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Hispanic News

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On September 30, 2006, the Cesar E. Chavez Tribute Committee of the Inland Empire sponsored the unveiling of the Cesar E. Chavez bust at the Cesar E. Chavez Middle School with civic, elected and education officials and a large audience in attendance. The five-year project was chaired by Jesse Valenzuela, and supported by businesses and individuals in the Inland Empire. Photo by IEHN.

The Cesar E. Chavez Tribute Committee of the Inland Empire (CECTIE) achieved its mission of completion of the bust of the late Cesar E. Chavez, America's outstanding and enduring human rights activist, and celebrated an unveiling ceremony at the middle school named in his honor.

This mission was a long and arduous struggle to seek funds, however, it was a labor of love by dedicated committee members and supported by many persons and businesses in our community,” stated Jess Valenzuela, CECTIE chairperson.

This permanent monument will honor the achievements of Cesar E. Chavez for our nation’s farmworkers, and will be a symbol for the people in our community, especially for our young students attending this middle school,” he said. It was the culmination for many in an emotional and joyous ceremony on September 30, 2006, at the Cesar E. Chavez Middle School.

Father Patricio Guillen, Libreria del Pueblo, performed the invocation. Mistress of Ceremony Attorney Eloise Reyes welcomed the over two hundred enthusiastic audience. Reyes introduced the invited civic, elected and education officials. Jess Valenzuela, representing Congresswoman Joe Baca, Senator Nell Soto, Assemblyman Joe Baca, Jr., County Supervisor Jesse Gonzales, Mayor Pat Morris, County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Herb Fischer, San Bernardino City Schools Trustees Dr. Elsa Valdez and Teresa Parra, Mexican Consul Carlos Giralt-Cabalares, Evelyn Alarcon, Cesar E. Chavez National Holiday Director, San Bernardino City Schools Superintendent Dr. Art Delgado, Principal Stephanie Cereceres and artist/sculptor Ron Pekar.

Jesse Valenzuela also made a special presentation to Ron Pekar, artist/sculptor. Mayor Pat Morris spoke eloquently on the life of Cesar E. Chavez as a tireless crusader for the welfare of the farmworkers' rights and their work environment. “Cesar Chavez’ lifelong struggle for the benefit of the farmworker of our country has been an inspiration to me and I have emulated his values in my professional and personal life. This monument of this great man will be a model for the youth of our community,” stated Morris.

The unveiling of Cesar E. Chavez bust was greeted with a rousing applause by the audience. Afterwards, persons and students took photos alongside the bust for posterity. Benediction was given by Father Guillen.

A health and wellness fair was presented by the Health Department and sponsored by medical groups. Entertainment was provided by cultural groups, including Aztec and folklorico dancers, mariachi group and Latino art exhibit.

There were many greetings, hugs, laughter, small discussions by over 230 former Wilson Elementary School students who attended the Wilson School 13th Annual Alumni Picnic at South Colton Veterans Park, Colton.

Wilson School Alumni Committee, composed of former students of the South Colton elementary school, sponsors the annual event.

“This event has become a gathering place for many of our friends, and gives us an opportunity to become reacquainted, and reminisce about our growing up years,” stated Ernie Colunga, WSAC Chairperson.

WSAC annually recognizes a former student who has been successful in their chosen profession, and others who have given outstanding service to their community.

This year, WSAC recognized Ray “Sonny” Abril Jr. for his contribution to the community and an advocate for excellence in education.

Abril, a lifelong resident of Colton and 1950 Wilson School graduate, served in the Korean War from 1950 to 1954. After his honorable discharge, he was employed at Griffin Wheel, retiring after 25 years. He was later appointed to the San Bernardino County Coroner/Public Guardian Department, retiring after 16 years.

In the early 1960’s, Abril and Colton southside residents became actively involved in community issues and advocates for educational opportunities for all children. He was later elected to the Colton School Board.

During his tenure as board trustee, Abril performed a leading role with the district administration in developing and implementing educational goals and objectives, student performance, reducing the dropout rate, improving safety in the schools, and increasing the number of college-bound students through special education programs.

Pete Carrasco, former Wilson School student, stated that Abril’s mission while serving in the school board was “I will do what is best for the safety, education, and general welfare of all children.” Carrasco added that was a noble statement, even when decisions were difficult and doing what was politically correct was a safer option.

