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COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
SWORN IN

Several hundred invited educators and supporters listened attentively as Dr. Cheryl Fischer, wife of the superintendent and retired educator, attended by over 200 educators and guests in a ceremony at the County Superintendent of Schools Administrative Office. Dr. Fischer is entering into his third term as superintendent of schools.

Photo courtesy of the County Superintendent of Schools Communication Office.

SHERIFF PENROD SWORN IN
FOR FOURTH TERM

Gary Penrod was recently sworn in for his fourth term as Sheriff for the County of San Bernardino at the Four Seasons Hotel, Ontario, with an audience of over 400 guests. Sheriff Penrod has incorporated major changes in the department, including advanced technologies, expansion of jail and facilities, and jurisdiction over the Marshall and Coroner Offices during his 10-year tenure. Photo by IEHN.

A jubilant audience at the Four Seasons Hotel in Ontario witnessed the swearing in of San Bernardino County Sheriff Gary Penrod for his fourth term, with resounding applause and standing ovation by county officials, law enforcement officers, citizens, sheriff volunteer groups, and friends for the popular 35-year law enforcement official.

Master of ceremonies Jack Brown, chief executive officer for Staters Bros, reviewed the 154-year history of the county police department, including chasing outlaws in the desert to sending other types of criminals to jail in the unincorporated areas.

A slide show depicted Penrod's career in the sheriff's department, including a variety of activities associated with law enforcement responsibilities, and public affairs functions.

Penrod joined the Sheriff's Department in December, 1971, and worked at Glen Helen while attending the academy. He was assigned to Big Bear and worked for 10 years, and promoted to detective in 1981.

He was later promoted to sergeant in 1983, working in narcotics. Returning to Big Bear, he was promoted to lieutenant in 1987, and assigned to Barstow, later assigned to Victorville.

In 1988, the City of Hesperia was incorporated and Penrod was assigned as its first police commander, promoted to captain in 1989. In 1992, Penrod was promoted to deputy chief in charge of region I. Penrod was elected county sheriff in 1994, when the county population was 773,850. Currently, the population is 1,900,000.

During his 12-year tenure as sheriff of the county, Penrod has initiated many operational, technical and logistical changes in the department, including: Adelanto Detention Center, use of Tasers and installation of ballistic doors in patrol cars, use of a website with public input, the expansion of the Scientific Investigations Division, including DNA technology.

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DEMOCRATS SHOULD DROP ‘NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND’

By William Bainbridge

The television news recently captured my attention with iconoclastic filmmaker Michael Moore blasting the Democrats. Yes, the Democrats. He was demanding those now in control of the government’s budget immediately order a withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

While no fan of Moore, it is tantalizing to think of a similar tirade he might direct toward federal interference in control of education through the No Child Left behind Act.

Now that the election has been decided, politicians are talking of bipartisanship. What we really need is nonpartisanship, not bipartisanship.

We need to find out whether the majority of Democrats really care about the issues facing schools.

Politically informed citizens of either party are displeased with No Child. Conservatives have expressed their displeasure with No Child’s federal control. Liberals criticize the law that places accountability measures on teachers whose unions are among their largest benefactors.

It is important to recognize the contradiction inherent in supporting local control through charter schools and vouchers while unloading federal education mandates on the nation’s public schools, many of them unfunded. It has been well documented that No Child is not improving education quality. The current administration is using misleading statistics to support No Child.

Also, corruption issues are emerging: First, seeking to build support for its education reform law, the Bush administration inappropriately paid commentator Armstrong. Williams $240,000 with federal tax dollars to promote No Child on his nationally syndicated television show.

Then according to the U.S. Department of Education’s own inspector general, the $5 billion “Reading First” program showed preference in funding curricula developed by publisher McGraw-Hill. As reported in a previous column, the Bush and McGraw families have been personal friends since the 1930s and the McGraws have been generous donors to the Bush presidential campaigns. Under No Child, the administration solicited the committees charged with approving states’ curriculums with individuals having “significant professional connections” to another profitable McGraw program, “Direct Instruction.”

