race for one of Washington's most coveted positions. A Texas Democrat has not held a Senate seat

in nearly a decade, and the nominee who prevails could tip the Senate's delicate balance in favor of his party.

"Everyone was expecting that all the attention would be on the senatorial race because there wasn't going to be much of a gubernatorial race," Polinard said. "Then suddenly the ball game changed."

"Every day the Texas public is reading what's going on in the governor's race."

— Eddie Aldrete
spokesperson for Lloyd Bentsen

It changed the first week of January, when former Attorney General Dan Morales decided at the last minute to run for governor instead of senator.

"It greatly benefits Morales," said Richard Murray, political scientist at the University of Houston. "Bentsen and Kirk really needed the visibility."

Morales enjoys some recognition from voters stemming from a 1996 bid to unseat

Gramm, who is now retiring. The school geography teacher swung Democratic nomination from Bentsen candidates after crisscrossing the state in a white pickup truck. He could also be sharing a last name with Dan Kirk.

Bentsen's gold-plated name could be valuable. His uncle is Lloyd Bentsen, legendary Texas senator who served from 1970 to 1993, when he joined Clinton's cabinet.

But Kirk is flailing in the alphabet of political names. Though he's more money than Bentsen and Morales, Dallas mayor and secretary of state still little known outside his home state.

Mudslinging might put some heat on the race, but analysts say it would do much good at this point.

"Kirk and Bentsen are not saying mean things about each other," Murray said. "It doesn't make a lot of sense for nobody knows who in the hell they are."

What the candidates need is attention from the media, says Bentsen's spokesperson Eddie Aldrete.

"Every day the Texas public is reading what's going on in the gubernatorial race," Aldrete said. "Once a week they're reading about the Senate race. I think all the candidates would be further along than they are now if the Senate race were getting the same coverage."



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