Ray Abril, Jr. (left) was honored at the Wilson’s School 13th Annual Alumni Picnic for his advocacy for excellence in education, and 26-year tenure in the Colton School District. Presenting the award, Pete Carrasco, former Wilson School alumnus. Wilson School Alumni Committee are former elementary school students who successfully entered professional careers, and others who became involved in community and educational activities. Photo by IEHN.

Ray Abril, Jr. (left) was honored at the Wilson’s School 13th Annual Alumni Picnic for his advocacy for excellence in education, and 26-year tenure in the Colton School District. Presenting the award, Pete Carrasco, former Wilson School alumnus. Wilson School Alumni Committee are former elementary school students who successfully entered professional careers, and others who became involved in community and educational activities. Photo by IEHN.

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Gary Baca, Colton School Board Member, and other attendees were also in attendance.

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NATIONAL LATINO CONFERENCE SPEAKS OUT AGAINST IRAQ WAR
BY Dr. Carlos Muñoz

Latinos recently spoke out for immigrant rights, as well as against the Iraq War and other vital issues, at a historic conference.

In early September in Los Angeles, Latino and Latina political leaders from across the nation met at a four-day conference to discuss social, economic and political issues. It was the first gathering of its kind since 1977.

Known as the National Latino Congreso, the conference was born following the protest marches last spring against the House bill that would criminalize undocumented immigrants.

The gathering brought together more than 1,000 leaders from progressive grassroots organizations, civil rights and immigrant rights groups, as well as religious, labor and political organizations.

Those attending included high-profile leaders like Dolores Huerta who, with Cesar Chavez, co-founded the United Farm Workers Union and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Also attending were lesser-known leaders, like Angela Sanbrano, one of the key organizers of the immigrant rights movement and president of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities.

The organizers of the Congreso offered three fundamental reasons for convening it: (1) To debate tactics and strategies essential to maximizing Latino electoral success in the upcoming election, (2) to build unity among U.S.-born Latino and immigrant leadership necessary to strengthen the immigrant rights movement and (3) to prepare Latinos for local, state, and national political leadership in the 21st century.

But the Congreso did not shy away from other issues. It passed resolutions endorsing equality for gays and lesbians, including same sex marriage, advocating universal health care regardles of immigration status, documenting racial profiling of blacks and Latinos, supporting environmental justice and opposing the war in Iraq.

Rosalio Muñoz, the coordinator for Latinos for Peace and one of the leaders of the 1970 Chicano Moratorium Against the War in Vietnam, introduced the Iraq War resolution. It called for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. It also asked the Latino Congreso to exert pressure on Latino elected representatives in the U.S. Congress to speak out against the war and support legislation aimed at bringing the troops home.

Until now, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus has not taken a stand against the war. This despite a recent Pew Research Center poll that indicated 51 percent of U.S. Latinos opposed the war, and only 37 percent favored troops staying on. By comparison, Americans as a whole are simply end up being just another conference that passes resolutions but does not follow up with action.

It must take the lead of activist elders like Dolores Huerta, Soledad Chávez, "Chole" Alatorre and the younger immigrant rights leaders, like Angela Sanbrano, Mariaela Garcia and Emma Lozano, who spoke at the Congreso and demanded accountability from our elected officials.

Option, his decision was driven by what was best for all children.

Further, were you actually referring to your Chairmanship of the Board of Supervisors when you said, "It's really a shame to see something so obviously politically motivated and improper happen in this county organization?" Let me refresh your memory. Charter Schools, backroom deals, Adelanto jail and Colonies deals, Gumpourt report, use of county e-mail for political fundraiser, ongoing backroom negotiations with prior Human Resource Director, just to name a few.

I am distressed that the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors has chosen, for apparently cheap political purposes, to tarnish, with unfounded and false accusations, my reputation and promotion. This was a joyous occasion for my wife and family, but you Mr. Postmus have ruined it for us.

Mr. Postmus here's your chance to show everyone in San Bernardino County that you have not forgotten how to do the right thing, publicly apologize to my family and me.

Michael Willhite
Assistant Assessor
County of San Bernardino

OPEN LETTER TO S.B. SUPERVISOR
POSTMUS

Mr. Postmus, I was appalled by your newspaper comments regarding my appointment as County of San Bernardino Assistant Assessor. There is absolutely no truth in your statement that it was an illegal act. Do you have any facts or are you basing your claim on your own personal experience with illegal acts?

