

Oregon sees surge in Hispanic candidates, office holders

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

Juan Carlos Gonzalez was a high school junior from Forest Grove when he encountered President Barack Obama in Washington, D.C., through the Boys Nation leadership program.

Meeting the nation's first black president made a lasting impression on Gonzalez, the son of Mexican immigrants.

"His campaign slogan was hope. He just activated so many people in the country to think about the United States in the way that he did," Gonzalez said. "He was larger than life. I thought if he could be the first, I could be first in something else. Glass ceilings could be shattered."

Now 26, Gonzalez recently won election to Metro, the Portland area's influential regional planning council. The agency is responsible for planning infrastructure and development across jurisdictional boundaries and protecting green space.

When he takes office in January, he will be the first Hispanic to serve on the council and possibly the youngest member in history. Metro officials confirmed he's younger than any of the

22 councilors who've served since the elected body was reorganized in 1995.

Oregon has seen a surge in recent years in Hispanics seeking and winning election to public office, from local school boards to the Oregon Legislature. According to the U.S. Census, Oregon had about 495,000 Latinos in 2017 — 13 percent of the state's population. That's up from 11 percent in 2000.

The recent election advanced that trend with Gonzalez's win and the possible election of Eddy Morales to the Gresham City Council. Multnomah County is recounting the votes in Morales' race against incumbent Kirk French because the margin was so narrow.

Following the May 2017 election, Hispanics were the majority on the Woodburn School Board, reflecting the makeup of the district's enrollment. Latinx candidates continue to win seats on other school boards around the state.

School board members from Hispanic and other backgrounds formed the Color Caucus two years ago to increase their influence on the Oregon School Boards Association. During that period, the caucus has



Jaime Valdez/PortlandTribune

Juan Carlos Gonzalez recently won election to Metro, the Portland area's influential regional planning council. Oregon has seen a surge in the number of Hispanic candidates and office holders.

grown from a handful to dozens of members, said Erika Lopez, a Hillsboro School Board member and part of the caucus.

The group is seek-

ing a vote on the association's board. A majority of school boards must agree, and some, such as Hillsboro, have already voted in favor, Lopez said. The caucus expects to find out the outcome by the end of the month, she said.

The movement to put Hispanics in office gained steam in 2014 after voters rejected an Oregon ballot measure that would have provided a four-year driving card to undocumented immigrants. Disappointment over the measure's failure stirred Hispanic leaders to step up

their advocacy and organizing, said Reyna Lopez, executive director of PCUN (Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste), Oregon's union for farm workers and tree planters.

The same year, the Color Political Action Committee formed to find and support candidates who reflected their minority constituencies. Since then, other organizations with the same purpose have formed, including East County Rising in east Multnomah County.

President Trump's immigration stands during his presidential campaign in 2016 helped galvanize unprecedented political organization in the Latinx community.

Lopez ran for office after her 10-year-old son came home from school and told her he was afraid she would be deported. Lopez, whose family emigrated from Mexico, is a citizen and can't be deported.

But, Lopez said, the incident "was kind of the nexus of what was happening in the national policy landscape and ... how it translates into our lives and in our communities."

Then, this year, three Oregon lawmakers proposed a state measure to repeal the state's 30-year sanctuary law, which prohibits local police from enforcing federal immigration law. Voters earlier this month defeated the measure after a robust opposition campaign led by the Hispanic community.

Even PCUN — which previously focused on working conditions — recently started recruiting Latinx candidates. Its political action arm, Accion Politica PCUNista, urged Teresa Alonso Leon, the daughter of a farm worker, to run for the House district that runs from Woodburn to Salem and helped buoy her to victory in 2016, Lopez said.

That same year, the Legislature gained two other Hispanic lawmakers — Diego Hernandez of east Portland and Mark Meek of Clackamas County.

