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SAN BERNARDINO HAS CITY LIMITS, NOT NATIONAL BORDERS

By Wilfrid "Bill" Lemann

English. To survive, they picked crops for meager wages, lived in inferior housing, and could only hope their children would find a better life.

The government knew it was wrong to condone it, much less allow it to continue. But, if it acted to stop it, the economy of an entire region almost certainly would be destroyed. So, the U.S. Congress and the administrations in the national and state capitals agreed to let it continue unchallenged for decades until a viable solution could be found. It was a devil's bargain, struck with full knowledge yet deep regret by otherwise moral leaders who—despite their own deep-seated disgust—felt powerless to intercede without risking their own deep-seated disgust and, for the common good, seemingly had no choice but to somehow see it through.

That was the situation in the America of the late 17th century. Only after it smoldered for a half century did slavery finally come to an end with the Emancipation Proclamation.

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SANDRA RODRIGUEZ-S.B. FIRST HISPANIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

San Bernardino, CA - U.S. Rep. Joe Baca (D-Rialto) will host a Citizenship Day Workshop in conjunction with community groups, on Saturday, July 1, 2006, at the National Orange Show in San Bernardino.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, eight million individuals are currently eligible for citizenship. People are eligible if:

- They have been a permanent resident for 5 years (or 3 years if married to a U.S. citizen)
- Their mother or father became a U.S. citizen before their 18th birthday
- They have lived continually and physically in the United States
- They have knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government
- They have an ability to read, write, and speak the English language

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Wednesday, June 28, 2006

Inland Empire Hispanic News

consuming its people and resources in a long and bloody civil war.

Anytime people finally confront a vexing problem for which there is no quick-fix solution that legitimately satisfies the morass of legal, moral, economic and social challenges involved, we become understandably frustrated. If nothing changes, that frustration grows, and we often want to lash out in anger. It is a natural reaction and can even be a healthy stimulus for positive change.

But such anger — when misapplied and misdirected — can bring us to rally behind proposals that while seeming to directly address the problem, in truth are overwhelmingly simplistic. They serve only to agitate the controversy, embarrass its causal supporters, and bring unintended consequences that we all will come to regret. San Bernardino is now faced with such a proposal.

However well-meaning, those who advocate that our city take Draconian measures to punish hard-working American citizens and business owners who find themselves, through no fault of their own, providing housing, employment, and miscellaneous services to further the prospects, health and comfort to people who came to this nation illegally are missing the point. The problem is that for decades our national and state governments have been unwilling or unable to stem the rising tide of illegal immigration and this lack of action has been condoned by those who depend on cheap labor to power our economy, the fruits of which we all enjoy.

A realistic solution has not yet emerged. No one, and certainly not those of us involved with the legal profession, can legitimately defend crossing our borders illegally. There are legal ways to come to America and most of our own ancestors took that route and established new lives in this truly wonderful nation. Yet, the millions of people who have come here illegally are a fact of life. We cannot turn back the clock, we cannot pretend that we didn’t know what was happening and cannot now point accusing fingers at friends and neighbors whose only sin was to go along to get along. We are all part of the problem. We must all become part of the solution.

The proposed ordinance calling itself the “San Bernardino Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance” is misleading on its face, rife with contradictions to established state and federal law, practically unenforceable, and will cause significant legal and financial problems for the city and its taxpayers. It is not the solution. It is not even a solution. But it is a wake-up call for everyone, and for that, its supporters should be thanked. What they have put forth shows the inherent dangers of doing nothing. We have done nothing to bring about thoughtful change, and now are confronted by a proposal that sounds just close enough to reasonableness that has garnered some popular support. That’s the real danger — that we will rush to do something, anything, to try to resolve the situation and end up losing our way as a community.