Further, were you actually referring to your Chairmanship of the Board of Supervisors when you said, "It's really a shame to see something so obviously politically motivated and improper happen in this county organization?" Let me refresh your memory. Charter Schools, backroom deals, Adelanto jail and Colonies deals, Gumpourt report, use of county e-mail for political fundraiser, ongoing backroom negotiations with prior Human Resource Director, just to name a few.

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Michael Willhite
Assistant Assessor
County of San Bernardino

WILSON SCHOOL ALUMNI HONORS
RAY ABRIL, JR.

Continued from page 1

This year, WSAC contributed 13 scholarships to: Monica Avila - CSUSB, Michael Caponegi-Crafton College, Claudia Cordero-San Bernardino Community College, Joshua Lomeli, UC-Berkeley, Rita Mares, UCR, Andrew Marquez, San Diego State, Janet Moneterosa, UCLA, Amber Ornelas, CSU-Fullerton, Justine Plemmons, CSUSB, Ilis Pozo-UCR, Sandra Rodriguez-UCR, Veronica Rodriguez-CSUSB, and Ariani Vandin-CSUSB.

PARENT SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATION
SET FOR OCTOBER 28

RANCHO CUCAMONGA - Parents interested in learning more about the education of their children from preschool through high school can attend a symposium on Oct. 28 at Los Osos High School.

The registration deadline for the event is Oct. 26, and the cost to attend the symposium is $25, which includes a continental breakfast and lunch.

The event will feature two sessions in English and Spanish with 32 workshops and will be held on Oct. 28 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Topics of the workshops range from nutrition to literacy and are targeted for parents of students from preschool to those preparing for college.

The event is sponsored by Project INSPIRE, the California State PTA and the county offices of education of San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and Riverside.

Registration can be made online at http://oms.sbcws.k12.ca.us <http://oms.sbcws.k12.ca.us>.

For more information, contact Marielauna Huizar, coordinator of Project INSPIRE, at the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools office at (909) 386-2696.
Unemployment among Hispanics was lower this year, and wages went up after a two-year decline, according to a national study released yesterday by the Pew Hispanic Center.

Increased immigration and the Hispanic labor force are growing rapidly, and those workers are easily finding jobs — especially in construction according to the study.

“In terms of employment, there are strong gains for Hispanics,” said Rakesh Kochhar, the center’s associate director for research and author of the report.

Latinos, who represent 13 percent of the U.S. labor force, accounted for 49 percent of all new workers in the year ending June 30. Eighty percent of jobs filled by Hispanics went to immigrants, who make up the biggest share of the Latino labor force.

The report was submitted as Congress debated proposals for immigration laws, the immigrant workforce, hiring of illegal immigrants, and border security.

Kochhar stated that the number of immigrant workers and the market for them seem to be “stronger than what we may do at the borders.”

The report did not review labor trends for illegal immigrants; however, it noted that previous studies have found that many new Latino immigrants are in the country illegally.

Hispanic unemployment dropped early this year to 4.9 percent from 5.8 percent in the same period last year. Median weekly wages for Latinos rose from $423 in 2005 to $431 in 2006 — still lower than those of any other ethnic group.

The current construction boom drove the Latino job growth, specifically for the foreign-born, the report said. Half the new jobs for Latinos in the past year were in construction, and the major portion of jobs was generated in the South and the West, according to the report.

Since 2003, nearly 90 percent of Latinos workers hired in construction have been immigrants, the report found. The wages for foreign-born Hispanic workers dropped from a median weekly wages of $400 to $389. That is probably due to more immigrants arriving and competition for the jobs they perform has stiffened, Kochhar said. “High growth in employment may have come at the price of wages.”

The report also noted that the nation’s construction industry appears to be slowing. That is especially true in places such as the Washington region.

The report, based on recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Labor Department, indicated that unemployment dropped over the fiscal year from 4 percent to 3.5 percent for Asians, from 4.1 percent to 3.9 percent for non-Hispanic whites and from 9.9 percent to 9 percent for blacks.

According to an analysis released today by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) of census data on the 2004 election, foreign-born voters in states with significant electoral votes such as California, Florida, and New York can make a statewide electoral vote outcome difference if as few as three to four percent of foreign-born voters shift their partisan-ship or candidate preferences.

“Few realize how large the foreign-born vote has become in selected states,” stated Harry P. Pachon, president of the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute and professor of public policy at the University of Southern California. “In six states alone they number over four million voters.”

