

What Did David Alvarez' Campaign Mean to San Diego?

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What Did David Alvarez' Campaign Mean to San Diego?

by BRENT E. BELTRÁN on FEBRUARY 24, 2014 · 3 COMMENTS

in DESDE LA LOGAN, FAULCONER VS ALVAREZ, POLITICS

Supporters speak about what it meant to them

By Brent E. Beltrán

This past Sunday my family and I attended a thank you celebration hosted by David Alvarez' campaign at Cesar Chavez Park in Barrio Logan. Over 150 supporters and volunteers turned out to not only get a thank you from Mr. Alvarez but to also thank him for running on a progressive platform.



Alvarez thanks his supporters and volunteers at Cesar Chavez Park in Barrio Logan.

In attendance were many luminaries on San Diego's political left, from Democratic Party politicians to labor leaders to local barrio denizens who have engaged in a variety of community battles over the years. Some of who had fought for over a decade for the very park they were standing in.

There were a variety of skin shades, ethnicities, genders and sexual preferences. All them there to support a mayoral candidate that stood for what they stood for: dignity and respect for all.

United Food and Commercial Workers union President Mickey Kasparian spoke to the assembled crowd followed by newly elected California State Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins



Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins shows her support for David Alvarez and the Barrio Logan Community Plan.

who introduced Mr. Alvarez. In her comments to his supporters she said that she would help out in any way possible to see the Barrio Logan Community Plan upheld.

Though Alvarez did not get elected, his platform gave hope to many and planted the seeds for future progressive candidates.

As I was munching on a free Korean BBQ burrito from one of two food trucks that were present I couldn't help but wonder what

the assembled supporters thought the campaign meant to San Diego and what did it mean to them personally?

With that in mind I walked around and asked a few people. Including David Alvarez himself. Here is what they had to say.

*"I think it really was a game changer for going into the future. Establishing coalitions between community, different neighborhoods throughout the entire city, and the progressive movement. Standing up for working people. Standing up for the environment. Standing up for everyday citizens. I think we brought together all these people that have now created relationships with each other and going into the future I think it is only going to be a good thing." — **David Alvarez***

*"I felt David's campaign for San Diego was a real view at the future. We saw how you could be an honest candidate. Go out there and present who you really are like David did. David is the future of San Diego. He ran his campaign with class, with dignity. To me it meant a lot. To see a candidate from here, from the barrio like me. I'm from the barrio too. I was born in this area as well. It's very significant that you can go forward by being who you are and that's what David did. I'm excited. He's got a huge platform now and we're going to see a lot more of David." — **Enrique Morones**, President of [Border Angels](#)*

“For me it meant a dream come true. To have a candidate who was based in the community, has advocated for the community, who is committed to not only the Latino community but working class communities as a whole in San Diego. Except for maybe Bob Filner, who unfortunately left in disgrace, I don't recall that we've had such a candidate in the history of San Diego. Just in the sense of having a candidate who was boldly and publicly championing working class neighborhoods, that was a first.” — **Isidro Ortiz, Ph.D.**, Professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies at San Diego State



David Alvarez and his multi-cultural supporters and volunteers.

“What it meant to San Diego was that he was able to bring a lot of different sectors together. Folks that do a lot of community based work. He was able to connect, be that bridge. That was why we were able to have a very strong grassroots campaign. Obviously it wasn't enough. We weren't able to bring enough voters. But still, the groundwork that has been laid is something I'm proud of. It is something that we can continue building to truly shift the political dynamics of San Diego. What it means to me is that we were able to plant a strong seed. What we do now is going to be critical. In terms of are we really connecting with the communities that didn't come out because they felt government has not paid attention to them. Our communities have been left behind. The conversation has shifted. Now it is up to us to continue to nurture that so the next election we can succeed. Succeed in the manner that we don't have to be shifting the politics. It can be with our values, with the principles that we believe. And we don't have to shift them to play into the system to succeed.” — **Georgette Gomez**, Associate Director of [Environmental Health Coalition](#)

“I think David stood for all of the right things. I think he has a really good heart and listened to people. The thing that was most important to me, working beside him in the earlier debates, was that quality. The quality to listen and to change his opinion after listening when he got facts that were different than what he knew before. I would hear him as he learned from people really incorporate this new knowledge. I think that is really

important in a politician. Not to just be spouting out rhetoric but to learn from everywhere he goes. I think David did that. I didn't see any of the other candidates do that. — **Bruce Coons**, Executive Director of [Save Our Heritage Organization](#)

"I think what it meant to San Diego is that finally people can actually have their voice in city hall. Many people are disenfranchised and it was an opportunity to actually have someone that they can relate to have represent them. What it meant to me was that we actually had a chance to put someone who was working class Latino, progressive, and it really meant a lot to me personally and politically. And the fact that I could actually be part of history. Despite that we lost, the fact that makes me happy was that I was part of it. And if anybody were to ask me what part of history I was on, I was on the right side." — **Sandy Naranjo**, [union organizer](#)

"What I saw in this campaign is the young people being reenergized. I saw David brought young people. He brought different groups together, of color, of religion. He brought [different] economic levels [together]. I haven't seen anybody do that, bring that kind of coalesced community together. I think that portends great for the future." — **Roger Cazares**, former President/CEO/Executive Director of [MAAC Project](#)

"To San Diego David's campaign was the first step in building a political structure that actually serves everybody in the city. And again, it was the first step because we've got a long way to go. But where people are and what people are hoping to see this city become is ahead of where our politics is right now. David's campaign helped close that gap. But we've got a lot more to do. We've built, I think, the strongest alliance between community organizations, young people, working people, environmentalists, progressives that we've ever seen in this city and this campaign is what brought that together. And now if we just keep that together and keep building and keep growing stronger we're going to see the political change start to come. I think ten years from now we're going to look back at this campaign and know this is the beginning of creating a new San Diego." — **Richard Barrera**, Secretary-Treasurer/CEO of the [San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council](#)

After the Filner betrayal David Alvarez gave progressive San Diegans someone to support. He gave us hope after the debacle that came before him. He ran on a progressive platform. He didn't change his ideals. He didn't change his vision for what he thinks San Diego can be. He ran on who he is. Though he may have lost the election he gave us progressives and San Diego's historically marginalized communities hope for the future. With our fine city's ongoing demographic and political shifts this hope will soon translate into more political power. We have seen this shift on the city council and we'll soon see it again behind the

mayor's desk. To me that is what this election means. And we have David Alvarez to thank for that.

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Brent E. Beltrán is a third generation pocho that lives next door to Chicano Park in San Diego's Barrio Logan. He's the former publisher of Calaca Press, is married to his dreaming heart watcher and is the proud father of a baby Dino-saur. He's an MMA watching junkie who likes to get his nerd on by viewing superhero and sci-fi movies/tv shows. He writes the somewhat regular column Desde la Logan and is the newest addition to the SDFP Editorial Board. He can be contacted via email at desdelalogan@gmail.com and through his Twitter account [@DesdeLaLogan](https://twitter.com/DesdeLaLogan).

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