Do we want San Bernardino to become a national joke? Do we want our city to spend millions of dollars in legal fees defending parts of a clearly faulty law, but clearly adverse judgment that will pit neighbor against neighbor and deny employment and livelihoods to otherwise innocent businesses and their employees? Most importantly, do we want San Bernar­dino to give birth to what could quickly become an odious, anti-immigrant, movement designed not to foster legitimacy, justice, and fairness, but rather resentment and hatred, advocating and urging acts that smack of the dark times of suspicion and repression in the streets and shops of pre-World War II Europe? Do we want San Bernardino to become a community where our citizens are encouraged, some under threats of lost livelihoods, to spy on fellow residents, and to question any stranger’s legitimacy, in effect, to ask “to see your papers?” I don’t think so and deeply hope not.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I must also object to the blatantly false statement in the proposal that treating undocumented workers and their families has resulted in “fiscal hardship” and “substandard care” in our community’s health care facilities. There is no hospital in our nation that does not feel the pinch of fiscal crisis on occasion. It is and always has been a fact of life within the non-profit healthcare industry, and whatever a free care we provide is arguably a small tile in a huge and complex financial mosaic. But, let there be no confusion on one point. Neither St. Bernardine nor any other hospital in our region is providing substandard care to anyone, and whom we treat is irrelevant to our standards and to our actions. By mission, by choice and by law, we provide care to whoever needs it, regardless of their heritage, bank account, religious beliefs or political persuasion. We don’t care who someone is, where he or she came from, or how they found their way to our city. If they need care, let us make sure we provide to everyone — we are there to offer it. Those clamoring to find dire consequences of illegal immigration are advised to look elsewhere than in our city’s hospitals.

We do have a problem in San Ber­nardino, but unlike when we turned our backs and shared the misfortune of illegal immigration and this lack of action has been condoned by those who depend on cheap labor to power our economy, the fruits of which we all enjoy. San Bernardino is now faced with such a proposal.

However well-meaning, those who advocate that our city take Draconian measures to punish hard-working American citizens and business owners who find themselves, through no fault of their own, providing housing, employment, and miscellaneous services to further the prospects, health and comfort to people who came to this nation illegally are

The ultimate goal of Citizenship Day is to help those who meet the above eligibility requirements to file their Application for Naturalization. Participants in the Citizenship Day workshop will include:

• They are of good moral character
• Receive an evaluation of their citizenship qualifications
• Complete their N-400 form, “Application for Naturalization”
• Get a review of a naturalization packet by immigration lawyers &

other authorized personnel
• Complete the packet so it is ready for delivery to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
• Receive a copy of the application for their records

Assistance will be provided by Congressional staff, attorneys and other trained personnel in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese. WHAT: Citizenship Day Workshop WHO: Rep. Joe Baca; in conjunction with community organizations

WHEN: Saturday, July 1, 2006, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
WHERE: National Orange Show, 689 South “E” Street, San Bernardino, CA 92401

Citrus Building, enter through Gate 8 from Arrowhead Avenue

The public is invited to attend. For more information please call Rep. Baca’s district office at (909) 885-2222. Members of the media are also invited to attend.
Christopher Meza and Ivan Cortez were selected Valedictorian and Salutatorian, respectively, for the June 7, 2006 graduation ceremonies.

Since he can remember, Christopher Meza has always looked up to his brother, Alexander Najera, as his role model. After all, his brother was Valedictorian at Elijah High School, Rialto, a graduate from the University of California, Berkeley, and has a successful career at CSUSB, and is on his way.

Meza has studied hard at Elijah to earn high grades, including AP courses required for higher education, and added HP courses to finalize a well-rounded education.

Meza's extra-curricular activities included Associated Student Body, Future Business Leaders, National Honor Society, Rialto Varsity Soccer Club, student representative to the Rialto School District, Rialto Fire Soccer Club, Inland Empire Future Leaders, and his community service included the Rialto Recreation Committee, and Rialto Teen Forum.

Meza concluded his school career with a grade point average of 4.12 and voted Co-Valedictorian for the 2006 graduating class on June 7, 2006.

Meza has been accepted at the University of California, Los Angeles. His major is Philosophy, with a minor in Latin American Studies and Public Policy. He anticipated continuing his education at Cal-State to become a teacher and his role in the future.

