



Latina Legislator: Leticia Van de Putte and the Road to Leadership (Rio Grande/Río Bravo: Borderlands Culture and Traditions)

Sharon A. Navarro

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In late 2003, Texas State Senator Leticia Van de Putte led ten other Texas Senate Democrats to New Mexico as part of a protest against a Republican redistricting plan. The walkout of the “Texas Eleven” made national headlines; it also deprived the state senate of a quorum and temporarily froze all legislative action.

As Sharon A. Navarro shows in *Latina Legislator*, the dramatic boycott is a fitting image for Van de Putte’s life and career. Though she initially ran for office on a shoestring budget, Senator Van de Putte has successfully authored and sponsored legislation that has reformed the state welfare system, revamped the Juvenile Code, and provided a healthcare safety net for children in Texas. Multiple civic and community groups have recognized her as one of the most effective and influential lawmakers in Texas.

With Van de Putte as her central case study, Navarro assesses the possibilities for other Latina and all female legislators. Further, her analysis of Van de Putte’s record provides a context for judging legislative effectiveness and productivity. This book is invaluable for those interested in Texas and regional politics as well as women’s and ethnic studies.

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