In October, the Los Angeles Times documented that “Ignite Learning,” a company owned by President Bush’s brother and his parents, is benefiting from federal dollars targeted for economically disadvantaged students. Many U.S. school districts were convinced to use federal funds to purchase products from Neil Bush’s company, such as Ignite’s “portable learning centers” that cost $3,800 each. Ignite does not offer reading instruction, and the Ignite math program is not scheduled to be available until next year.

Department of Education officials appointed by President Bush is being called in to develop a “compassionate conservative” approach to supporting the law that is under challenge in several states.

Before such a test could be developed, additional contracts would be let and national content standards would have to be developed. Efforts would likely rely on firms like McGraw-Hill that are currently reaping the benefits of the flawed No Child legislation.

Public schools were created to provide every child an opportunity to succeed. It is time to end this federal interference in our schools. It is time to end the era of No Child. The federal government must provide every child an opportunity to succeed. It is high time federal interference is brought to an end.

No Child does not increase performance. Many U.S. school districts were convinced to use federal funds to purchase products from Neil Bush’s company, such as Ignite’s “portable learning centers” that cost $3,800 each. Ignite does not offer reading instruction, and the Ignite math program is not scheduled to be available until next year.

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While it is rare to see any administration inappropriately paying commentators, it is even rarer for the administration to be caught red-handed.

The administration should back off. Congress should move swiftly to pass a budget. Once the budget is passed, it is time to end the era of the unwise No Child legislation and abolish it.

William Bainbridge - St. Augustine, is CEO of SchoolMatch, a national educational auditing, research and data organization.
Inland Empire Hispanic News

THE U.S. GLOBAL EMPIRE
By Laurence M. Vance

There is a new empire in town, and its global presence is increasing every day.

The kingdom of Alexander the Great reached all the way to the borders of India. The Roman Empire controlled the Celtic regions of Northern Europe and all of the Hellenized states that bordered the Mediterranean. The Mongol Empire, which was the largest contiguous empire in history, stretched from Southeast Asia to Europe. The Byzantine Empire spanned the years 395 to 1453. In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire stretched from the Persian Gulf in the east to Hungary in the northwest, and from Egypt in the south to the Caucasus in the north. At the height of its dominion, the British Empire included almost a quarter of the world’s population.

Nothing, however, compares to the U.S. global empire. What makes U.S. hegemony unique is not only its control over great land masses or population centers, but of a global presence unlike that of any other country in history.

The extent of the U.S. global empire is almost incalculable. The latest “Base Structure Report” of the Department of Defense states that the Department’s physical assets consist of “more than 600,000 individual buildings and structures, at more than 6,000 locations, on more than 30 million acres.” The exact number of locations is then given as 6,702, divided into large installations (115), medium installations (115), and small installations/locations (6,472). This classification can be deceiving, however, because installations are only classified as small if they have a Plant Replacement Value (PRV) of less than $800 million.

Although most of these locations are in the continental United States, 96 of them are in U.S. territories around the globe, and 702 of them are in foreign countries. But as Chalmers Johnson has documented, the figure of 702 foreign military installations is too low, for it does not include installations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, and Uzbekistan. Johnson estimates that an honest count would be closer to 1,000.

The number of countries that the United States has a presence in is staggering. According to the U.S. Department of State’s list of “Independent States in the World,” there are 192 countries in the world, all of which, except Bhutan, Cuba, Iran, and North Korea, have diplomatic relations with the United States. All of these countries except one (Vatican City) are members of the United Nations. According to the Department of Defense publication, “Active Duty Military Personnel Strengths by Regional Area and by Country,” the United States has troops in 135 countries.

This means that the United States has troops in 70 percent of the world’s countries. The average American could probably not locate half of these 135 countries on a map.

To this list could be added regions like the Indian Ocean territory of Diego Garcia, Gibraltar, and the Atlantic Ocean island of St. Helena, still controlled by Great Britain, but not considered sovereign countries. Greenland is also home to U.S. troops, but is technically part of Denmark.