Further analysis from the 2004 election examines the impact of Latino foreign-born voters in important electoral states. Again, in states with significant electoral votes such as Florida, California, and New York, Latino foreign-born voters can make a statewide electoral vote outcome difference if seven to nine percent of Latino foreign-born voters change their partisanship or candidate preferences.

In the other four states it would take a significant percentage (14-35%) of the Latino foreign-born vote to cause a one percent shift in the statewide electoral vote outcome. Given the large number of legal permanent residents who are not yet citizens in the United States, there is a potential for the foreign-born vote to grow and to become even more significant over time.

Founded in 1985, the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) advances informed policy on key issues affecting Latino communities through objective and timely research contributing to the betterment of the nation. TRPI is an affiliated research unit of the University of Southern California School of Policy, Planning, and Development, and is associated with the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy at Columbia University.

LATINA WOMEN’S FORUM TO BE HELD IN RIVERSIDE

The Latina Women’s Forum will hold its 12th Annual Health Conference, “Women and Stress,” October 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Riverside County Office of Education, 3958 Thirteenth Street, Riverside. The conference is free. There will be prizes, guest speaker and a free breakfast. No daycare is available.

Speakers include:

Steve Gray, MFT: “Women and Stress” Steve Gray has a Master of Science Degree in Psychology and is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist since 1985. He works with groups, families, individuals, and couples. Steve is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Alicia Marquez, MFT: “Depression” Alicia Marquez has a BA in psychology from Old Westbury University in New York and a masters degree in marital and family therapy from Loma Linda University where she is currently pursuing her doctorate degree. Alicia works at the Christian Counseling Center in Riverside and Loma Linda. She is a native of Uruguay. Alicia is bilingual in English and Spanish.

Alicia Marquez was born and raised in Mexico. She is a Community Outreach Worker at the Riverside Community Health Foundation. She received Tai Chi training through the Arthritis Foundation. Her mission is to create and promote a self-sufficient community through education, information, and prevention by training the community to improve and maintain the health and wellness of its residents.

To register or questions, call Maria Jimenez at (951) 826-6894.

Proudly Serving the Inland Empire

Contact your local realtor for all your real estate needs sell or purchase of real estate, probate sales, vacant land, new construction or multiple units etc.
Federal, state, county, city and education officials posed at the unveiling of the Cesar E. Chavez bust. At left, Father Patricio Guillen giving the benediction. Photo by IEHN

Jesse Valenzuela, CECTCIE chair and Ron Pekar, sculptorialist, at the unveiling of the Cesar E. Chavez bust. Valenzuela's leadership was the catalyst for the finalization of the Cesar E. Chavez bust. Pekar has developed over 600 art and sculpture projects throughout the world, and has more than 35 years of college-level teaching, lecturing, and art demonstrations at private and public schools. Photo by IEHN

UNVEILING THE CESAR CHAVEZ BUST

San Bernardino, CA - District Attorney Michael A. Ramos announced the promotion of veteran prosecutor Benjamin Gonzales, 55, to chief deputy district attorney.

Gonzales joined the District Attorney’s Office in 1975. He distinguished himself as a highly effective trial prosecutor where he handled murder cases and other high profile prosecutions.

In 1990, he was promoted to Supervising Deputy, first serving in the San Bernardino Office. For the last 11 years, Gonzales has supervised the Fontana Office. That office has had a growth of 15 staff to its current strength of 45, with 22 prosecutors. He is highly regarded by the law enforcement agencies that he has worked with over the years.

He is the father of four children and two grandchildren and resides in the City of San Bernardino. His father, Benjamin Gonzales Sr is a former chief of police of the San Bernardino Police Department and still resides in the city. His sister, Laura Gonzales, is Division Director II-West Valley Services-County of San Bernardino Probation Department.

Ramos stated that, "Ben is an outstanding prosecutor and a proven manager in my Office. He has an excellent reputation with law enforcement agencies we serve. Ben brings unquestioned integrity to his new chief deputy position. I am proud to have him join our Executive Staff."

HELPING AN OVERWEIGHT CHILD

By the American Counseling Association

A growing number of studies have identified obesity as the number one health issue currently facing American children. Being overweight not only brings increased health risks, but also can subject a child to taunting and discrimination.

While dealing with a child’s weight problems is never easy, there are a number of things that parents can do both in terms of eating habits and overall mental attitude, that can make reaching and maintaining a healthy weight a more attainable goal.

