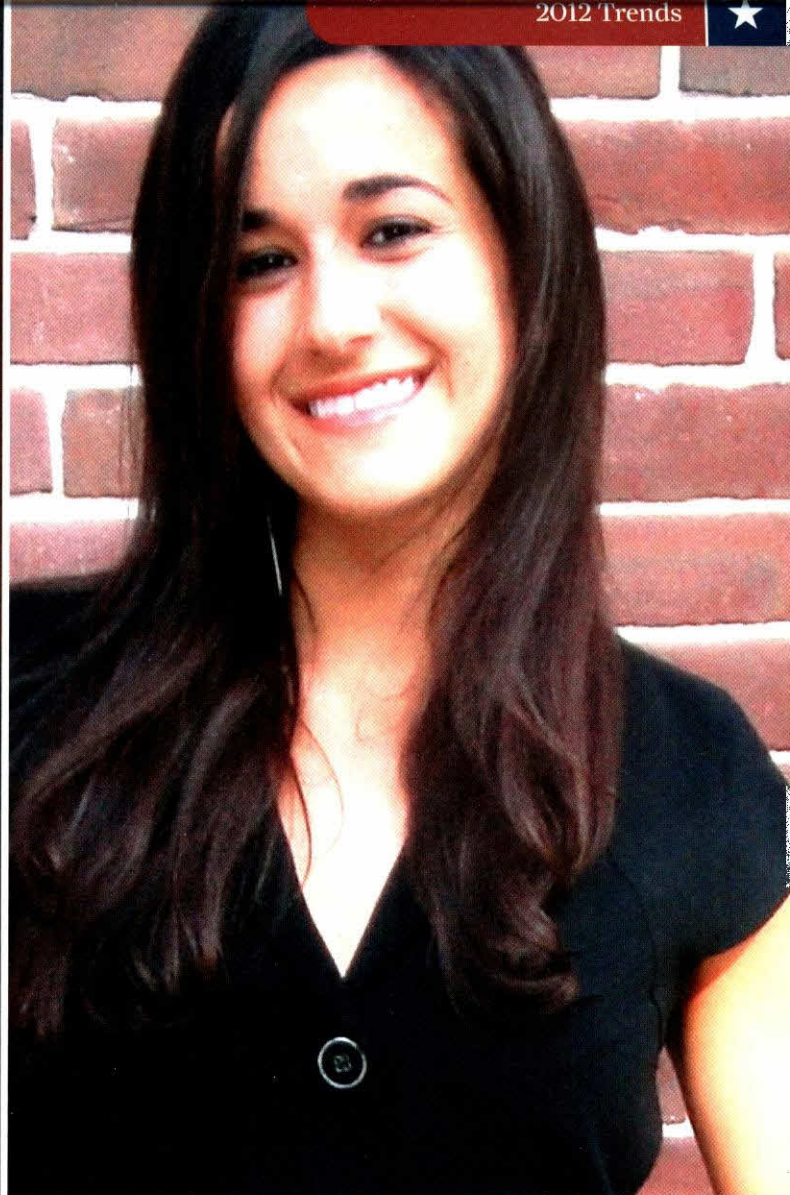


# *A Passionate* **CONSERVATISM**

A new wave of Latino conservatives are showcasing why being both Republican and Latino is a perfect fit—and why 2012 may be just the time to prove it.

By Katie Pavlich





(AP/Susan Montoya Bryan, AP/William B. Plowman, AP/Rich Pedroncelli, Photo courtesy of Marilinda Garcia)

In November 2008, Barack Obama received 67 percent of the Latino vote in his successful bid for the presidency, according to the Pew Research Center. As president in the summer of 2011, Obama addressed the National Council of La Raza to declare his support for the Latino community.

"Recently, 100 Latino officials from across the government met with Latino leaders from across the country at the White House," Obama said. "We need your voice. Your country needs you. Our American family will only be as strong as our growing Latino community."

What the president may not realize is the Latino community is growing without him. Many Latinos call conservatism a natural fit to their cultural values, while the Democrat party's policies often fail to address traditional Latino practices of the sanctity of life, marriage between a

man and a woman, limited government spending, strong national defense, the Second Amendment and individual responsibility and freedom.

And it's several Latino politicians themselves who are pointing out this discrepancy.

#### **LATINO VALUES ARE AMERICAN VALUES**

"Conservative principles are appealing to me because that is who I am," New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez tells *Townhall*. "I was raised a conservative."

In 2010, the Republican Martinez was the first Latina woman elected as a state governor in the history of the United States. Although she was raised in a conservative home, her parents were registered Democrats. Simply following in her parents' footsteps, like many Latinos

in America, Martinez first registered Democrat.

"There was no discussion. There was no sitting down and talking about politics and what I should personally decide myself where I should register," Martinez says.

Her father was a policeman; her mother worked, but didn't make much. Regardless, education was important in the Martinez home, and her parents scraped together enough money to send Martinez and her two siblings to Catholic school rather than public school.

When Martinez was in high school, her parents started a security business. Her mother kept her day job and worked at night in their kitchen doing paperwork while her father kept his police officer position and searched for contracts in his extra time. A young Susanna was his first security guard at the age of 18. The