Troops in two other regions, Kosovo and Hong Kong, might also be included here, but the DOD’s “Personnel Strengths” document includes U.S. troops in Kosovo under Serbia and U.S. troops in Hong Kong under China.

Possessions of the United States like Guam, Johnston Atoll, Puerto Rico, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Virgin Islands are likewise home to U.S. troops. Guam has over 3,200.

Regular troop strength ranges from a low of 1 in Malawi to a high of 74,796 in Germany. At the time the most recent “Personnel Strengths” was released by the government (September 30, 2003), there were 183,002 troops deployed to Iraq, an unspecified number of which came from the U.S. forces in Germany and Italy. The total number of troops deployed abroad as of that date was 252,764, not including U.S. troops in Iraq from the United States. Total military personnel on September 30, 2003, was 1,434,377. This means that 17.6 percent of U.S. military forces were deployed on foreign soil, and certainly over 25 percent if U.S. troops in Iraq from the United States were included. But regardless of how many troops we have in each country, having troops in 135 countries is 135 countries too many.

The U.S. global empire - an empire that Alexander the Great, Caesar Augustus, Genghis Khan, Suleiman the Magnificent, Justinian, and King George V would be proud of.

Laurence M. Vance [send him mail] is a freelance writer and an adjunct instructor in accounting and economics at Pensacola Junior College in Pensacola, FL.

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

FUNDING IRAQ WAR, KILLING OUR COUNTRY
By Bruce Gagnon

The Bush administration is preparing to submit a request to Congress for up to $160 billion to fund the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan for fiscal year 2007. This will be on top of $70 billion that Congress has already approved for 2007.

Since 2001, Congress has approved $502 billion for the war on “terror,” roughly two-thirds for Iraq. The cost of the entire Vietnam War, in today’s dollars, was $536 billion.

The UK’s Guardian recently reported that Bush told senior advisers that the U.S. must make “a last big push” to win in Iraq and might increase U.S. military forces by as many as 20,000 soldiers.

In our recent national election, the people voted for a change in policy in Iraq. The message seems to have reached Washington and their answer to the public appears to be “OK, we will change our policy. We will dramatically increase the amount of money we are spending on the war and we will send even more troops.”

Not quite what the 62 percent of Americans who oppose the war had in mind.

America is now hemorrhaging jobs and our debt is more than $8.6 trillion and growing by $2 billion a day. We’d better wake up quick and tell the Democrats that they must stop funding this war. It’s killing our country.

Bruce K. Gagnon is coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.

CHICANO STUDENTS PROGRAMS OF UCR PRESENTS 14TH ANNUAL NOCHE CULTURAL

Chicano Student Programs of UCR presents the 14th Annual Noche Cultural on Saturday, January 20, 2007. The event is an evening of variety entertainment for the entire family. Doors open at 6:30 pm with show to begin at 7:00 pm in the University Theatre.

This year’s event includes a performance by Teatro Talaenos, a nonprofit bilingual Latin-American Theatre Collective, dedicated to presenting quality theater productions that focus on the rich cultural heritage and traditions, in addition to addressing social and human rights, needs and concerns. Also performing will be Mexico, who will perform exciting traditional and new music with the ancient, exotic and cosmic sounds of the instruments of ancestral Mexico!

The evening also includes a performance representing various regions of Mexico by Ballet Folklorico de UCR. This dance groups include students from the local area and perform in the community at various events. In addition there will be a special performance by Melinda Del Toro who will wow the crowd with her beauty, stage presence, and singing voice, which easily ranges from Ranchera & Mariachi, to R & B to Soul to Latin Rock.

Making their 14th appearance will be the local familia, Los Romeroz with a family act and their own very special renditions of romantic ballads.

Admission: $9 general, $7 students. Parking fee is $5 per car. Directional signs on campus lead to the theatre. Due to limited seating, advance ticket purchase is recommended.

For tickets and information call UCR Chicano Student Programs (951) 827-3821.
The fact that mankind has been populated is proof that mankind has the capability to live together in peace. If mankind cannot live together in peace, then mankind should not be alive. Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation.

