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"El Respeto al Derecho Ajeno es la Paz" Lic Benito Juarez

Immigration Reform Can Break the Political Deadlock

It should come as no surprise that partisan acrimony lingers following the enactment of sweeping health care reforms. For months, members of both sides have accused each other of playing dirty on a number of issues. But surely they must be wondering how they got to the point where the politics of "no" became "Hell no!" How did the well get so poisoned, to the point that enraged constituents have turned political threats into death threats against congressional members?

It does not have to be that way. Congress has a chance to do something positive, not by walking away from future legislative battles, but by taking on a tough issue like immigration that the public wants resolved.

Cynics may snicker at the suggestion that immigration may be the rope with which to climb out of the poisonous well. After all, it is a history of ugly rhetoric by restrictionists who are angry by the demographic changes occurring across the United States and who falsely use the slow-moving economy as an argument against comprehensive immigration

reform. But immigration offers Congress a way to move forward because it's traditional: by a bipartisan issue. The center of the Senate immigration debates in 2006 and 2007, for example, was a bipartisan bill the majority of senators from both parties supported. And especially in this economy, Congress has an obligation to pass an immigration bill that is tough, fair, and practical and that will help, not hurt, the national economy.

That's why Senate Immigration Subcommittee Chairman Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) renewed this weekend their commitment to keep working on immigration and seek strong engagement from President Obama and other senators. While timing for action on a bill is unclear at the moment, there is agreement that something must be done.

Broad immigration reforms will add a cumulative \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. gross domestic product over 10 years, according to a study by the Center for American Progress and the Immigra-

tion Policy Center. In the program's first three years, tax revenues would increase



from \$4.5 billion to \$5.4 billion and generate enough new consumer spending to support 750,000 to 900,000 jobs in the United States. The real wages of workers—U.S. born and immigrants—will also rise under comprehensive immigration reform.

Comprehensive reform will include enacting a tough new immigration program that will enforce the borders and the interior so that unscrupulous employers do not unfairly depress the wage scale,

exploit workers, and cheat on tax payments. It will contain a fair immigration



system to meet the nation's economic needs for low-skilled and high-skilled workers, and also protect families. And it will require the current undocumented immigrants to register, pay fines and back taxes, learn English, and eventually become citizens.

Beyond their economic benefits, these reforms will strengthen our values as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. That is why law enforcement officers, faith leaders, unions,

and communities of all colors support immigration reform. Case in point: More than 20,000 people from more than 40 states gathered peacefully on the National Mall on March 21 to show their support and to call on Congress to show courage and lead.

Mass deportation, the alternative to a comprehensive approach, won't work. Deporting a population totaling almost 11 million, aside from the human cost, would be a gross waste of taxpayers' dollars and hardly practical, according to a recent CAP study.

The government would have to take \$922 from every man, woman, and child in the United States to come up with the \$285 billion that would be needed to apprehend, detain, legally process, and transport undocumented immigrants and maintain the current enforcement strategy at the border and in the interior. That kind of money could be put to much better use, and the economy would mightily suffer if undocumented immigrants were forced out. Our GDP would lose a cumulative \$2.6 trillion over 10 years.

And here's another thing for congressional members to consider: The political math as well as the economic math adds up in favor of immigration reform. A recent 10 million Latino voters in 2008 were critical to President Barack Obama's victories in key states such as Colorado, Nevada, North Carolina, and Indiana. He had to work hard to win their support during the Democratic presidential primaries. In the two previous elections, President George W. Bush won because of the large support he received from Hispanic voters. While Latinos are just as concerned as other voters about the economy, a candidate's stance on immigration helps them separate the "good" guys from the "bad" guys in an election.

In other words, a lawmaker who votes for this bill can win the support of the fastest-growing part of the electorate that has wide independent streaks.

There is still truth in the axiom, "Good policy makes good politics." Immigration offers a chance to help workers in this struggling economy and to stop playing politics with a badly broken system.

Nclr Urges Passage Of Immigration Reform And "Care Act" In Honor of Civil Rights Legend Cesar Chavez

Washington, DC—Today, in recognition of the birthday of the late civil rights legend Cesar Chavez, NCLR (National Council of La Raza), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, is urging Congress to approve comprehensive immigration reform as legislation to better protect the hundreds of thousands of children who currently work in difficult conditions in our nation's fields. The "Children's Act for Responsible Employment of 2009" (H.R.

