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Orlando Hispanics to celebrate Sotomayor

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Several Hispanic advocacy groups are throwing a Sotomayor watch party in east Orlando on Thursday afternoon and early evening to celebrate the nomination, and expected confirmation, of Sonia Sotomayor as Supreme Court Justice.

The Puerto Rican Leadership Council, a new for-profit corporation created by entrepreneur Carlos Guzmán, is hosting the event with local advocacy groups Latino Leadership and Frente Unido 436.

Organizers said they hope the watch party will be a way to bring Latinos of different political affiliations together to celebrate a historic milestone for the community. Sotomayor, a New Yorker of Puerto Rican heritage, is on the verge of becoming the first Hispanic to rise to the country's top court.

Many Puerto Ricans in Orlando are proud to share their cultural roots with the nominee.

"Sonia [Sotomayor] represents the generation that came from Puerto Ricans who moved to New York in the 1940s and she is making us proud," said Elías 'Rico' Piccard, an activist leading Frente Unido 436, which focuses on local issues in the neighborhoods of east Orlando where many Hispanics reside. "Her nomination says that we came and we learned English, and we studied and prepared ourselves, we assimilated and now we are reaching key positions."

The gathering, where the Senate confirmation hearings would be on display if deliberations are still ongoing, will take place at Oh Qué Bueno Restaurant, of 1125 S. Semoran Boulevard, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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