The foundation of such a method is love. Martin Luther King Jr., December 11, 1964

There’s been a lot of controversy lately over whether Citizens Energy Corp. should distribute — and the poor should accept — discount heating oil from Venezuela while that country is under the leadership of President Hugo Chavez.

But those who have no problem staying warm at night should not condemn others for accepting Venezuela’s oil. Rhetoric means little to an elderly woman who has to drag an old cot from her basement to sleep by the warmth of the open kitchen stove or gives up food or medicine to pay her heating bill.

For nearly 30 years, Citizens Energy has provided senior citizens and low-income families with affordable fuel oil, gas, electricity, pharmaceutical drugs and other basic necessities. Citgo Petroleum is a U.S. company owned by the people of Venezuela. The oil it provides to Citizens Energy, the nonprofit that I lead, acts as a safety net for hundreds of thousands.

When our partnership with Citgo was announced last year, US Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman praised the discount program as corporate philanthropy. “It’s a charitable contribution,” he said, “and I wish more companies did it.”

Charities like the Baseball Hall of Fame and the Muscular Dystrophy Association receive generous donations from Citgo, but no one is telling them to decline the gifts.

Meanwhile, oil companies other than Citgo have declined to share their record profits with those who most struggle to keep pace with rising energy costs.

In spite of the fact that heating oil prices have doubled over the past few years, the federal fuel assistance program faces a one-third cut this year, from $3.1 billion to $2.1 billion. Washington earns windfall tax revenues from the rising prices of petroleum products, but not a cent goes to offset rising energy costs for the poor.

Nor do the poor benefit from increased royalties on gas and oil taken from federal lands and waters — if, in fact, the energy companies pay the government at all.

Crisis of our program isn’t about cheap heating oil. It’s all about Hugo. While conservative interests in this country don’t like him, U.S. businesses don’t mind his money and his marketplace.

Otherwise, why would General Motors and Ford sell more than 300,000 cars a year in Venezuela? Why would Chevron Texaco, Exxon Mobil, Shell, and other major corporations — including Vice President Cheney’s old firm, Halliburton — invest and earn billions every year off of petroleum exploration, production, refining, and transportation in the country? Why would U.S. insurance companies, banks, telecom firms, entertainment conglomerates, and consumer product manufacturers flock to our Latin American neighbor? American consumers certainly don’t mind doing business with Venezuela. More than 558 million barrels of Venezuelan crude and oil products were shipped to the United States last year. Just one-half of 1 percent of that goes into our organization’s program, but that’s the only portion that draws criticism.

Even though doing business with Venezuela has been very good for capitalists, the issue at hand is Chavez and his politics of socialism. Before we accept the characterizations of him as a socialist threat to our way of life, we ought to look at our own country — ironically, a system of socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the poor.

Banks make billions on the gap between federal lending rates and what they charge consumers to borrow for homes, cars, small businesses, and personal needs. The government guarantees their deposits, so that if the banks fail, the taxpayer is left holding the bag.

Insurance companies charge consumers with premiums that go up and up, yet expect the government to cover their losses when they get hit — as we saw in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

Student loan corporations, working closely with colleges and universities, contribute to spiraling higher-education costs with loans guaranteed by the government.

The fact is that many of the bluest of our blue chip corporations may actually be wearing a shade of Hugo Chavez red beneath their suspenders — with one major difference: They’re fine with socializing the risks of capitalism, as long as they can privatize the profits. As for the poor? They’re decidedly on their own.

Meanwhile, in Venezuela, the president is socializing his nation’s oil profits. Poverty has dropped by 25 percent. State-sponsored provision of basic needs like food and healthcare has expanded.

So, sure, we’ll distribute Hugo’s oil. Doing so is called compassionate capitalism. Right now, our country’s vulnerable families fend for themselves, while the well-to-do can afford to throw snowballs at our program from the security of their warm homes and offices.

Joseph P. Kennedy II, a former member of Congress from Massachusetts, is founder, president, and chairman of Citizens Energy Corporation.