1. Don’t be the food police. Restricting food choices or constant lecturing about poor eating habits can leave a child feeling deprived, different and discounted. The result can be lowered self-esteem and eating habits that may include hiding food or binging on restricted foods.

2. Give your child an active role in food choices. Help your child learn about healthy food choices and include him or her on shopping trips to the market. Don’t automatically say “no” to poor food choices, but instead gently teach your child how to balance less desirable food choices with healthier ones.

3. Help develop a positive attitude. An overweight child doesn’t need lectures about his or her weight. Instead, teach your child to have a realistic view of the world and him or herself. We aren’t all supposed to look like models or movie stars. Healthy people come in a variety of sizes and shapes.

4. Be a positive role model for your child. Make dinner a family affair with everyone, taking reasonable portions and having a choice of healthy foods. Don’t lecture about healthy snack choices, instead set the example by reaching for that piece of fruit yourself.

5. Make staying active a family goal. A family walk or bike ride or ball game can work off excess calories, provide communication opportunities, and provide overall health benefits for your child and the entire family.

6. Encourage communications. Often we use food to make us feel calmer, to hide anger or as a way to avoid problems. Teaching your child that there are other ways to deal with issues besides the refrigerator can help overcome the emotional eating problems so many children face.

There can be many reasons why a child is overweight. If you feel excessive weight is a significant problem for your child, talk to his or her physician about possible options or see a counseling professional specializing in children.

The Counseling Corner is provided as a public service by the American Counseling Association, the nation’s largest organization of counseling professionals. You can learn more about the counseling profession at the ACA web site, www.counseling.org.

IF KNOWLEDGE CAN CREATE PROBLEMS.
IT IS NOT THROUGH IGNORANCE
THAT WE CAN SOLVE THEM.
ISAAC ASIMOV
SECURE FENCE ACT - A BRAZEN ATTEMPT TO SECURE RE-ELECTION

OCTOBER 2, 2006 - This weekend, the U.S. Congress went home to campaign for re-election having failed to enact comprehensive immigration reform but congratulating itself on authorizing 700 miles of walls and fences along the U.S./Mexico border. Far from ensuring the nation's security, the so-called "Secure Fence Act" was a brazen attempt to secure votes for re-election.

This year, MALDEF worked hard in Washington, D.C. and across the country educating and advocating on the importance of comprehensive immigration reform for the nation's economic growth and security. With many others, including the millions who marched this spring, we were able to hold back the most egregious provisions of the Sensenbrenner bill that passed the House in December, 2005 but was rejected by the Senate. Unfortunately, the House leadership chose to conduct field hearings this summer instead of do the hard work of reaching agreement with the Senate and Bush Administration. Left undone were important bipartisan legal changes such as AgJobs, supported by industry and unions alike that would have provided visas for farmworkers, and the DREAM Act, that would have permitted students attending two- or four-year colleges or entering military service to adjust their immigration status.

Faced with House leadership intransigence, on Friday night the U.S. Senate passed legislation by a vote of 80-19 that authorizes 700 miles of fencing along the nearly 2,000 mile long border between the United States and Mexico. While the worst features of the Sensenbrenner bill were not enacted, the Secure Fence Act authorizes, but does not pay for, walls and fences that will keep unauthorized immigrant families inside the U.S., make illegal crossings more deadly and dangerous, and increase the profits of smugglers who prey upon the hopes of immigrants. And it provides not one new visa for American companies who need workers or American families who want to be reunited with loved ones.

On a positive note, MALDEF achieved its other top legislative priority when the 109th Congress extended, one year early, the Voting Rights Act, including the bilingual ballot and pre-clearance provisions of importance to Latino and other citizens. It is now up to the Latino community to use their rights protected by the Voting Rights Act to ensure a better future for Latinos and other immigrants who currently lack them. Founded in 1968, MALDEF, the nation's leading Latino legal organization, promotes and protects the rights of Latinos through advocacy, litigation, community education and outreach, leadership development, and higher education scholarships.

