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Rep. Veronica Gonzales Selected to Aspen-Rodel Fellowship

24 rising stars selected nationwide to join prestigious program

Fresh Ink

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McAllen—State Representative Veronica Gonzales (D-McAllen) was recently selected by The Aspen Institute as a member of the Aspen-Rodel Fellowship in Public Leadership class of 2007.

The Aspen-Rodel Fellowship selects 24 of the nation's top young elected officials – 12 Democrats and 12 Republicans - that the Institute has identified as "the true rising stars" of American politics to discuss broad issues of democratic governance and effective public service.

Former Congressman Mickey Edwards, the program's director, said the new fellowship class "represents the true promise of America – an outstanding group of young leaders with a clear commitment to putting the nation's interest ahead of partisan considerations."

"It is very humbling to be nominated and selected to participate in this elite program," said Gonzales. "We live in a country that is very diverse but as Americans, we share many common goals. It is exciting to be part of an organization that exists to provide political leaders an opportunity to share ideas with other like-minded individuals who have the best interests of their constituents and communities in mind," said Gonzales.

The fellowship selects 12 Democrats and 12 Republicans annually. Edwards said the selection process involved looking for young officials who had not only earned reputations for thoughtfulness and intelligence, but who had also been recognized for "their willingness to cross party lines and their ability to remain focused on the ideals that led them into public service in the first place."

The invitation-only nomination process ensures that those selected have been vouched for as the area's most respected and most promising leaders on their way up in the political hierarchy. The 24-month program consists of three weekend-long seminars in the United States as well as week-long seminars in foreign countries to observe the operation of other governments.

Rep. Gonzales is the third Fellow from Texas and is only the second Texas Legislator selected to join the ranks of the prestigious fellowship. The Aspen Institute, founded in 1950, is an international non-profit organization dedicated to fostering enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue. It seeks to promote nonpartisan inquiry through seminars, policy programs, conferences and leadership development initiatives.