



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 105th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 143

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1997

No. 123

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. MILLER of Florida].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 16, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable DAN MILLER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] for 5 minutes.

FAMILIAS LATINAS EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, yesterday began Hispanic heritage month. And for that reason and many others, I am very privileged to read a letter from Familias Latinas to the President and Mrs. Clinton.

The following letter is the product of a radio program called Buenos Dias California on KIQI AM in San Francisco. The hosts of the show, Carlos de Marty and Marcos Gutierrez, asked, "What would you say in a letter to the

Clinton family?" The suggestions from the Spanish listening audience were recorded and a letter written as follows:

DEAR PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON: Congratulations to you and your daughter on selecting Stanford University for her formal education. This means you will be in our State more often since you will want to keep your family together. And that, Mr. President, is the reason for this letter, family unity.

The people who have signed this letter believe that the Latino family in the United States lives in an atmosphere of fear, paranoia, frustration, uncertainty and despair which is detrimental to our community and may eventually have negative effects on the community at large. We want to communicate our feelings and request action now. Our family unit is under a great deal of pressure from propositions and laws which have flourished under your presidency. Among these are Propositions 187, 209 and the latest, a proposition to do away with bilingual classes. We are having a difficult time understanding why you have not been as supportive of us, as we were of you during the last two presidential elections.

Let us look at the specific elements which are hurting our family unit starting from the elderly and working down to our children. Our non-citizen grandparents live in fear of losing their benefits even though they spent a lifetime contributing to the collective wealth of our country, not only in taxes paid, but in hard work done for little pay which allowed the country to flourish. Some of our parents are being deported, even though they have established roots in this country.

You will be leaving your daughter at Stanford for four years in a friendly atmosphere. Imagine having to destroy your family because of immigration rules. Imagine having to leave your children in this country because you are being deported. We must remember that a lot of the men and women being deported now to Central America, came to the United States in defense of democracy, under the hardship of civil war. Citizenship should not be used as a wedge between family members.

Many of us in the Latino family live in a cycle of poverty which forces both parents to work more than eight hours a day. This results in long hours of loneliness for our children. A lot of times we cannot afford to get

good care for them. We are sure that because of your busy schedule there were times when you left your daughter alone, but never under inadequate care.

On the educational front, many non-Latino students get preferential treatment because of their parents' connections to educational institutions. Our children don't. In the recent past our students had affirmative action. Now they don't.

On the drug front, it is hard to imagine that the Nation which can focus on little rocks in far away planets, cannot see the enormous amount of drugs coming into our communities. Instead of sensible help, your government has allowed the construction of a sophisticated, profit-oriented prison system which sits waiting for our children.

All these elements, working steadily and daily, have taken their toll on our family unit. We are sure, Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton, this is not what you want. With these signatures, we are declaring our collective dissatisfaction with the racist, anti-immigrant and anti-Latino atmosphere which has been allowed to prevail for too long. We need your administration's support for our tradition of family unity. We come to this land, as your ancestors did, to find a better way of life, to build community and loyalty to a wonderful country like the United States.

As far as our past, we believe that the Latino community has contributed to the progress of the United States in times of peace, and specifically with our blood in times of war. We know the length of the list of the Latinos who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. These contributions should have earned for us a more active participation in our country's internal affairs and specifically in the future negotiations and plans between the United States and Latin America.

We recommend that you accommodate more Latinos within your sphere of power so that perhaps you could see our plight under a different light. Many of us feel that as descendants of the original inhabitants of parts of the United States, specifically as described in the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty, we deserve better treatment.

We feel that your role as a leader is to strengthen the Nation's points of agreement, not its differences. We believe that you, Mr. President, have a responsibility to act as a catalyst to rid the xenophobic attitudes

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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