

# Parties to close S.J. campaigns on Halloween

By STAR wire services

**S**an Juan residents could see more tricks and treats than usual this year when the three main political parties hold their campaign closing activities on Halloween in the capital city.

The New Progressive Party's Oct. 31 closing is slated for the Hiram Bithorn Stadium in Hato Rey, while the Puerto Rican Independence Party will wrap up its run at the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras.

The Popular Democratic Party, meanwhile, did not pinpoint the location of their campaign send-off beyond saying it would be in San Juan on the same day.

The mystery did not go over well with the NPP. "I call on them to immediately comply with their responsibility and don't try to take political advantage of a situation which could put the public at risk," NPP campaign official Frances

Rodríguez said.

Campaign leaders from the three parties met with Police Superintendent Agustín Cartagena on Thursday to discuss security issues at the campaign closings.

"We will implement security measures and coordinate to develop strategies to minimize problems during the elections," Cartagena said.

Rodríguez attended from the NPP, while Carlos Dalmau was on hand for the PDP. Ariel Colón was the PIP's representative.

Regarding the campaign caravans, Cartagena said his department was prepared to guarantee safety.

"We will be forceful and firm in dissuading people from breaking the law by using all-terrain vehicles," Cartagena said, saying the recreational vehicles are to blame for many of the accidents during caravan activities.

# ACLU to start taking action against government

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**W**illiam Ramírez Hernández, the newly named executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, announced Thursday that it will start taking action against the government for failing to meet federal standards involving special education for physically impaired students.

In a news conference at the Bar Association, Ramírez said the Education Department has failed to provide for the educational needs of children with physical or learning disabilities as required by federal law.

He added that he will also take action to see to it that the laws against parking on the sidewalks are obeyed so that people in wheelchairs do not have to risk their lives by using the streets to get around.

"The government must be made to realize that those with physical impairments have rights and we will make certain those rights are protected," Ramírez said.

The ACLU, which was founded in 1920, has been at the forefront of the struggle for civil rights on racial, religious and gender grounds throughout its history.

STAR PHOTO BY MAURICIO

American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director William Ramírez Hernández, right, makes a point during a Thursday news conference. He is joined by Pedro Julio Serrano and Mary Rivera.

Ramírez said the ACLU throughout the United States and Puerto Rico will continue to defend against what it considers the excesses of the Patriot Act and provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act that, he said, discriminates against poor children.

In Puerto Rico, he said, the ACLU will be looking out to protect gays against discriminatory laws and harassment by

law enforcement authorities.

A priority for the ACLU here, he said, was looking out for AIDS patients to make certain they are not denied treatment when brought to local hospitals. "We have received reports of hospitals that keep AIDS patients on cots in the corridors contending they do not have room when they do," he said.