

5 La Raza Unida Activists to Run as Slate for East L.A. Offices in Cityhood E...
FRANK del OLMO
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5 La Raza Unida Activists to Run as Slate for East L.A. Offices in Cityhood Election

BY FRANK del OLMO

Times Staff Writer

Five Mexican-American activists announced Thursday they would run as a slate for city offices in the Nov. 5 incorporation election in East Los Angeles.

Although all elected officers would be nonpartisan in the proposed city government, the five candidates said they would run under the banner of La Raza Unida, a Chicano political party.

As of Thursday, 18 persons had indicated their intention to run for city office in East Los Angeles. The five Raza Unida members were the first to declare themselves a formal slate.

La Raza Unida's slate comprises three men and two women. Only one, college instructor Raul Ruiz, has run for political office before.

Aside from Ruiz, the candidates are Arturo Sanchez, Celia Rodri-

guez, Daniel Zapata and Frances Sue Lopez. All are longtime activists in the East Los Angeles area.

Proponents of cityhood argue that a local government would provide better service for the heavily populated area than it presently gets from the county Board of Supervisors.

East Los Angeles is a 6.5-square-mile island of unincorporated county territory surrounded by Los Angeles on the west, Monterey Park on the north, Montebello on the east and the City of Commerce on the south. Its population of 105,000 is more than 80% Spanish-surnamed.

Voters in the area first will be asked to vote for or against cityhood and then to vote for five city council candidates.

The five highest vote getters would take office if the proposition for cityhood is approved by a majority of the voters.

The Raza Unida candidates claim they would serve area residents better than city officers affiliated with "Democratic and Republican corruption," according to Ruiz.

La Raza Unida campaigners will argue prior to the cityhood election that, although the election is supposedly nonpartisan, many of the other candidates are backed by the two major political parties, he said.

In recent years, La Raza Unida has run candidates in a handful of political races in the Los Angeles area, mostly for state offices.

In Texas and other states where the party is active and more successful than in California—La Raza Unida candidates have won local offices before running for state and national offices.

In 1973, the state's Raza Unida activists announced plans to run a candidate for governor this year, but

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party spokesmen conceded Thursday that those plans would not be carried out.

"We've learned from the past," said one party leader Thursday, "to have a base in a city like East L.A. and then run for state office is more practical than what we tried before."

Raza Unida spokesmen said they expect as many as 30 candidates to file for the five city council seats that will be voted on when East Los Angeles' 24,000 voters are polled on cityhood.

There had been speculation among activists in the area that two groups that have pushed the incorporation campaign—the Ad Hoc Committee to Incorporate East Los Angeles and The East Los Angeles Community Union—might form slates of candidates.

However, a spokeswoman for the two groups said Thursday that neither ACTIELA nor TELACU would form a slate or endorse any candidates.

The county Registrar of Voters reported Thursday that 16 of the 18 announced candidates had taken out nominating papers but none had formally filed as yet.

Nominating papers must be filed by Aug. 29. Prospective candidates must have resided in the area for at least 30 days and be registered to vote.

Other prospective candidates who have taken out nominating papers are Bob Saavedra, Mariana Alarcon Hernandez, Manuel (Tank) Barrera, Ricardo Macias, Edward M. Granados, Joe D. Rivera, Alex Duran, Ben Talbert, Salome M. Garcia, Joe R. Chavez, Vernon (Benito) Juarez, Roy R. Neshek and Ralph Villalobos.