Ivan Cortez' family immigrated to the United States from Jalisco, Mexico, and his father works hard to support the family. The family is very close-knit, and active in their church and church-related activities.

Cortez is aware of the value of education and has made it a habit to excel in all his classes, including AP classes, with a heavy emphasis on chemistry biology, computer efficiency, and other AP related courses. His is also linguistically proficient, reads, writes, and speaks French and Spanish.

Cortez' future career goal is to be a physician. He, and his family, are cognizant of the long educational process to complete his goal. In an interview, His mother, Rosalba, said, "We will sacrifice whatever it takes for Ivan to become a doctor. This will be the greatest achievement for Ivan and our family."

Cortez has been preparing for future preparatory studies, with accelerated courses and school activities: Honor Society, French Club (current president), Future Business Leaders of America, AP Chemistry Club, and Internship involvement-guidance programs/collage tours.

Cortez has been recognized for his academic achievement and leadership roles: Honor Roll (from 7th grade to present), President's Education Awards Program, Booster Club for French I Trophy (3 years), American Legion Certificate Award, East Kiwanis Club Student of the Month, City of the Rialto Student of the Month, and Rialto School District Board of Education Award. He graduated with a grade point average of 4.02.

Cortez was voted 2006 Co-Salutatorian of the Year for the 2006 graduating class on June 7, 2006. He has been accepted at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Inland Empire – Seventeen communities throughout California, including Mead Valley/Glen Valley in Riverside County and Ontario/Rancho Cucamonga in San Bernardino County, has a significantly higher share of colon cancers detected at an advanced stage compared to the rest of the state, according to data jointly released by the American Cancer Society, California Division and the California Dialogue on Cancer at the Dialogue for Action, a statewide leadership summit for cancer control.

"Advanced stage colon cancer refers to colon cancers that are diagnosed when the tumor has already spread beyond the wall of the intestine to lymph nodes or to distant parts of the body. The five-year survival rate for colon cancer is 65 percent when it has spread beyond the intestinal wall and only eight percent when it has spread to distant parts of the body."

Results show that in 17 communities, 70 percent or more of the colon cancer cases were diagnosed at an advanced stage. Another 70 communities had 60-69 percent of colon cancer diagnosed at an advanced stage.

In Mead Valley/Glen Valley in Riverside County, 80% of colon cancers are diagnosed in late stages; in the northeast Ontario/south Rancho Cucamonga area of San Bernardino County, 70% of colon cancer cancers are in late stage.

"There is no reason why so many Californians should suffer with this disease," said Jon Greif, DO, FACS, president of the American Cancer Society, California Division and co-chair of the Dialogue for Action leadership summit.

"The number of colon cancer deaths could be cut in half with regular testing beginning at age 50. These data, showing such a high percentage of advanced diagnoses throughout the state tell us that the testing message is not being heard by most Californians."

Colon cancer is the third-most common cancer and third-greatest cause of cancer-related death among both men and women in California.

Approximately 14,100 new cases will be diagnosed in California in 2006 and 5,270 people will die from the disease, according to California Cancer Facts & Figures, 2006.

"The data map gives us an idea of which communities need the most assistance to help decrease both the number of new cases and deaths due to colon cancer in California," said Dr. Greif.

"Participants at the Dialogue for Action leadership summit developed a blueprint that ensured everyone, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status has access to colon cancer testing."

Survey data in California from 2004 show that only 43 percent of California adults ages 50 and over report having a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy to test for colon cancer within the past five years.

The proportion that tested was lower among African Americans (41 percent), Hispanics (31 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (28 percent) and among persons in poverty (27 percent).

Riverside Area Rape Center

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"Education’s purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one."

Malcolm Forbes

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LATINO LEADERS CONVENE
FIRST NATIONAL LATINO CONGRESS IN A GENERATION

LOS ANGELES — Earth Day Network (EDN), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the National Alliance of Latino American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC), the National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC), Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP), and the William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI) announced that they are co-hosting, together with Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the first comprehensive meeting of Latino leaders, organizations and elected officials since 1977, to be held September 6-10, 2006, at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. The announcements were made simultaneously in Los Angeles and Dallas.