AMERICAN RED CROSS
SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

AMERICAN RED CROSS SEEKS VOLUNTEERS
Do you have as little as 4 hours a week to share?
Do you want to make a difference?
Are you interested in an experience of your lifetime?
If so, we have an opportunity for you.
We need volunteers for:
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First Aid/CPR teachers
Community Outreach Program
Contact Elissa Reechsteiner at (909) 380-7248

CITY OF SAN BERNARDINO
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AGENCY (SBETA)
ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) 06-01

INNOVATIVE YOUTH PROGRAM
The One-Stop Career Center is seeking qualified organizations to provide comprehensive employment and training services to youth eligible under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Programs must address the purposes of the WIA Youth Training Program, including the improvement of basic educational skills, the achievement of a High School Diploma or GED, the ability to provide work readiness and occupational skills training, on-going counseling and guidance, mentoring, supportive services, development of citizenship and leadership qualities, and effective connections to the employer community, through job shadowing, community service placements, or through work experience/internships.

Eligible Organizations include, but are not limited to, public and private schools, community-based organizations, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and governmental entities. Programs must be operated in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and its Regulations, and within state and local policy, as set forth in the RFP instructions.

Proposals must be submitted in their entirety to the One-Stop Career Center by 4:00 PM October 30, 2006 in order to be considered. For further inquiries, contact:
SBETA/ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER
600 NORTH ARROWHEAD AVENUE, SUITE 300
SAN BERNARDINO, CA. 92401-1148
(909) 888-7881
ATTN: CONTRACTING & PLANNING STAFF
Washington, DC - Latinos are in the midst of celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, a time to focus attention on our culture and history and to celebrate with pride our accomplishments and contributions. But we should do more than celebrate the past; we should also chart our future course. Although the Latino community has unique characteristics and its own priorities, we share with the majority of Americans the sense that our nation has drifted onto the wrong track and needs to head in a new direction.

Where would this new direction take us? And how can Latinos — locally and nationally — get there? Locally, the Latino community has experienced remarkable growth. This poses both significant opportunities and challenges. To help address the major issues confronting us, I took the lead in organizing the Inland Empire Latino Coalition. The IELC includes professionals in education, health care, business, government, and other fields who share a desire to improve the quality of life for Latinos now and in the future.

We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, but already we have made progress, and I am confident that the IELC will provide valuable leadership for Latinos and for our local communities as a whole.

Many Latinos in the Inland Empire and across the United States are feeling the impact of government policies that have hindered our progress. Latinos are often denied opportunities that others enjoy. In terms of economic achievement, education, employment and health care, Latinos are not reaching the same level as others. Although President Bush and other Republicans have discovered the importance of the Latino community in election years and have been aggressively pursuing Latino voters, they have not truly made our issues and wellbeing their priority. In fact, they have pursued policies that actually harm many Latinos.

One out of three Latinos has no health insurance. This problem has grown 19 percent under President Bush. Poverty among Latino-American families has risen 21 percent, and the median Latino household income is 4 percent lower than when Bill Clinton was President. Many other statistics document what we all feel in our daily lives. Although Latino families are working harder and harder, many are struggling to make ends meet. In short, President Bush and Republicans have left Latinos behind.

That is why I am joining my Democratic colleagues in supporting the New Direction agenda. This is a plan to help lead our nation to greater security, prosperity and opportunity for all Americans. I also support "El Compromiso Democratica con el Pueblo Latino", the Democrats' pledge to help create solutions to challenges that the Latino community faces in areas including economic empowerment, education, retirement, immigration reform, health care affordability and national security.

Let me share with you just a few of our ideas. We will make college more affordable so that families can use education as a vehicle to move out of poverty. We will also make health care more affordable for both employers and employees and fix the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.

In order to keep good paying jobs for American workers, we will take tax incentives away from corporations who send their jobs overseas. We also have proposals to promote alternative energy to end our dependence on foreign oil, lower gas costs and reduce pollution.

As we honor the achievements of Latinos, we know that celebrating the Latino community for one month is not enough. Nationally, the New Direction agenda will promote greater opportunities for Latinos to achieve success. Locally, the Inland Empire Latino Coalition will find solutions to address the growth of the community. Latinos in the Inland Empire deserve a real opportunity to achieve the American Dream. I am honored to play a role in making those opportunities available national and here at home.

**Ralph Dominguez Biography**

Ralph Dominguez is a resident of Fontana and a candidate for the Fontana City Council. Ralph is proud to be a Democrat and is committed to working hard for the people of his city. He believes that Fontana is a good city, but it could be better by involving its residents in the political process at City Hall and addressing their concerns. He is particularly concerned about the traffic in the city and the drop out rate of young people from school.

Ralph came to the United States of America in 1979 from El Salvador. Throughout high school, he worked as a gas station attendant. He briefly attended East Los Angeles Community College before enlisting in the Armed Forces. He served in the United States Navy for 3 years.

