

# Political parties become bilingual to attract Hispanic voters

By Padmananda Rama, NPR

If you grew up in a bilingual Hispanic household, listening to the Democratic and Republican conventions may have sounded a lot like home.

It's no coincidence that both parties highlighted politicians like Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro.

Rubio, whose parents are from Cuba, introduced Mitt Romney at the Republican convention; Castro, whose grandmother immigrated from Mexico, became the first Latino to give the Democrats' keynote address.

Their speeches, while delivered in English, included some Spanish. Even Mitt Romney's son Craig opened his speech in Spanish, a language he learned while working as a Mormon missionary.

In this year's presidential election, Latinos are a major voting bloc – and Spanish is getting its close-up.

"As a Latina mom of two children I'm raising bilingual, it's a great way of showing them why they need to continue speaking Spanish," writes Roxana Soto, author of the book *Bilingual is Better*, in an email interview with NPR.

"Listening to the various convention speakers sprinkle sentences and phrases in Spanish throughout their speeches is like music to my ears," says Soto. "I feel like it will help elevate my first language to another level and will hopefully show others that just because we speak Spanish doesn't mean we

can't speak English, too."

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