

Election Defeat a Wake-Up Call to GOP on Immigration

President Barack Obama's re-election has become a wake-up call that has the Republican party at attention. Topping the list: a lack of outreach to Hispanic voters.

The GOP slide is palpable—from 44 percent in 2004 down to 31 percent in 2008. And in 2012? A new low: 27 percent.

The drop has some notable conservative commentators changing their tune on a key issue to Hispanics: a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants.

"We've got to get rid of the immigration issue altogether," Fox News's Sean Hannity said. "It's simple to me to fix it. I think you control the border first. You create a pathway for those people who are here. You don't say 'you've got to go home.' And that is a position that I've evolved on."

In the last week, Republican leadership in Washington has signaled they may be ready to move on this issue.

Sammy Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, has been imploring Republicans to embrace immigration reform for years.

On this week's The Brody File Show, the influential evangelical leader had the following message for the top Republican in the country, House Speaker John Boehner.

"Mr. Speaker, I hope you receive the proverbial wake-up call," Rodriguez said. "On Wednesday morning after the election, I think the Republican Party and the entire nation for that matter woke up to La Bamba. They listened to Hispanic music playing from California to New York. This is the Latino hour in America socially, politically, spiritually."

Rodriguez's organization is joining forces with other prominent conservative Christian groups with a message to evangelicals that next year it is crucial for their voices to be heard on this issue.

"We have great organizations, not in favor of amnesty, but in favor of reconciling the rule of law with providing a pathway, treating the stranger amongst us as one of ourselves, reconciling Romans 13 and Leviticus 19," Rodriguez told conference participants.

"Now, we want to see those in the pews, the members in the pews, really serving as advocates in favor of immigration reform," he said.

Beyond immigration, Rodriguez believes a pro-family, conservative Republican Party can make serious inroads with the Latino community.

A new survey shows 69 percent of Hispanic Americans think public schools should teach biblical values and 66 percent believe in traditional marriage.

But Rodriguez said until immigration reform is solved, not much will change.

"Immigration reform is the proverbial Jordan in order for the Republicans to step into the promised land of the Hispanic electorate," Rodriguez concluded.