

# Ads pit Chávez, opposition in lovers' quarrel

## Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez offered a 'message of love' in a campaign ad, but the opposition turned a cold shoulder.

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**CARACAS** - Love is in the air as campaigning heats up ahead of Venezuela's presidential election.

Newspaper ads by President Hugo Chávez's campaign include a solemn "message of love" for the Venezuelan people that reads: "I have always done everything for love."

The opposition has hit back, taking out its own ads with a wilted rose and a "love note" reading, in part: "Don't ask for more time. Don't talk to me about love."

Chávez faces leading opposition candidate Manuel Rosales in the Dec. 3 vote. Polls show Chávez has the lead.

The tone of Chávez's ad, with a green background, is decidedly low-key for the flamboyant leader, who favors red shirts and recently called President Bush the devil in a speech to the United Nations.

In a speech on Thursday, Chávez reiterated that his political movement is about love. "That love, what it has done is grow all these years," he said.

He also lashed out at the Venezuelan oligarchy, saying the rich sought to twist his words when he said "being rich is bad" -- an observation that he said is based firmly on Christian principles.

Rosales, the governor of western Zulia state, has sought to attack Chávez's record by questioning the effectiveness of his oil-funded social programs after nearly eight years in office.

Chávez says his government's achievements -- in areas from poverty-reduction to education -- are clear and has pledged to win a "knockout" victory for another six-year term.

The ad by the president's campaign lists actions by Chávez, from joining the army to starting government social programs: "For love of the fatherland, I became a soldier. . . . I have governed these years for love.

"There is still much to do. I need more time. I need your vote. Your vote for love," the Chávez ad concludes.

The opposition's ad shows a handwritten note addressed simply "Hugo" and has the feel of a breakup, with the closing line reading: "I deserve something better. Venezuela."