3564)—known as the "CARE Act"—would raise the minimum age at which children can work in agricultural jobs and require the U.S. Department of Labor to designate which jobs are safe for 14-year-olds and which jobs are off-limits to anyone under the age of 18. "Cesar Chavez shined a national spotlight on the depressed wages and unbearable working conditions experienced by agricultural laborers in the 1960s. Still, today, too

many farmworkers face similar conditions. An essential element of any solution to the myriad problems faced by farmworkers is immigration reform, including provisions in the "AgJOBS Act of 2009" (H.R. 2412) that will reduce incentives for growers to hire undocumented workers by improving protections for all of our nation's farmworkers," commented Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO. "Chavez fought for the rights of farmworkers who labored in inhumane conditions, with small



children working alongside their parents in the scorching heat and at risk of injury from heavy machin-

ery and exposure to pesticides. As child labor in the fields flourishes today, we must continue the fight that Chavez so passionately waged against the abhorrent practices that put Latino children in danger!"

Murguía said. "As the White House celebrates Chavez's 83rd birthday today and honors his life of social justice, we commend the president for signing a proclamation designating March 31, 2010 as Cesar Chavez Day," said Murguía. "For the hundreds of thousands of children who labor in our nation's fields today—the vast majority of them Latino—not much has changed in the past 40 years. Farmworker organizations are doing their part to make sure that these children have hope for a

better life. Congress can help by approving the "CARE Act" immediately," concluded Murguía.

Gna Announces Additional Developments In Fight Against Highland Concrete Company

Guadalupe Neighborhood Association (GNA) announced today that they filed on March 18, 2010, with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) a "Motion to Overturn, Stay, and Reconsider the Executive Director's Approval of Standard Permit Registration Numbers 91373 and 91374 Issued to Highland Concrete Company and Request for a Contested Case Hearing" (Motion to Overturn).

Additionally, GNA announced that TCEQ has notified Highland Concrete Company that it has until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 13, 2010 to file briefs with regard to issues raised in GNA's Motion to Overturn.

Furthermore, TCEQ notified GNA that it has until Friday, April 23, 2010 to file a written reply to briefs submitted by Highland Concrete Company, if any.

Finally, TCEQ has extended the time for the Commission to act on GNA's Motion to Overturn until Thursday, May 20, 2010.

Carlos Quirino, Jr., President of GNA stated, "I believe our actions bring hope to people across the city, that neighbors standing side by side, can effect change."

Lubbock attorney, Victor Hernandez, continues to be GNA's local attorney in this matter.

"Victor Hogan stated, "Right now, May 20, 2010 is scheduled to be the day that TCEQ will decide the fate of Guadalupe neighborhood. It is my hope that GNA's hard work, dedication, and perseverance will pay dividends."

GNA announced that it continues to raise the funds necessary for the defense of this suit. Contributions can be made payable to Guadalupe Neighborhood Association and dropped off at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 102 N. Avenue P, Lubbock, Texas 79401 or dropped off to any American State Bank.

El hielo de ICE

For the Hispanic community, which constantly suffers the consequences of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities, recent revelations by the Washington Post—that ICE officials have set quotas for deportation of undocumented immigrants, without consideration for the circumstances of those they're removing from the country—come as no surprise.

Latinos who live in some of the most remote parts of the country can describe with despair how they've seen the Hispanic population of their communities reduced by ICE's actions and the horrific consequences of the deportation policies they enforce, such as 287(g) and Secure Communities.

Before the Obama Administration, in the summer of 2008, in Bluffton County, South Carolina, local authorities decided to inaugurate their partnership with ICE with what they called Operation Surge—a reign of terror during

which 300 undocumented immigrants were arrested and stuffed into a local jail too small to accommodate all the new arrivals.

There, deportations have persisted under the 287(g) program—with gross abuses to its intent. "It's not just being used to deport criminals, but all kinds of people. It's an abuse," Eric Esquivel, publisher of the bilingual magazine La Isla (which is printed in the area), told me.

The real issue is that despite the modifications ICE made last year to its memorandum of understanding with local police departments under 287(g), as part of the Obama administration's new policy to prioritize deporting real criminals, local agents are continuing to put immigrant workers with no criminal records into deportation proceedings.

But the situation in the highest levels of the federal bureaucracy is no different; take, for example, the internal memo from ICE's Deten-

tion and Removal Office (DRO) dated February 22nd, which clearly states a deportation quota of 250,000 noncriminal immigrants a year.

