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October 19, 2010

## Obama signs Hispanic education order

Times wires

### Obama signs Hispanic school order

Two weeks before elections in which Democrats in several states are nervous that depressed turnout by Hispanic voters could cost them their jobs, President Barack Obama on Tuesday signed an executive order to improve Hispanic children's educational opportunities.

Obama's order appeared to be, at least in part, a bid to rally Hispanics behind Democrats. If Hispanic voters sit out the elections, that likely will hurt Democrats the most, because many Hispanics traditionally back Democrats. This could be of particular consequence in close contests this year in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Texas and Washington state.

The measure is intended to widen the scope of a long-standing initiative on Hispanic education by increasing partnerships with the private sector and soliciting more input from the community.

### Voting rights of felons expanded in 23 states

A study of felony disenfranchisement laws has found that 800,000 felons have been returned to the voter rolls in the past decade.

A push by criminal justice advocates and civil rights groups to rewrite state laws that sometimes place lifetime voting bans on felons has resulted in 23 states amending their policies since 1997 to expand voter eligibility, the Sentencing Project said.

### Secretive GOP donors are planning ahead

A secretive network of Republican donors is heading to the Palm Springs, Calif., area for a long weekend in January, but it will not be to relax after a hard-fought election - it will be to plan for the next one.

Koch Industries, the longtime underwriter of libertarian causes including the Cato Institute and the ballot initiative that would suspend California's landmark law capping greenhouse gases, is planning an invitation-only, confidential meeting to, as an invitation says, "develop strategies to counter the most severe threats facing our free society and outline a vision of how we can foster a renewal of American free enterprise and prosperity."

Koch Industries is run by billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch.

St. Petersburg Times