



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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Council

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Forty-one percent of Yakima's more than 91,000 residents are Hispanic, but the city has never elected a Hispanic member to its at-large city council.

Yakima has four council members who represent districts and three at-large members, but the district candidates are only selected in the primary election. Every resident casts votes for each council seat in the general election.

Civil rights advocates contend the method dilutes the Latino vote and blocks minority representation, and the ACLU has been pushing the city to change its system since 2010.

Last year, council members refused to put an initiative on a special ballot requiring that all seven members represent a specific district, and Yakima voters defeated an initiative to change the system in last year's primary.

"The concerns of the Latino community are not being effectively represented in the City

Council," said La Rond Baker, an ACLU attorney. "We realized the City Council wasn't going to come to the table in any meaningful way, so we filed today."

Baker also said the lawsuit isn't about getting minority candidates onto the council, but about ensur-

In 2008, after the Justice Department intervened, the city of Sunnyside changed its entirely at-large City Council elections to a partially districted system that is similar to the system in Yakima.

"I would hope that every City Council would want to have a

that the state pass a Voting Rights Act to facilitate minority representation in local communities.

The study found that Latinos comprised nearly 22 percent of the population in 10 Eastern Washington counties between 1983 and 2011, but have been elected to only 2.7 percent of their city council and school district seats during that time.

A legislative bill that would have made it easier for minorities to get elected in local communities passed out of committee but failed to come up for a vote on the House floor in the last session.

Modeled on the decade-old California Voting Rights Act, it would have encouraged court challenges to cities, counties and school districts to push them to switch from at-large to district elections in areas where large minority groups are present.

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ing the candidates that minorities support have a fair shot in an election.

Yakima isn't the first community in Eastern Washington, where the Hispanic community has grown significantly in recent years, to have its voting system come under review.

system that complied with the Voting Rights Act," Baker said. "When we win, it may require some of them to make alterations to their own systems."

Earlier this year, an annual survey of Eastern Washington's Latino population by Whitman College students recommended

Party

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into people you want to interview all day long," says Moreno. "I'm not sure if it will necessarily be the same this time around."

While there may not be as much buzz as four years ago, Moreno is still excited about the new possibilities for his coverage this year.

He says there will be a lot more technology at his disposal. In 2008, he says reporters were tied to a media room. Moreno's laptop was always plugged into an Ethernet cable. This year, media representatives will be able to file reports from anywhere, mainly with the help of smartphones.

Moreno will be providing a variety of content, including traditional news stories, photos, videos and live streaming. He will also be plugged into all of the major social media outlets to provide updates.

At the Democratic Convention,

Moreno looks forward to talking with attendees about how they feel about the President today compared to 2008. He says a lot of Democrats that received invites to the convention have backed out and he wants to get a sense of why

can platform. Moreno will also ask delegates about issues affecting communities of color in particular, including voter ID laws and immigration policy.

Out of everyone, Moreno says he is most interested in speaking

make such a drastic turn.

Moreno says he would have a hard time setting up that interview formally, which is why he appreciates the setting of the convention.

"Most of the time when we want to get an interview with an elected official we have to reach out to their press secretary," he says. "At the convention, there's as good of a chance as any that you might just bump into an Artur Davis."

A lot of Democrats that received invites to the convention have backed out and reporter John Moreno wants to get a sense of why the level of enthusiasm has changed

the level of enthusiasm has changed.

At the Republican Convention he will be seeking out the few Black and Hispanic delegates to see why they support the Republi-

with Artur Davis, a former Democrat who had nominated President Obama in 2008 and is now a Republican. He wants to know what about the President's performance has caused Davis to



C O M M U N I T Y C A L E N D A R

SEATTLE 2012



If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to *The Skanner* at info@theskanner.com

Saturday September 1

6TH ANNUAL BLUES FOR FOOD FEST. Our goal is to have an organic and entertaining blues

alternative to Labor Day. Noon – 9 p.m. Magnuson Park, 7400 Sand Point Way NE.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST. Everyone is invited to join us for good food and conversation. The breakfast is free of charge (donations will be accepted) 9 – 11 a.m. Zion Lutheran Church, 4634 Alger Ave, Everett, Wa

Saturday September 8

8TH ANNUAL WOMEN OF COLOR HEALTH AWARENESS CONFERENCE: FIRST LADY OF HEALTH, HONORING MRS. MICHELLE OBAMA. This free

community event starts at 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bethlehem Baptist Church, Family Life Center, 4818 Portland Ave, Tacoma, WA

THE MOUNTAINEERS OUTDOORSFEST BRINGS THE GREAT OUTDOORS TO SEATTLE. The annual day-long event is free and features vendors, workshops and a range of recreational demonstrations and hands-on activities from hiking to extreme camping to climbing on a real basalt rock columns. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The Mountaineers Program Center in Magnuson Park, Seattle