

Saenz Blanchard: Fundraising is Going Well

Steve Taylor



Denise Saenz Blanchard, pictured Tuesday at The Patio in McAllen, says her campaign team is now in place. (Photo: RGG/Steve Taylor)

McALLEN, Jan. 18 - Congressional District 27 candidate Denise Saenz Blanchard was in McAllen on Tuesday to raise funds for her campaign. The former chief of staff to Congressman Solomon Ortiz said fundraising has to be the priority this early in the campaign.

“Right now I am focusing on the fundraising aspect of it. Every day I am dialing for dollars. In the evening I am getting out and reaching with the people,” Saenz Blanchard, a Democrat, said, in an exclusive interview with the *Guardian* at The Patio. Among those she met with at the McAllen restaurant was international bridge owner Sam Vale.

Texas congressional candidates are still unsure how the district lines will look or when the primary election will take place due to legal battles over the redistricting map drawn by state lawmakers. A trial is currently underway in Washington, D.C., to decide if the legislative-drawn map should be pre-cleared under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. This trial will likely impact the look of District 27.

The current date for the primary is April 3. However, many experts believe this will be pushed back a couple of months or more. This gives candidates like Saenz Blanchard more time to raise funds. She told the *Guardian* she is holding a fundraiser in Port Isabel on Feb. 2 so that the people of the Laguna Madre area can contribute to her campaign. She said more fundraisers will be announced soon.

“We are busy raising the money. I am averaging about \$3,000 to \$4,000 a day. I have about \$60,000 in pledges right now. Things are moving. We are having fundraisers. The support of the people in the district has been more than incredible,” Saenz Blanchard said.

In addition to raising funds, Saenz Blanchard has been putting her campaign team together. She said she has hired a full-time campaign manager and has a media marketing team in place. The hires she has made have a lot of campaign experience, she said. “They have seen this race, they have looked at all the angles and they believe in me. It is very exciting. Our signs are beginning to go up. All is good,” she said.

Asked why the voters of District 27 should back her, Saenz Blanchard said: “I think I bring a lot to the table in terms of experience and knowledge. From day one we can get to work. I do not have to go through on-the-job training. I am already trained and ready to serve.”

Saenz Blanchard said she will be outlining specific details about her campaign platform in the coming months. She said she will be discussing issues such as investment in the region’s ports, education, healthcare, infrastructure and a veterans’ hospital in depth on the campaign trail. However, in her interview with the *Guardian*, Saenz Blanchard focused on character and experience. She said her work for Congressman Ortiz for more than 19 years is appreciated by the voters she meets.

“I think the people of District 27 recognize that the person who was doing a lot of the work for many years is willing to stand up and continue serving them. There seems to be a lot of confidence in the experience, the passion that I have for the people of South Texas,” Saenz Blanchard said.

“I am the real thing in the sense that I care about our people. I have no other special interest. My only interest is how do we make this place a better place to live, to work, to do business and to play so that we can attract tourists and have a great place for all of us to have a better quality of life.”

Saenz Blanchard said her knowledge of the district is another key attribute.

“For the last four months, before I retired, I had the great pleasure of working for the Honorable Rubén Hinojosa in his Beeville district office. I already know the Beeville area and the Beeville people. I have worked for the people of District 27 for the past 19 years and eight months. I worked from Brownsville all the way to Corpus Christi. I know the issues, I know the key players. I don’t have to be brought up to speed,” Saenz Blanchard said.

“I want to work with every player. It won’t matter if they are Republican or Democrat. It is about the people. It is about our citizens and that is what I want to do - to get to work and make things better, to improve our quality of life in South Texas.”

Saenz Blanchard concluded her interview with the *Guardian* by stressing the importance of service.

“Being a member of Congress is about being a true servant of the people. It is not the other way around. I am here for you. My hands are open. I want to get to work to make things happen. I have the energy, the experience, I have the passion. I have the fire to get to work for the citizens of South Texas.”