When he completed his military service, he attended Chaffey College and worked as a waiter, in construction and as a steel worker. In 1987, he started his employment with UPS and became a Teamster. In 1991, Ralph became Citizen of the United States of America. Becoming a US Citizen was one of Ralph's proudest moments. He is proud to be "a citizen of the greatest country on the face of the earth" and proud that he served his country by being in the Armed Forces.

In 2001, he became a Business Representative for Teamsters and still serves in that position. Recently, he was appointed as the Secretary for the Joint Area Labor Management Committee.

Ralph is a devoted family man. He is proud of his wife Myra of 14 years, a homemaker, and their three children, daughter Myra and sons, Rafael and Andrew. The Dominguez's have been residents of Fontana for 20 years where their children attend school.

Ralph is not an experienced politician but knows that the people of Fontana need to be heard. YOU need to have the city council members respond to YOUR needs. As your council member, Ralph is committed to being "a voice for all of our community" to make sure your voice and the voices of your neighbors are heard.

Ralph invites you to call him at (909) 349-3886 or e-mail him with your concerns at VoteRalphDominguez@yahoo.com

**Teresa Parra**

Election Day November 7

www.teresaparra.org

I believe that we must ensure that EVERY STUDENT of this district has access to quality education. This is the cornerstone of our City's economy, future and empowering our quality of life.
“The environment? What’s up with that?” This used to be the reaction of many Latinos to hearing about environmental issues, says Roger Rivera, president of the National Hispanic Environmental Council. They considered the environment a concern “for rich white folks with time on their hands.”

But this perception is changing, evidenced at the Latino Congreso in Los Angeles. More than 1,300 Latino leaders, public officials, and activists came together at the Congreso, the most comprehensive gathering of its kind in nearly 30 years. Issues like voting power, migration policy, and education reform were high on the agenda, but there was also an entire day dedicated to the environment, with well-attended sessions on such topics as climate change, community parks, and environmental justice.

The response from the attendees — most of whom could tell stories about neighborhood sewage spills, dwindling fish supplies unprecedented heat waves, and other problems they had experienced suggested that the country’s largest “minority” group certainly understands the importance of environmental issues.

“We don’t always talk about the environment, but we should,” John Trasvina, interim president and general counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, told the assembled crowd.

Rivera called the environment “the single biggest issue frontier for Latinos.” Why should Latinos in particular talk about the environment? Because, like other communities of color in the United States, Latino communities get picked as sites for polluting factories while wealthier, predominately white communities are left alone.

According to a 2004 report [PDF] by the League of United Latin American Citizens, more than half of Latinos in the U.S. live in areas that violate federal air-pollution standards for ozone. This ozone pollution contributes to the 2.5-to-1 ratio of asthma incidence in Latino children compared to non-Latino white children.

Environmental health issues like these can affect other aspects of children’s lives, such as their education.

The enormous Port of Los Angeles is the entryway for about 42 percent of U.S. imports, and the neighboring community of Wilmington is home to the largest port and refinery cluster in the United States. Wilmington is 85 percent Latino, and its residents are five times more likely to develop cancer than the average American.

The theme of the Congreso was “Marcha Hoy; Vota Manana” (March Today; Vote Tomorrow). Indeed, one of the questions for this election season and those that follow is whether the record numbers of immigrant-rights marchers earlier this year will translate into record numbers of voters in November and beyond.

With approximately 43 million Latinos in the United States and a projected 100 million by 2050, the potential for nationwide Latino political dominance is certainly there. As several experts at the Latino Congreso pointed out, however, many Latinos are not registered to vote, and turnout can be a big problem.

Antonio Gonzalez, president of the Southwest Voter Registration on Education Project and the main organizer of the Congreso, projects that 6.5 million Latinos will vote in November 2006, an increase of 1 million over 2002 levels.

The lofty goal of the environmental section of the Latino Congreso, according to organizers, was to develop a broad-based, accepted Latino agenda on the environment.

As Celeste Cantú, executive director of the California State Water Resources Control Board, said, “The United States is a Latino community.” For this reason, we all have a stake in how Latino leaders, public officials, and activists confront environmental challenges, and we must all stand together to achieve success. ¡Si se puede! Yes we can.

Oliver Bernstein, deputy press secretary for diversity programs For the Sierra Club, represented the Sierra Club at the recent Latino Congreso in Los Angeles.

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