The DRO's philosophy appears not to have changed since 2003, when then-director Anthony Trogens signed his name to Operation Endgame, a strategic plan to deport all undocumented immigrants over a ten-year period. ICE director John Morton's clarification that his agency does not set quotas is irrelevant. The numbers speak for themselves.

Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano herself said last August 11th in El Paso that for the year to date, ICE had made 181,000 arrests and deported 215,000 "illegals." The Secretary remarked that detentions had increased by 6% over the same period compared to 2007, when George W. Bush was president, and deportations had increased by 25%.

Later, DHS reported that deportations had increased 46% under the Obama Administration.

These were activists' complaints when they met with the president in the White House before this month's march in Washington. And this is why they were surprised when the president appeared to believe that his administration was primarily deporting criminals.

By "coincidence," the same day that the president met with Latino activists—and only 28 miles away—ICE's "cowboys" conducted a pair of raids that resulted in the arrest of 29 humble restaurant employees.

This is why no one should be shocked that some community leaders have labeled the current ICE memo scandal "treason," that they say that the White House is engaging in doubletalk, that posters at demonstrations have shown John Morton's face with slogans written over it, or that the Reform Immigration for America campaign is asking: Who's in charge?



P&R Septe Systems, Inc. is a locally owned Company here in Lubbock, TX. Waterborn's deal with Sebastian Belandiergo from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Mr. Belandiergo owns a Company P&R Argentina that use the same application for conservation of water and energy aimed to use with our company here in Lubbock. We hope to continue efforts for the conservation of water and energy through the welcome Mr. Belandiergo in our region of Texas. It is understood by these two Companies P&R Septe Systems, Inc. here in the U.S. And P&R Argentina in Buenos Aires, Argentina looks like the incorporation of the conservation of water and energy not only in the US but also in Latin America. Mr. Sebastian was also awarded from LULAC Council 263 and one of our membership 4th P. Cervantes, Robert Noriega, Mary Quinn, the Garcia Edwards Quintana, Robert Rodriguez, Henry F. Martinez, Jose Luis Treviño, Susana Luciani, Amanda Garcia, Ray Espinola, Lisa D. Dennis, Carmen Varg and many more members not in photo. Photo by John P. Cervantes.

Commentaries on the Editor

U.S., Mexico have more in common than either side would like to admit

by Gregory Tejeda

I would recommend that you read a commentary published Sunday in the New York Times that offers up a (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/28/opinion/28bellini.html>) view about how Mexican citizens can stand for all the drug-related violence taking place in border along the U.S./Mexico border—but which the activists

of our nation would like to think is taking place across the whole country. Author Mario Bellini makes mention of the "art of fencing," which he describes as an off-beat Mexican practice by which people with some wealth can get out of some of the unpleasantness of life by paying someone else to do it for them.

THOSE UNPLEASANTRIES CAN even go so far as paying someone to serve a short jail sentence, if you happen to get convicted for something such as driving while under the influence.

His point is that Mexican society has developed almost into two types of people—the ones who rent other human beings and the others who allow themselves to be rented, even though it means putting up with the indignities that certain others are using their money to avoid.

THE END RESULT, Bellini writes, is that while all people in Mexico are aware of how the drug-related violence in places like Ciudad Juarez has become in a theoretical sense, "ordinary citizens feel that this situation barely affects them. That doesn't happen to other people... over there."

Sound inhuman? ANYBODY IN OUR nation who says "yes" is turning a blind eye to the realities of life.

Because we have some inner-city neighborhoods where the same drug trafficking that causes violence in Mexico creates living environments that only give you who feel that life has given them no alternative would possibly endure.

Any of us with money can usually afford to isolate ourselves in communities where we just don't come into contact with such violence.

HECK, it's not even a matter of avoiding urban areas—since those great cities in our country usually have elite neighborhoods where a single homicide in a given year is considered a significant act. That is true even if just a few blocks away, you can find neighborhoods where a single murder in a month would be considered "slow" by the local cops.

THOSE OF YOU who deliberately live in rural communities, I'd say your very choice puts you so far out of the loop on this issue that I'm not interested in hearing your criticisms of anything relating to Latin American nations.

