

Pence's 'Mexican Thing' Remark Draws Ridicule, Criticism from Latinos

Some scholars and activists mock the remark, while others say it brought back painful memories

By *Russell Contreras and Amy Taxin, Associated Press*

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Latino scholars and activists are criticizing Republican Mike Pence for referring to “that Mexican thing,” at the vice presidential debate as he tried to brush

MexicanThing was trending on Twitter as Latinos widely made fun of the remark with memes, gifs, and satirical versions of Trump’s “Make America Great Again” red cap.

“Proud to be ‘that Mexican thing!’” Javier Martinez, a New Mexico Democratic lawmaker,

Mexican-American syndicated cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz said the moment the words came out of Pence’s mouth “I knew it was going to be big.”

Alcaraz drew a cartoon of a Latino man holding a card that read, “my vote.” Above the man read the words: whip out that Mexican thing again.

Some Latinos, however, saw little humor in Pence’s remarks.

A leading House Democrat, Rep. Xavier Becerra of California, said Pence’s words brought back painful memories.

“As the son of immigrants, I’ve lived with the ‘Mexican thing’ all my life,” Becerra told The

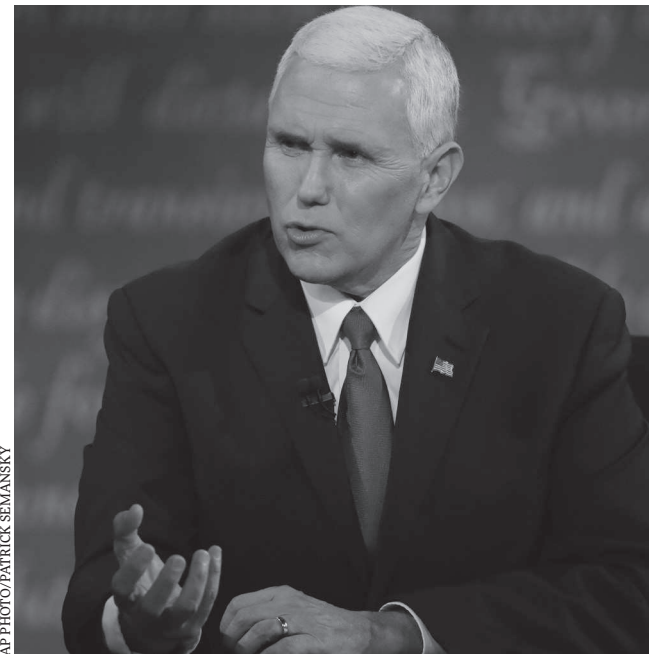
president and vice president mainstreaming the same hurtful rhetoric.”

A top state lawmaker in California, Kevin de Leon, said Pence’s remarks were “absolutely disgraceful.”

“He said it like we’re an irritant, (like) he is bothered by our presence and our contribution to the fabric of this great nation,” said de Leon, whose mother grew up in Mexico.

Pence’s words also led to the creation of a web address, ThatMexicanThing.com, that redirects visitors to Hillary Clinton’s campaign website.

In addition, the Latino voting rights advocacy group VL Action Network registered the web address, www.thatmexicanthing.org, “to drive eligible voters to register



AP PHOTO/PATRICK SEMANSKY

Republican vice-presidential nominee Gov. Mike Pence answers Democratic vice-presidential nominee Sen. Tim Kaine during the vice-presidential debate at Longwood University in Farmville, Va., Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2016.

Alexandro Jose Gradilla, a Chicana and Chicano Studies professor at California State University, Fullerton, said the way Pence used the word “Mexican” and “thing” seemed the suggest Mexican-Americans were objects, not people. “It was very revealing, especially because of the way Trump has used the

word ‘Mexican’ in the past,” Gradilla said.

Some see the word “Mexican” as going beyond describing a nationality and sometimes being used as a slur against U.S.-born Latinos.

Associated Press writer Amy Taxin contributed to this report from Santa Ana, California.

“I never would have believed that into my 50s I would witness a candidate for president and vice president mainstreaming the same hurtful rhetoric’

aside criticism of Donald Trump’s comments about Mexican immigrants.

They said Pence’s remark was dehumanizing and tinged with sexual innuendo.

Pence’s comment came after Democratic vice presidential Tim Kaine pressed the Republican on Trump’s remarks last year comparing Mexican immigrants to rapists.

“Senator, you whipped out that Mexican thing again,” Pence said.

By Wednesday, #That-

tweeted Wednesday.

There was no immediate comment from the Trump-Pence campaign about criticism of Pence’s remark. The campaign has been trying to increase its appeal to Latinos and other minorities

“The way Pence used the word “Mexican” and “thing” seemed the suggest Mexican-Americans were objects, not people

who tend to favor Democrats and could prove pivotal in key states, including Florida.

Associated Press. “I never would have believed that into my 50s I would witness a candidate for

to vote against the scapegoating and complete dismissal of the Latino community.”

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