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## Jeb can follow his brother in courting Hispanic vote

Sir, Several recent articles in the Financial times on the putative presidential candidacy of Jeb Bush overlook the core of his appeal and his chance for victory. The conventional line of reasoning is that Mr Bush is a "centrist", who might pick off enough swing voters to win a general election, if only he can pass the conservative dominated Republican primaries.

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The conventional wisdom is wrong. It is neither true that a moderate cannot win the Republican party primaries, nor that a moderate Republican candidate will have wide appeal in a general election. In spite of all that has been written about the dominance of the Tea Party base, the Republicans nominated centrists in each of the past two elections, after which their candidate was slaughtered.

Mr Bush is a conservative, not a centrist. Yet he differs from most other prominent US conservatives in one respect; he is popular in the Hispanic community. He won the Hispanic vote by huge margins in both his successful gubernatorial elections in Florida.

A large proportion of US Hispanics are Catholic and family oriented. They are conservative in their values and outlook. The Democratic party is not a hospitable place for them, but neither do they feel welcome in a Republican party dominated by anti-immigrant sentiment, which they believe reflects hostility towards

them. They know Jeb, like his brother George, is not that way.

Mitt Romney, who took an anti-immigrant position, lost the 2012 election because he retained only half the Hispanic vote that George W Bush had won in his presidential elections. Jeb would win back those votes, which would favour him to win a general election. Hispanics could bring him victory in the primaries too.

If Mr Bush is able to motivate Hispanics to vote in the Republican primaries in large numbers, they could deliver him victories in Florida, Texas and California (and maybe New York).

Victories in those states just might enable him to overcome the anti-immigrant sentiment in the Republican base, and win the nomination.

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