THREE COUNTY TEACHERS EARN NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

SAN BERNARDINO — Three teachers from San Bernardino County earned their National Board Certification this month, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

They were among 293 teachers from California who achieved the National Board Certified Teachers by their district, school and area of certification:

• Chaffey Joint Union High School: Jana Arrieta, Ontario High School, English language arts/adolescence and young adulthood.

• San Bernardino City Unified: Jason Scott, Fairfax Elementary, Generalist/middle childhood

• Snowline Joint Unified: Susan Thomas, Quail Valley Middle School, Mathematics/early adolescence.

Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

SHERIFF PENROD SWORN IN FOR FOURTH TERM

Continued from page 1

and added personnel, transfer of the aviation division to the San Bernardino International Airport, a multi-jurisdictional meth team, inclusion of the Marshall and Coroner’s offices to the department’s jurisdiction, Citizens Information Exchange Committee, ICE Program, and a myriad of law enforcement advancements to challenge the increase of criminal activities throughout the department’s jurisdiction.

“We have had hard times in the department,” Penrod said, in addressing the audience. “In a fiscal crisis, layoffs were mandated, but we handled it with attrition and were able to keep our personnel. There were also problems with some of our people. However, we were also to log 49,000 arrests. I will encourage more deputies to get out of their cars for community policing. Don’t get me wrong, we are still going to throw a lot of people in jail,” he said.

Penrod is chair of the state sheriff’s association, and has been able to direct more resources to county law enforcement.

Under his leadership, stated Undersheriff Richard Beemer, the department has grown and incorporated new advances in the area of law enforcement. “Gary Penrod is popular in the department and as sheriff of the County of San Bernardino,” he said.
Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Rep. Waters: “Mr. President Don’t Send More Troops to Iraq”

Washington, DC - U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (CA-35) offered the following advice to President Bush as he tries to improve the failed situation that he has created in Iraq: “Mr. President, just don’t do it - do not send more of our men and women in uniform to Iraq. Iraq is embroiled in civil war. Our troops should not be sent into a hopeless situation that will likely result in injury or death for many of them. “This war has already stretched our military thin. Many experts, including some at the Pentagon, do not believe that the United States has the capacity to send more troops to Iraq without becoming vulnerable to other threats. “In addition, many experts do not believe that sending more troops to Iraq will accomplish anything. Even General Abizaid, the top U.S. commander for the Middle East, has suggested that more troops in Iraq are unnecessary. One Defense official described the deployment of more troops to Iraq as ‘a double down’ - we should never gamble with the lives of our troops. Sending more troops to Iraq is not the solution; we cannot ask our brave men and women to fight - and perhaps die - for nothing. “Mr. President, we should not put more troops in a country where militias are gaining influence and invoke their own style of justice. Militia’s run rampant in Iraq, kidnapping, torturing and killing scores of innocent Iraqis each day while at the same time seeking revenge against their historical rivals. Moqtada al-Sadr’s militia, al-Mahdi, is one of the worst offenders of this behavior. Each day his militia, which is gaining new members all the time, seeks to expand his influence through gruesome methods. We should not put our troops in the middle of a sectarian civil war. “The only way that the United States military can stabilize Iraq is by redeploying out of Iraq and allowing the Iraqis to assume more responsibility for the security in their country. Mr. President, you must develop and implement a plan to conclude our involvement in Iraq immediately but without sending more troops to the civil war zone that Iraq has become.”

Representative Maxine Waters is Chair of the 73-member ‘Out of Iraq’ Congressional Caucus. The Caucus was founded in June 2005 to pressure the Bush Administration to conclude the Iraq war as soon as possible.

CALPIRG: STOP THE RAID ON STUDENT AID

By Steve Blackledge

Average student debt levels have more than doubled in the last decade and more students and their families are finding themselves buried under the burden of student loan debt. Last year, even as interest rates on loans skyrocketed, Congress cut the student loan program by $12 billion dollars. While students struggle with increasing debt, the private lenders are making huge profits and receiving billions of dollars in subsidies from the federal government.

