



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 12, 2018

Young Hispanics Challenge Democrat Leadership

It appears the old guard of the Democratic Party might soon be relieved of duty.

Senator Dianne Feinstein and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, both of California, face challenges to their power, while [the defeat](#) of a third long-time Democrat, Representative Joe Crowley, by socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (shown) might well send the message that party is moving even further left.



The interesting thread running through all three stories is this: All three challengers, such as they are, are Hispanic, a sign of the party's demographic change. Their targets are the party's aging, mostly white, leadership.

Feinstein In Trouble?

[Feinstein faces](#) a challenge from Kevin De León, a radical state senator who advocates open borders and authored a law that forbids California law enforcement, as [TNA reported last week](#), from helping federal immigration authorities.

Despite crushing De León in the state's open primary — which eliminates a Republican from running in the general election because the two top vote-getters face each other — Feinstein's position is still precarious. So she is now encouraging state party officials, [The Intercept reported](#), to withhold endorsing a candidate for the general election. That's because state party activists might endorse de León at their next meeting.

For weeks, Feinstein and her team have been calling, emailing, and texting the roughly 360 delegates of the party's executive board, which is meeting this weekend in Oakland to decide the endorsement. It's the same style of campaign run by candidates seeking a state party endorsement, only Feinstein is playing for the block. De León, say close observers of the race, is relatively close to securing the 60 percent endorsement threshold, one of the few avenues available for him to change the dynamic of the race, after finishing 32 points behind Feinstein in the open primary in June.

On Saturday, delegates received a letter from six candidates in flippable districts in the state, making the argument that they should vote for no endorsement in the name of party unity. "A divisive party endorsement ... would hurt all down ballot candidates and our ability to turn out Democrats we desperately need to vote in November," the letter reads. Feinstein's campaign paid for the mailing.

De León says that's bunk. He argues that Feinstein wants to avoid losing the endorsement because she knows he has the votes to get it.

Pelosi Under Fire

Meanwhile, Representative Linda Sanchez, [USA Today reported](#), says it's time for "generational change" in the party's leadership.



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"The highest ranking Latina in the House" doesn't think the oldsters who run the party in the lower chamber are up to the job.

"I think it's time for that generational change," Sanchez told reporters Wednesday. "I want to be part of that transition, because I don't intend to stay in Congress until I'm in my 70s."

Pelosi is 78 years old. The No. 2 and No. 3 House Democrats, Representative Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Representative James Clyburn of South Carolina, are also in their late 70s. To be exact, Hoyer, [a congressman since 1981](#), is 79. Clyburn, [in Congress since 1993](#), is 77.

Sanchez suggested the trio's continued grip on power was stymieing younger Democrats. "I want to help create opportunities for some of the newer members, who have a lot to contribute but don't necessarily always get the opportunity," she said.

Of course, Republicans hope Sanchez, 49, isn't in Congress past her next birthday in January, but in any event it's clear that young "Latinos" are a major threat to the dinosaurs who came of age in the 1960s and were Sanchez' age during the Reagan years.

'Conventional Playbook' Scrapped

[The Hill reported](#) that Ocasio-Cortez, the Democratic Socialist who ended Crowley's career in Congress, is going to "rattle [the] D.C. establishment." "Ocasio-Cortez's shock victory ... made the 28-year-old an overnight sensation in the Big Apple and across the country, leading Democrats to bombard her with messages of congratulations and offers to cooperate in the future."

Democrats think she's "telegenic," of course, but not all are happy with the challenge to established politicians.

That's because Ocasio-Cortez "is not interested in following the conventional Democratic playbook."

Ocasio-Cortez is helping an upstart in Missouri, Cori Bush, take on veteran [Representative Lacy Clay](#). That upsets at least one Democrat, *The Hill* reported:

"We're trying to take back the House, but it seems like they're just trying to go after Democrats. It makes no sense," said Rep. Gregory Meeks (D-N.Y.), who vigorously defended Clay's work on the Financial Services Committee. "I would hope that the new member coming in would ... keep the eye on the prize."

The Hill noted that Ocasio-Cortez "boasts nearly 700,000 Twitter followers, far more than many members of Congress, and has shown a skill for handling the media. After her victory, her team said it was dealing with 1,000 media requests, and she quickly made the rounds not only on the news shows but in interviews on 'The Late Show' with Stephen Colbert."

She is, one Democrat said, a "rock star."

The question is whether Democrats will dance to the tune this member of the Bernie Sanders Band will play.

Photo: AP Images



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