

Democrats from Texas to Washington, D.C. The lack of serious young political activists has been a notable feature in recent American politics. LYM members who are elected officials in Democratic Party organizations in California are a cause of wonder among the older members, who have asked them for advice in recruiting young people. The idea of a candidate for Texas Democratic Chair who is under 30 years old, and committed to swelling the ranks of vigorous, savvy young people in the party, has generated both enthusiasm and anxiety among stodgy party stalwarts, many of whom have become encrusted, cynical administrators.

Making Texas 'Blue'

It was not that long ago that Texas was a Democratic state, with elected officials such as Sen. Ralph Yarborough, House Speaker Jim Wright, and U.S. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez. These were Democrats who fought hard for economic growth and social justice, who took on the corporate cartels and the lackeys of special interests with a unique zest. In the 1980s and 1990s, Texas Democrats split, with a radical, anti-growth "environmentalist" wing emerging to battle against an increasingly free-trade-oriented gang of "moderate" Democrats. These latter types took over the state party in the mid-1990s. Not surprisingly, Texas went Republican, with Texas GOPers—such as the windbag Sen. Phil Gramm, the indicted, resigning Rep. Tom DeLay, and former Gov. George W. Bush—moving into positions of leadership nationally.

The Rogers candidacy represents an opportunity for Texas Democrats to reclaim the state. In her first public response to a Democratic questionnaire, she offered a breath of fresh air, by emphasizing that the most important responsibility of a party leader is to inspire party regulars. (See below for her answers to two of the questions.)

In less than a week, Rogers has received numerous invitations to campaign throughout the state, including from one of her three opponents, Charlie Urbina-Jones, who invited her to join him in appearances in south and west Texas.

'Every Texan a Democrat!'

The following are answers to two questions posed to candidates for Texas Democratic Party Chair, which are posted on a website run by activists, called South Texas Chisme (www.stxc.blogspot.com). Rogers' answers appear on the website with those of her opponents.

Question 1: What is your vision for the Democratic Party of Texas?

Rogers: My vision is to lead Democrats in taking back



EIRNS/Michael Maddi

LaRouche Youth Movement member Lakesha Rogers has announced her candidacy for Texas Democratic Party Chair. Rogers, a former member of the Harris County (Houston) Democratic Party Executive Committee, pledged that her campaign will bring in young voters, by involving them in a serious platform debate on how to serve the general welfare.

Texas. If we address the burning issues and needs of all the citizens of Texas, such as adequate health care, real quality education, modern rail, advanced energy sources, and real productive jobs, I foresee *every Texan a Democrat!* I also envision the recruitment of young adults to the policy shaping of the party, encouraging people in their twenties into positions of leadership. We must do as Franklin Roosevelt did, reach out to those in the lower 80% of family income brackets. . . . We must engage in the discussion of principled ideas, rather than "hot button" issues, when shaping a party platform. I am prepared to take Texas "Out of the Bushes and into the Future."

Question 4: List your campaign experience, and describe how you would apply the experience as state party chair?

Rogers: At twenty-nine years old, I have for the past ten years fought to develop a mass outreach in the Democratic Party. I have organized university campaign drives and forum discussions. I participated in organizing a victory for (Houston) Mayor Lee Brown. I have three years experience as a member of the Harris County (Houston) Executive Committee. I have hit the pavement day in, and day out, as a leader of the most potent political force in the nation, the LaRouche Youth Movement, in the fight to bring down the infamous "Hammer" Tom DeLay.* . . . I have been at the center of the fight to bring down Dick Cheney and the entire neo-con apparatus.

*Five days after Rogers announced her candidacy, former Speaker of the House, the disgraced Tom DeLay, announced his resignation from Congress.