A college degree is becoming a necessity in today’s world, and students are doing whatever it takes to pay for college, including taking on more and more debt. Average student debt levels have more than doubled in the last decade, and nearly two-thirds of all four-year college graduates now have student loans.

Last year, Congress cut the student loan program by $12 billion dollars, money that could have gone to lowering interest rates or making college more affordable. As college costs continue to swell, more students have to borrow to pay for their degree. A full 39% of student borrowers graduate with unmanageable levels of federal student loan debt.

As more students take out larger loans, private student lenders have worked to increase their subsidies at the expense of students and taxpayers. Lenders like Sallie Mae capitalize on excessive federal subsidies and oppose loan reforms that could help students.

We need our leaders to do more to help. Congress and the Bush Administration should take action to reduce the burden of student debt by reducing waste in the loan programs, by increasing grant aid and by cutting interest rates in half.

Incoming House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has committed to cutting student loan interest rates in half within the first 100 hours of the new Congress as it convenes in early January, but will need the support of the rest of Congress.

Parents and students are urged to contact their respective congressional representative to put real student aid above subsidies to corporate lenders.

Steve Blackledge is CALPIRG Legislative Director

STATUS OF CALIFORNIA’S KIDS UNDERMINES PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMY

According to New Children Now Report Card, “The State of the State’s Children”

Cosynt Societal Outcomes Linked to Children’s Current Health and Education Status

OAKLAND, CA - If significant children’s policy changes are not made in health care and education, current and future generations will be far worse off than previous ones and pay costs, directly and indirectly, for many years to come. These are among the findings of a new study from Children Now, a leading nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to assuring all children thrive.

The 2008-07 California Report Card: The State of the State’s Children, a research report released today, identifies critical issues affecting children’s well-being and threatening to compromise public health and the economy. The report assigns letter grades to individual issues, such as a “C-” in K-12 education, and a “B-” in health insurance. One bright spot, a “B+” in after school programs, reflects the state’s ability to resolve systemic children’s issues through focused, bipartisan effort.

“Our aim is to present a complete, nonpartisan analysis of the components of our children’s well-being, so as policy agendas are set we have an accurate measuring stick to assess what’s being done,” said Ted Lempert, Children Now president. “All of our children’s issues are interconnected so it is absolutely critical that we begin to look at them together.”

The report presents the most current data available on the status of California’s children, who represent 27 percent of all Californians and 13 percent of the nation’s kids:

- 760,000 California Children, ages 0-18, don’t have health insurance.
- One in three of California’s 6- to 17-year-olds is obese or overweight.
- About 55 percent of California’s 3- and 4-year-olds do not attend preschool.
- About 60 percent of California’s 2nd- to 11th graders do not meet state goals for math and reading proficiency in 2006.
- As many as 30 percent of the state’s children live in an economically-struggling family, able to pay for only the most basic needs.

“We need to recognize that comprehensive changes to the systems themselves are needed now,” said Continue on next page

“I have a career because of Crafton Hills College.” --Ken Dale

Ken Dale began his medical training at Crafton Hills College in 1985 by enrolling in the CHP Paramedic Program. "Crafton Hills is one of the longest standing college paramedic programs in the country with an absolutely phenomenal reputation," says Ken, an emergency medicine physician.

PREPARE FOR TOMORROW...START TAKING CLASSES TODAY!
Spring Classes start January 16 - apply now!
ENROLLMENT FEES ARE REDUCED TO $20/UNIT BEGINNING SPRING 2007. You can apply and register online.
Crafton Hills College - www.craftonhills.edu

Inland Empire Hispanic News
ABOUT FACE: SOLDIERS CALL FOR IRAQ WITHDRAWAL  
By Mark Cooper

For the first time since Vietnam, an organized, robust movement of active-duty US military personnel has publicly surfaced to oppose a war in which they are serving. Those involved plan to petition Congress to withdraw American troops from Iraq.

After appearing only seven weeks ago on the Internet, the Appeal for Redress, brainchild of 29-year-old Navy seaman Jonathan Hutto, has already been signed by nearly 1,000 US soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen, including dozens of officers - most of whom are on active duty.