The National Latino Congress on Public Policy and Political Participation will engage all the members of the Latino political, advocacy, and economic families in a dialogue, with the goal of moving forward with a national agenda. The themes of the Congress will blend historic Latino priorities, such as immigration reform, voting and civil rights, education reform, job creation, and access to health care, with a broader set up issues associated with this (and future) generation's reality of ever increasing Latino governance, such as urban greening, climate change, public health, trade/foreign policy, and energy policy, etc. The Congress will establish a long-term Latino agenda and action plan, educate and train a wide range of Latino community leaders, elected officials and activists on critical issues, and mobilize Latino community leaders, with a special emphasis on establishing opportunities for new and young leaders. The event is expected to draw 2,000 delegates representing leaders from community organizations, labor and business community, religious groups, student organizations, environmental, health and community development groups.

WCVI President Antonio Gonzalez, Acting MALDEF President John Trasvina, and NALACC President Angela Sanbrano formally announced The National Latino Congress on Public Policy and Political Participation in Los Angeles, one of two news conferences held simultaneously.

Co-chair WCVI is a non-partisan Latino think-tank, which conducts policy advocacy and opinion research aimed at improving the level of policy participation in Latino and other underrepresented communities.

"It is time that we marshal our policy advocacy and elected officials to gather far more policy benefits than we are currently achieving. Never before has the Latino community enjoyed the possibilities incumbent with 10 million voters and 5,000 elected officials," said WCVI President Antonio Gonzalez. "This Congress will bring together policy leaders at all levels in the first effort in a generation to hammer-out a consensus and comprehensive action agenda."

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) is the leading nonprofit Latino litigation, advocacy and educational outreach institution in the U.S. In the mission to foster sound public policies, laws and programs to safeguard the civil rights of the 40 million Latinos living in the United States and to empower the Latino community to fully participate in our society. "The Latino Congress in September will bring together grassroots leaders from across the nation for a plan of action on immigration and voting rights," said John Trasvina, MALDEF interim president and general counsel. "Now more than ever, we need a strategy that both advances the activism we saw in March and May and insures that the Latino voice is heard in city halls, state capitols and Washington, D.C."

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the largest and oldest Hispanic Organization in the U.S. LULAC advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs operating at more than 700 LULAC councils nationwide. The organization involves and serves all Hispanic nationality groups.

"The new American civil rights movement needs to have a national Congress to debate and discuss the ideas regarding America's future as a nation of immigrants and opportunity," said LULAC National Civil Rights Director Domingo Gonzalez. "Legislation from the 5,000 plus U.S. Latino elected officials, particularly the environmental and health movement, by incorporating the priorities and enlisting the support of the Latino community — the largest and fastest growing minority group in the U.S. — will expand the national dialog.

Participants in the National Latino Summit on Public Policy and Political Participation will primarily come from the 16 states with the highest concentration of Latino population, including Texas, California, New York, Arizona, New Mexico, Florida, New York, Colorado, Maryland, Virginia and Georgia. From the political community, the National Latino Summit will target widespread participation from the 5,000 plus U.S. Latino elected officials, especially Latino members of the U.S. Congress, Latino state legislators and elected executive branch officials, and elected Latino executives of cities and counties.

MEDIA CONTACTS:
Angela Sanbrano, NALACC, 213-385-0312
John Trasvina, MALDEF, 213-629-2512
Lydia Camarillo, SVREP, 210-924-0229
Antonio Gonzalez, WCVI, 323-222-2217
Kathleen Rogers, EDN, 202-518-0044
Roger Rivera, NHEC, 703-683-3956

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NCLR DISAPPOINTED IN CALIFORNIA PRESCHOOL BALLOT INITIATIVE VOTE
NCLR Calls on California Governor and State Legislature to Restore Funds and Expand Preschool Access

Washington, DC - The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., expressed disappointment that Proposition 82, the universal preschool ballot initiative, was not approved by California voters.