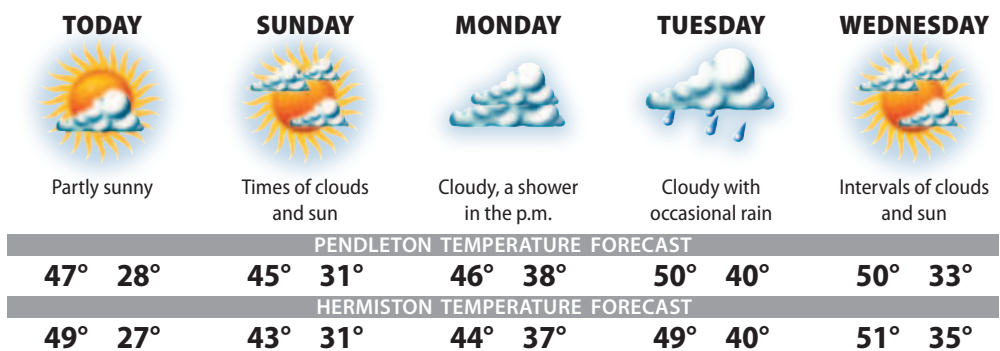
Lopez was elected to the Hillsboro School Board in 2017 after participating in Emerge training, a nonprofit that recruits and trains Democratic women for office. She learned how to file campaign finance reports, land endorsements and build up a resume before running for office.

The Hillsboro School District, where 37 percent of students are Latinx, had no Hispanic board members at the time. The board appointed another Latina, Yadira Martinez, earlier this year.

Martinez, raised in Hillsboro, said she sought the appointment because she realized the Hispanic community needed more involvement and "our voices need to be heard."

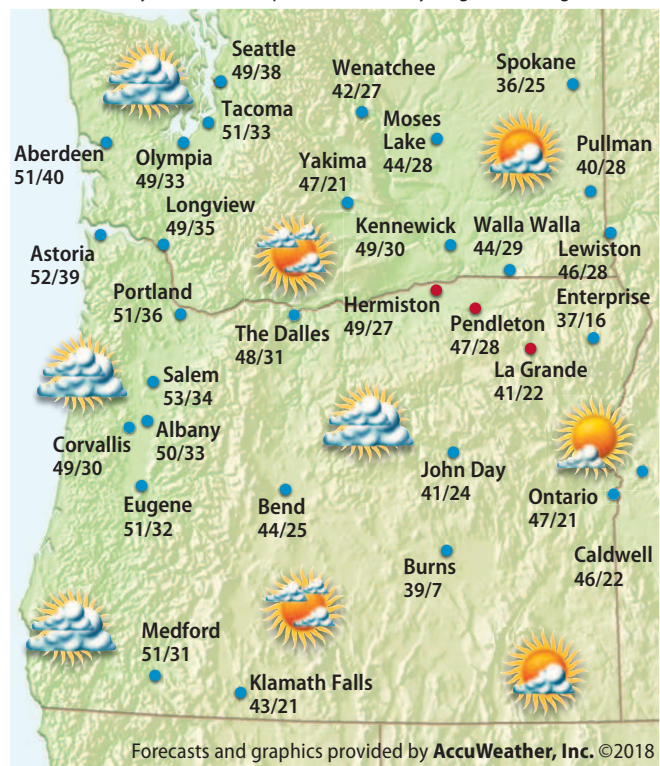
To win votes from Hispanic voters, advocates do a lot of canvassing. PCUN sent out Spanish-speaking employees and volunteers for house calls, sometimes visiting several times to convince a voter to turn in a ballot or help them understand the ballot choices, Reyna Lopez said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	51°	41°	
Normals	45°	31°	
Records	75° (1933)	-12° (1985)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.07"		
Month to date	0.17"		
Normal month to date	1.09"		
Year to date	8.32"		
Last year to date	14.84"		
Normal year to date	11.08"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	50°	33°	
Normals	47°	31°	
Records	70° (2017)	-11° (1985)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.14"		
Month to date	0.15"		
Normal month to date	0.89"		
Year to date	6.60"		
Last year to date	8.58"		
Normal year to date	8.17"		
WINDS (in mph)			
	Today	Sun.	
Boardman	SW 4-8	NNE 3-6	
Pendleton	SW 6-12	NNE 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:06 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:17 p.m.		
Moonrise today	5:56 p.m.		
Moonset today	8:31 a.m.		
Last New First Full			
Nov 29	Dec 6	Dec 15	Dec 22

BRIEFLY

Portland police officers on leave after man dies at hospital

PORTLAND (AP) — Authorities say a man who was restrained by police in Portland later died at a hospital and the officers are on paid leave while an investigation takes place.

