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Hispanics are not lost to the GOP

From Mr Daniel J. Aronoff.

Sir, Jurek Martin is correct that “the Republican party, once a big tent in the days of Ronald Reagan and with aspirations to it under George W. Bush, has some hard thinking to do if it wants to be a party with any serious future”. But he incorrectly concludes that the party needs to become more centrist in order to expand its base (“Republicans have some hard thinking to do”, November 7).

According to the polls, Mitt Romney’s support among Hispanics, the fastest growing US voter group, was half that of George W. Bush, at around 20 per cent. The explanation is Mr Romney’s anti-immigration stance, perceived by Hispanics as reflective of a discriminatory attitude towards them. The swing toward Democrats in the Hispanic vote is unreflective of any shift towards the political centre. That is why Florida senator Marco Rubio and former Florida governor Jeb Bush, two of the leading conservative politicians in the US who are not perceived as anti-immigrant, remain very popular with Hispanics, as was Jeb’s brother George W. Bush.

A large segment of the Hispanic community share with conservative Republicans a deep attachment to religion and traditional family values. The Democratic party will find it difficult over time to maintain the support of conservative Hispanic voters within a coalition that is hostile to their core values.

What the GOP must do to win back Hispanic voters is to jettison the anti-immigrant bias from its conservative agenda. To achieve this, it should promote into party leadership those politicians – such as Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio – who command popularity across the entire conservative spectrum.

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