"Prop. 82 may have failed, but many California lawmakers, including Governor Schwarzenegger, have made it clear that providing access to preschool to low-income children is a priority. We look forward to stepping up to the plate and develop a plan to give more children, especially those from low-income families, access to preschool," said Janet Murguia, NCLR President and CEO.

While we all recognize that preschool is a wise investment in our children and our future, the people of California have spoken and decided this was not the right initiative to implement universal preschool," continued Murguia.

"Latino children make up nearly half of all preschool-aged children in California, but account for little more than a third of preschool students. For preschool to work in California, it also needs to work for all kids, including Latinos. If the system fails to serve Latinos well, too many kids will enter kindergarten without being ready to learn," said Murguia.

"NCLR has been working on early childhood education issues with Latino community-based organizations in several states and on the national level. We look forward to partnering with those working to secure a prosperous future for California and the nation by investing in children today," concluded Murguia. For more information on NCLR and early childhood education issues in the Latino community, please visit www.nclr.org.

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Wednesday, June 28, 2006

REP. BACA FIGHTS FOR A FAIR MINIMUM WAGE
Wage at Lowest Level in 50 Years but Republicans Block Minimum Wage Vote

Washington, DC - Congressman Joe Baca (D-Rialto) is fighting this week to increase the minimum wage, which is at its lowest point in 50 years when adjusted for inflation.

"Throughout my years of public service I have fought for working families in the Inland Empire. Raising the minimum wage is a priority for me and my fellow Democrats," Rep. Baca said.

As the House prepared today to vote to cut taxes on the heirs of millionaires, Rep. Baca added, "The wealthiest few Americans might be prospering under the Bush Administration, but the millions of workers who earn the minimum wage are struggling to afford basic necessities.

Raising the minimum wage is a matter of fairness and also will help local families, communities and businesses.

Democrats last week attached an amendment to raise the minimum wage to the Fiscal Year 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill. The amendment is based on a Democratic bill that would gradually increase the minimum wage from $5.15 to $7.25 over two years. The House Appropriations Committee the minimum wage amendment passed with bipartisan support, but Republican leaders stopped the Labor-Health bill from coming to the Floor.

VIGOROUS JOB MARKET PREDICTED FOR SAN BERNARDINO

San Bernardino area employers expect to hire at a booming pace during the third quarter of 2006, according to the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey.

From July to September, 40% of the companies interviewed plan to hire more employees, while none plan to reduce their payrolls, according to Manpower spokesperson Evlyn Wilcox. Another 57% expect to maintain their current staff levels and 3% are not certain of their hiring plans.

"San Bernardino area employers have stronger hiring intentions than those in the second quarter when 40% of the companies interviewed intended to add staff, and 13% planned to reduce headcount," said Wilcox. "Employers are slightly more positive about hiring than they were a year ago when 37% of companies surveyed thought employment increases were likely and none intended to cut back."


According to the national seasonally adjusted results of the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey, U.S. employers still won't budge on hiring plans for the third quarter of 2006.

Of the 16,000 U.S. employers surveyed, 31% expect to add to their payrolls during the third quarter of 2006, while 6% expect to reduce staff levels. Fifty-seven percent expect no change in the hiring pace, while 6% are undecided about their July - September hiring plans.

In the United States, 7.3 million people would benefit from a raise in the minimum wage, including 1.8 million parents with children. "Minimum wage workers are not just teenagers working after school or during the summer for extra spending money," Rep. Baca noted. Nearly three-quarters of minimum wage workers are adults over the age of 20, and many are responsible for over half of their family's income.

Rep. Baca has signed a "discharge" petition, which would force a Floor vote on the Democrats' minimum wage bill if supporters secure 218 Member signatures. There are currently 189 signatures on the petition.

"Democrats will continue pushing for action on this issue until Republicans allow a fair vote," he asserted.

