

‘OUT OF THE BUSHES, INTO THE FUTURE’

LYM’s Rogers Campaigns For Texas Democratic Chair

by Harley Schlanger

Lakesha Rogers, a member of the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) from Houston, announced on March 28 that she will be a candidate for Texas Democratic Party Chair. Rogers, a Democratic Party activist who is a former member of the Harris County Democratic Party Executive Committee, said the primary focus of her campaign will be to recruit youth to the Party.

“I’m running,” she said, “because we Democrats have to take the state back. To do this, we are going to have to make a serious effort to bring young people into politics, to give them a voice in the Party, give them responsibility in shaping the future.”

A key to this, she added, is to engage in a vigorous debate around a platform. “The Cheney-Bush Administration has trampled on our Constitution, whether in the lies, corruption, and general incompetence involved in its pursuit and handling of the Iraq war, or its malign negligence exemplified in its handling of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the collapse of manufacturing and infrastructure, and the rip-off of seniors with its phony prescription drug bill.”

She called on Texas Democrats to join her in taking the platform debate out of the inner sanctums of the Party—where it has been controlled by the money-wielding fascist Felix Rohatyn, who rages against the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt—and into the workplaces, campuses, and neighborhoods, where Democratic voters have been neglected. “We need to do what Franklin Delano Roosevelt did,” she added. “We need to bring the ‘forgotten men and women’ into the discussion, take the Party back from the pundits and pollsters, and the endless pursuit of money. We are not losing elections due to the lack of money, but the lack of principled ideas.”

Rejuvenate the Party—With Youth!

She pledged that her campaign will bring in new voters, by involving them in a serious platform debate on how to serve the general welfare. “I will not limit my campaign to speaking to the delegates to the convention, but will demonstrate how we can bring new voters into the Party. I will emphasize the principles put forward by economist Lyndon LaRouche in his ‘Prolegomena for a Party Platform: Franklin Roosevelt’s Legacy.’ For Texas, this means a campaign for water, power, and transportation infrastructure, so we can create decent jobs the way FDR did to get us out of the Depression. By mobilizing the energy and creativity of youth behind these principles, we can virtually guarantee a landslide victory in the mid-term elections this November.”

She called on Texas Democrats to join with her to get Texas “Out of the Bushes and into the Future.”

This is not merely a slogan, she said, though it was picked up immediately as a rallying cry for LYM members throughout the country. “We intend to make this a reality. I come from a generation which was given no future by its Baby Boomer parents. The Boomer generation now runs most political institutions in this country. As a generation, it has proven to be unable to reflect self-consciously on its failure to provide serious adult leadership.

“We are taking our cue from Lyndon LaRouche, who has called on us to drive the fascists out of both political parties. If we do our job in the Democratic Party, to rid our Party of the anti-FDR influence of banker Felix Rohatyn and his pro-free trade, pro-globalization allies, then the Democrats will be able to win a landslide victory this coming November.”

Her announcement has triggered an excited response from around the country, both from young people, and from senior

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.