

GOP hopefuls spar before Hispanic audience

by UPI

CORAL GABLES, Fla. -- Immigration was the major topic Sunday when candidates for the GOP 2008 presidential nomination debated in Florida for a largely Spanish-speaking audience. The candidates, for the most part, took a gentler tone on the subject than they have employed in previous debates, but they insisted they would close the U.S. border to illegal immigration, The New York Times reported. In the debate, televised by the Spanish-language Univision network, the candidates alternated between praising immigrants for their contributions to the United States and articulating a tough approach on illegal immigration. Some even talked about shipping some of the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants out of the country, the newspaper said. Rep. Tom Tancredo, R-Colo. -- who has largely based his presidential campaign on the immigration issue -- refused to take part in the debate. He issued a statement accusing the other candidates of pandering to Hispanic voters and asserting that holding a presidential debate in Spanish was un-American, the Times said.

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