Yesterday Senate Republicans voted down an attempt to boost the minimum wage.
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FORMER PRESIDENT CLINTON, KARL ROVE AMONG SPEAKERS AT UPCOMING NCLR ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES

Washington, DC - The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., announced that former President Bill Clinton, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove, and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa are among the confirmed speakers for the upcoming NCLR Annual Conference which will be held July 8-11 at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA.

"We are deeply honored that President Clinton has accepted our invitation to address more than 2,000 community leaders from across the nation, and we are also excited by the wide array of speakers from the worlds of business, labor, government, nonprofits, and politics who will be joining us at this year's Conference," stated Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO.

The key speakers include:

- Sunday, July 9: A Town Hall on Sunday afternoon beginning at 3:30 p.m. "Break the Silence without Fear: Protecting the Latino Family against HIV/AIDS," will feature Congresswoman Hilda Solis (D-CA); Dr. Monica Alonso Gonzalez, Regional Advisor, Pan American Health Organization; Dr. Maria Rangel, Epidemiologist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and Dr. Garth Graham, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health, Office of Minority Health.
- Monday, July 10: Featured speakers at the Monday Luncheon, beginning at 12:30 p.m. are Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS); Bob Iger, President and CEO, The Walt Disney Company; and Lynn Pike, President of Bank of America, California. Bank of America is the title sponsor of the NCLR Annual Conference.
- Tuesday, July 11: Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove and Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO, will be the featured speakers at the Tuesday Luncheon beginning at 12:30 p.m.

The daily schedule will continue with a Town Hall, Leadership Across Communities: Opportunities and Challenges in the 21st Century, which will address issues such as the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the recent mobilization of immigrants and their supporters and their impact on relations between minority communities.

The Conference will conclude at the Awards Gala, with featured remarks by the Conference awards including Univision anchor María Elena Salinas; community leader Dr. Walter Sava; Arturo Moreno, owner of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim; attorney and longtime activist Vilma Martinez; and former NCLR President Raul Yzaguirre.

To pre-register for media credentials or for more information about the NCLR Annual Conference — including workshops and Latino Expo USA, which are free and open to the public — visit www.nclr.org/conference.

ARROWHEAD UNITED WAY PARTNERS WITH CITY OF SAN BERNARDINO TO PROVIDE HEALTH EDUCATION TO THE COMMUNITY

President Doug Rowand, Arrowhead United Way, announced that AWW received $10,000 grant from the City of San Bernardino to partner with Monterey Elementary School to integrate a school-based education program in the San Bernardino community. The Monterey Mamas Wellness Project is unique for a Latina-driven school-based wellness program. Peggy Scoggan, RN, BSN, CDE, will be co-coordinating the project and serving as the primary educator for the program.

The project will affect 838 students, focusing on 65% of Latino students and their mothers/families within the Monterey School boundaries. The objectives of the program are to reduce statistics of overweight children and increase physical activity by implementing a five phase program. In addition to offering education, the program will provide overweight and diabetes screening and incentives, such as cookbooks and exercise tools that will relate to health eating and activity habits.

In the State of California, the number of overweight Latino children in grades 5 through 9 has risen to 35%.

This project hopes to offset this figure in the following year and prevent children from becoming overweight and at risk of type 2 diabetes.

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Each office is independently owned and operated
who worked the fields. My parents would stress to us children the importance of education and avoid the hard migrant field work," she said.

While a student at Cajon High School, Rodriguez was active in community service. One such activity, Kids Against Crime, a youth intervention program, became the catalyst in her decision in a career field. "I learned about law enforcement, victims of crime, and worked with students to become voices of change. I made a decision at that time to become an attorney."

While a student at the University of California-Riverside, Rodriguez worked as an instructional tutor to pay for her education. "I worked with students with learning disabilities and became aware of their dedication to learn. This experience made me decide to go into teaching and to make a difference in children's education.