Not since 1969, when some 1,300 active-duty military personnel signed an open letter in the New York Times opposing the war in Vietnam, has there been such a dramatic barometer of rising anti-war sentiment.

Interviews with two dozen signers of the Appeal reveal a mix of motives for opposing the war: ideological, practical, strategic and moral. But all those interviewed agreed that it is time to start withdrawing the troops. Coming from an all-volunteer military, the Appeal was called "unprecedented" by Eugene Fidell, president of the National Institute of Military Justice.

The Nation spoke with rank-and-file personnel as well as high-ranking officers - some on the Iraqi front lines, others at domestic and offshore US military bases - who have signed the Appeal. All of their names will be made available to Congress when the Appeal is presented in mid-January.

Signers have been assured they are sending a communication to Congress protected under the Military Whistleblower Protection Act. The Pentagon is powerless to take official reprisals and has said that as long as active-duty personnel are not in uniform or on duty, they are free to express their views to Congress.

There are of course other, subtler risks involved. The military command exercises enormous power through individual reviews, promotions and assignments. But that hasn't kept a number of signers from going public with their dissent.

President Bush's term in office. That is one reason why the Appeal was introduced now, for Redress gives me that outlet. I am encouraged by the November elections, but still wary. We rushed into the war on false assumptions, and now we might rush out just as falsely. What troops need now is a light at the end of the tunnel, not just for this deployment but for all deployments.

Bringing everyone out this summer is too fast to be supported by our Army's infrastructure. We would hemorrhage lives if we do so. But so would we if we stay the course. I am encouraged by politicians who call for a withdrawal by the conclusion of President Bush's term in office. That seems a realistic timetable for me."

"Rebecca" - 26 years old. 101st Airborne, US Army. Just returned from Iraq. Stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. "I joined in 2004. I was trying to go into the human rights field, but it was very competitive. I was in need of health insurance, and the Army seemed feasible. Now it looks like I will be stop-lossed until 2010. I had strong feelings about the war; against it, but I'm the type of person that wants to fully understand both sides of the argument. My experience in Iraq confirmed my views, but it also gave me a more multifaceted view of things. I did see some of the good things being done, but it seemed like a Band-Aid on a gushing wound. Mostly I saw the frivolity of the missions, the lack of direction, the absurdity of the mission. You go out in your Humvee, you drive around, and you wait to be blown up and get killed by an IED. About 40 percent of my unit was stop-lossed. Their first mission was to take down Saddam and his regime, and they seemed to understand that and agree with the mission to take down a ruthless dictator. Now they see this very powerful government and they seem to understand why they are there, caught in the cross hairs of a civil war. I think it is safe to say that the majority of soldiers are wondering what this grand scheme is that we keep hearing about from those above us but that is never translating down to the ground level. Some politicians are starting to see that not only a majority of Americans oppose this war. Now they see this very powerful statement of soldiers who have already been on the front line and who are still in uniform and are also opposed. None of them have been here as long as we have, none of them have seen what we have seen. It's time they do."
**Wednesday, January 10, 2007**

**INLAND EMPIRE HISPANIC NEWS**

**HISPANIC ACHIEVEMENT LAGGING BEHIND IN U.S. PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

By Melissa Lazarin & Jacqueline Pacheco

On NCLB Anniversary, NCLR Issues Report and New Information Resource on Latino Students

Washington, DC - Marking the fifth anniversary of passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) - the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S. - today released a statistical brief that portrays the U.S. educational system as an obstacle course from preschool through college for the growing population of Latino students. Hispanic Education in the United States Frontlines, a new statistical brief, NCLR also launched a new webpage today which serves as a comprehensive information resource on NCLB and Latinos. The webpage - www.nclr.org/nclb - contains links to publications, data sources, analyses, partner organizations, and other resources. In particular, it provides an important source of information on English language learner (ELL) students in the U.S. public school system.

Report highlights include:

* Latinos are a significant proportion of the United States student population. Latino students enrolled in prekindergarten through 12th grade in U.S. public schools and institutions of higher education represented 17% of total student enrollment in 2005.

