

Radio Capital

Radio is a longstanding Latin American tradition. This year, as immigration debates heated up, Spanish speakers turned to the radio for their news and information. In the D.C. area, one station Hispanic adults tuned into was Radio Capital.

(Ambience) [In cue: Siete de la mañana con treinta minutos...]

It's 30 minutes past the hour on a Friday morning. A red radio tower overlooks the quiet streets of Silver Spring, M.D. Inside Radio Capital's small studios, DJ Mario Vela is shuffling a Selena song to play next. America Calderon sits as a guest on Mario's show each week and provides immigration advice for callers. All the buttons on the studio phone are blinking red.

(Ambience) [In cue: Linea numero uno, hola, buenos dias...]

Each week, listeners called in for advice on pressing legal questions. Most of them cannot afford professional consultations.

(Ambience) (Calls)

One call makes Calderon cringe. A Honduran caller's wife has been attempting to renew her Temporary Protective Status for years without success. Calderon advises them to reapply and bring the paperwork to her office in Columbia Heights.

(CALDERON) Since people don't read the papers much and sometimes they don't understand about the real issue, radio is very key in order to answer those questions. They get empowered by participating, by calling in. They feel they have a voice.

On Vela's show, they do have a voice. But now D.C. is losing three of its Spanish radio stations, including Radio Capital.

(Ambience) (Radio Switchover)

Red Zebra Broadcasting, home of the Washington Redskins, has bought the stations from MEGA Communications.

(Ambience) (Football coverage)

The stations now air *English football* coverage instead of Spanish music and *immigration news*. This leaves D.C. with nine Spanish radio stations, most of them with weak suburban AM signals. For Rudy Alvarez, who teaches a

citizenship class for Hispanic immigrants, this loss is unfortunate. He sees every day how his students benefit from the Spanish media.

(ALVAREZ) The thing I'm really impressed with is they really *are* well-informed, but it's because of the Spanish media that breaks it down, so they can understand how it works.

With fewer stations, Alvarez is concerned for the Hispanic community. But Calderon and Vela are optimistic. They hope that in the future, they'll be back on the air, answering community questions. For Intern Edition, I'm Christina Tran in Washington D.C.