**AFFORDABLE ASSISTANCE WITH LEGAL DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE IN CALIFORNIA**

National Association of Legal Documents Preparers announces available new online directory

Washington, DC - Californians do not need to hire a lawyer for their uncontested legal needs, including wills, living trusts, immigration forms, no fault divorces, business incorporations and bankruptcies. Instead, they can visit a new online directory from (NALDP)—http://www.naldp.org—to find the nearest legal document preparer.

Legal document preparers, also called legal document assistants and independent paralegals, are non-lawyers who may lawfully fill out, file and prepare legal documents on behalf of litigants who choose to exercise their constitutional right to represent themselves.

Access to affordable legal document assistance is particularly important in California, where the legal needs of 72% of the state's poor are unmet, according to the most recent status report by the California Commission on Access to Justice.

"The launch of this directory comes at a critical time. As more and more consumers take part in the do-it-yourself movement in the U.S., they realize they can also take care of their uncontested legal needs without using the costly services of an attorney. The NALDP directory is a tremendous resource for Californians who are seeking affordable assistance in the preparation of their legal documents," said Liasime Sadlier, Director of NALDP.

Access to legal assistance is a nationwide problem. According to the American Bar Association (ABA), each year 38 million low and moderate income Americans are closed out of the civil justice system. The ABA Journal also quotes a study that estimates consumers could save more than $1.3 billion per year by using independent paralegals for four routine tasks: uncomplicated divorces, wills, bankruptcies and business incorporations.

While legal document preparers can be found in most U.S. states, California is pioneering the drive to recognize and regulate the legal document preparation industry in an effort to ensure that more California citizens and residents have access to justice. "Search for a Legal Document Provider near You" is located on the NALDP homepage. Visitors can type in their state or zip code and get the names and contact information of the legal document preparers closest to them.

About NALDP

National Association of Legal Document Preparers, Inc., based in Washington, D.C., is a non-profit organization formed to give a voice and a national forum to the growing number of legal document preparers, legal technicians, online legal document providers and independent paralegals across the country. In addition to those professionals working directly with legal documents, our membership includes public policy, education and consumer advocacy professionals who share a commitment to the principles of NALDP. More information is available at http://www.naldp.org.

SANDRA RODRIGUEZ  FIRST HISPANIC HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

While a student at Cajon High School and a graduate of San Bernardino High School, she was an honor student and graduated with a 4.0 grade point average. While attending the University of California-Riverside, Rodriguez was active in community service and a member of Kids Against Crime, a youth intervention program, became the catalyst in her decision in a career field. "I learned about law enforcement, victims of crime, and worked with students to become voices of change. I made a decision at that time to become an attorney."

While a student at the University of California-Riverside, Rodriguez worked as an instructional tutor to pay for her education. "I worked with students with learning disabilities and became aware of their dedication to learn. This experience made me decide to go into teaching and to make a difference in children's education.

"Our family is very proud of Sandra. She always studied very hard in school, and was active in the community, helping people in need. Her brothers and sisters looked up to her and she is their role model. We totally support her as principal and future goals."

Parents: Santos and Rosalinda Rodriguez

Rodriguez, the oldest in the family has two brothers and four sisters: Santos III, CSUSB graduate, substitute teacher at Arrowhead Elementary School; Sabrina, CSUSB graduate, and a goal to become a high school social studies teacher; Susanna and Sergio, CSUSB students, Sylvia, a stay at home mother, and Sarah, an instructional tutor, and attending community college, with a future career goal of teaching handicap students.

Rodriguez, who has a normal 12-hour work schedule, stated, "I am appreciative of the support and encouragement received from my parents these many years. My plan is to pursue a doctorate in education, continue as principal for a number of years, and future goal is to serve in a leadership role at the district. I am aware of our goal to prepare our students for the world of higher education. I am fully committed toward that goal."
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Inland Empire Hispanic News
Wednesday, June 28, 2006

A message from California Department of Health Services funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Department of Public Health Nutrition Program Human Services System County of San Bernardino - Project LEAN and the Nutrition Network Grant 99-85667

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