* The number of ELL students enrolled in U.S. schools has increased substantially in the past decade. This student population increased by 56% between the 1994-1995 and 2004-2005 school years. Nearly 80% of ELL students are Hispanic native Spanish-speakers.

* Hispanics are significantly less likely to complete high school than their White peers. In particular, only 43% of Black and 48% of Hispanic male students graduate from high school compared to 71% of White males. Further, five times more Hispanics account for more than 25% of all students who drop out of school in the U.S.

* Schools serving Hispanic and other minority students offer few rigorous academic courses. According to a study by Achieve, Inc., 74% of minority girls want to enroll in advanced courses, but only 45% of their schools offer these courses. Similarly, although two-thirds of minority boys are interested in taking advanced mathematics courses, fewer than half attend schools that offer these courses.

Hispanics age 25 and older are less likely than Blacks and Whites to receive a bachelor’s degree. In 2005, just 12% of Hispanics age 25 years and older had received a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to nearly 18% of Blacks and more than 30% of comparable Whites.

“The barriers that keep young Latinos from succeeding in school today diminish everyone’s hopes for a society that is educated, productive, and financially successful. No one wins when we neglect nearly 20% of our nation’s students. As we mark the fifth anniversary of the No Child Left behind Act and work on renewing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this year, we urge Congress to fulfill the considerable promise of NCLB and help close the large gaps that remain in our children’s education,” concluded Murguía.

For more information or a copy of the NCLR report, Hispanic Education in the United States, call Melissa Lazarin at (202) 785-1670 or visit www.nclr.org.

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**BLIND AGENCY STEPPING 26.2 MILES FOR AWARENESS**

TEAM BSS, associated with the Blindness Support Services, Inc. of Riverside, a non-profit agency, are in training to participate in the L.A. Marathon on March 4. TEAM BSS is currently seeking funding to support the agency in expanding its services to the blind in the Inland Empire. Photo courtesy of the Blindness Support Services.

The chief executive officer, staff and students that constitute TEAM BSS, (composed of 12 members: six blind and visually impaired and six sighted) associated with the Blindness Support Services, Inc (BSS), a nonprofit agency, are in training to participate and compete in the L.A. MARATHON on March 4, 2007. The visually impaired team members are living with various eye diseases causing vision loss: Glaucoma, Diabetic Retinopathy, Retinitis Pigmentosa and Nystagmus.

The team’s overall goal: (1) RAISE AWARENESS TO BLINDNESS (2) GAIN SUPPORT and (3) RAISE FUNDS to enhance, expand, and develop new programs to meet the needs of people who are living with vision loss and blindness.

Located in Riverside, California, BSS provides the following services: Independent Living Skills, Orientation and Mobility Training; Travel Training; Braille; Rehabilitation Technology & Computer Training; Employment Preparation; Job Development & Placement; Children’s Programs; Parent Support Workshops; Senior Programs/Education Services; Information and Referral Services; Community Education/Presentations and Affordable Housing.

It’s not a “myth” to hear of individuals who are home-bound prisoners as a result of losing their sight. Oftentimes, these individuals find themselves unemployed with the inability to be self supporting. This scenario is just the beginning of their road to financial strain, desperation and hopelessness, which can lead to a life-threatening situation. In some cases, individuals have found services such as those offered at BSS, while others remain in a world of helplessness and despair. BSS personnel make ongoing efforts to seek out those who are less informed and provide assistance to them. These reasons constitute a need to spread “awareness” to the general public about the condition of blindness and the life-changing experiences it causes. Garnering support from the communities of the Inland Empire is essential in providing individuals to renew their zest for life and travel “The Road to Independence”.

With support and monetary contribution, programs and services provided at BSS can continue to be enhanced, expanded and developed where a need is not being met.

Support TEAM BSS’s fund-raising campaign by mailing your contribution to: Blindness Support Services, Inc., 3696 Beatty Drive, Riverside Ca 92506.

For further information call (951) 341-9244. You may also visit the website at www.blindnesssupport.com

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