KOIN reports the incident started on Thursday night with reports of a person yelling and running in the streets.

When Portland State University officers found the man, there was a struggle, so they requested assistance from Portland Police officers. The man was restrained and taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Investigators believe the man suffered a medical event and died at the hospital.

The Portland Police have launched an internal administrative investigation and two Portland Police officers will remain on leave until the review is completed.

Man charged in killings was under supervision in Washington

PORTLAND (AP) — Authorities say a man accused of killing two strangers in

separate downtown Portland shootings was under supervision in Washington state.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports James Barquet pleaded not guilty Wednesday to aggravated murder charges, first-degree robbery and felon in possession of a firearm.

A probable cause affidavit says Barquet killed Carol Horner late Monday, and then Brian Hansen less than four hours later with single shots to the head.

Washington State Department of Corrections spokesman Jeremy Barclay says Barquet was released from prison July 11 after serving seven months for a felony drug charge.

Barclay says Barquet entered a supervision program, meeting weekly with a community corrections officer.

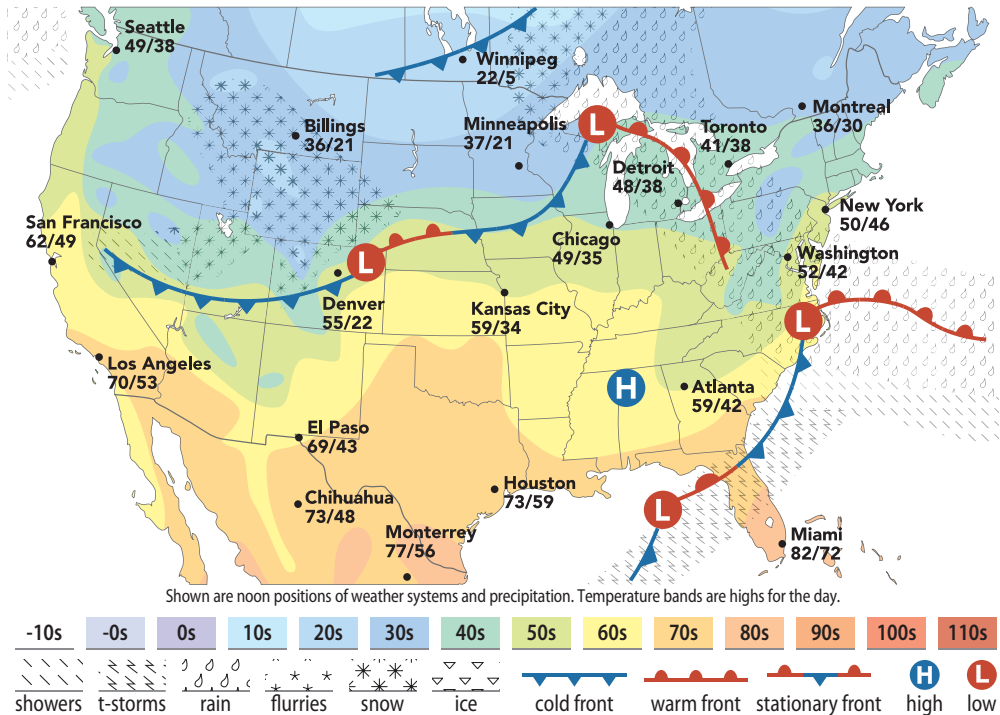
Barclay says Barquet's last meeting was Nov. 13. Court records show Barquet's supervisor told authorities he was unaware Barquet had traveled to Oregon.

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 85° in Key West, Fla. Low -26° in Old Forge, N.Y.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Corrections

The Nov. 22 article "How a PHS senior 'Beat the Odds,'" misstated the number of Beat the Odds scholarships Stand for Children Oregon gave out per year before 2018. It was three.

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