As for those of you who want to mock Mexicans for thinking they can "rent" other human beings, is it any different than the old practices of our nation in which people who were drafted into the military could get out of such service if they could find a replacement willing to go in their place? It sounds to me like the exact same thing. It's not alien to our nation. Perhaps the day will come about when it will be a thing of Mexico's past as well.

But for now, Bellini writes that Mexicans feel the need to "distance" themselves so they can "function in a country" where the drug dealers use their wealth generated from the demand for their product in the United States.

In many ways, we distance ourselves just as much as you can function in our society where the consumer demand for those deadly narcotics creates unstable places. Anybody who thinks that the drug problem is a Mexican one, or that Mexicans are no different from those of us in the United States is showing just how isolated their mindset truly is.

EDUCATION UNIONS REVEAL CONCERNS OVER OBAMA'S SCHOOL 'BLUEPRINT'

By Luis Carlos López
President Barack Obama's reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, an overhaul of George W. Bush's 2002 No Child Left Behind initiative, is raising concern from the nation's powerful education unions.

Stressing that the United States now trails many developed countries in key areas of public schooling, Obama delivered his administration's broad vision March 13 with the message, "Our competitors understand that the nation that out-educates us today will out-compete us tomorrow."

This month he followed up with greater pedagogical and budget detail in his "Blueprint for Reform." Both unions have provided prompt critiques.

In an interview with Hispanic Link News Service, National Education Association president Dennis Van Roekel stated that while the Administration is moving "in the right direction," the proposal needs to improve the way it deals with teachers before NEA, with its 3.2 million members, can fully support it.

A success education formula needs three components, he said: (1) collaboration between management and school boards and the employees and their unions, (2) assessments that use growth models and multiple measures, and (3) all schools receive the resources needed to make them work.

Proposed high-stakes testing to determine which are the challenged schools, making them "winners and losers — we don't support this," he said.

American Federation of Teachers spokesman John Cee called the "zero authority" as a flawed strategy. "The blueprint places 100% of the responsibility

on teachers," he said. "It can't be just teachers, or just principals, or just parents. It has to be all of us working together to give our kids the schools they need and deserve."

AFT has 1.4 million members. Meeting privately with Latino journalists March 26, Education Secretary Arne Duncan said academic growth has "flat-lined" the last two decades and the Obama plan places major emphasis on reaching the underserved.

Jan Sepúlveda, director of White House Initiatives on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, said focusing on teachers and evaluating their performance is key to bridging the gap. College/career readiness is a key component in expanding that success, he said.

"There's one thing about NCLB that we want to continue, and that is a focus on equity — seeing how subgroups, not just schools in general, are doing. We want to take it a step further, however, by giving states a common set of standards while also allowing flexibility."

The transformation approach outlined in Obama's blueprint would require schools in the lowest five percent to choose one of four turnaround models. Some require dismissal of the principal and half of the staff should schools fail to improve. Critics see this as a disruption unfair to some good staff and their pupils and just a waste of the problem.

The high school dropout rate for Hispanics and blacks is more than double that of the 30% for whites. A 2009 report by the Alliance for Excellent Education shows black and Hispanic rates to be 69% and 63%, respectively.

Luis Carlos López, of Washington, D.C., is editor of the national review Hispanic Link Weekly Report.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send Mail to: eleditor@sbcglobal.net

Dear Editor:

Rep. Randy Republican Neugebauer and Republican leaders have tried to mislead the American people when they argued during the final votes on Health Care Reform or this past week that the Executive Order issued by President Obama on abortion could be annulled with the stroke of a pen. Perhaps the most famous 19th Century Order was issued by President Abraham Lincoln in 1861 suspending the Writ of Habeas Corpus in different parts of the nation even though military action was not waged there. The Republican Governor of Indiana, acting as Commander of the State Militia, arrested a Democratic Lawyer from Huntington for opposing the war. In 1867, the Supreme Court of the United States, in Ex Parte Milligan, issued an opinion saying the Order was unconstitutional and that Milligan should be released from prison. In the 20th Century, President Roosevelt sent Japanese Americans in California—but not Hawaii—to Concentration Camps (called Relocation Centers) after Pearl Harbor with an Executive Order. In 1948, President Harry Truman integrated the Armed Forces with an Executive Order. Presidents Richard Nixon and George W. H. Bush issued Orders affecting relations with the USSR and China which were not overturned by Congress nor challenged in the Courts. And some Orders of Bill Clinton were overturned by George W. Bush when he first came into office. But Bush—and the Republican majority in the House led by Speaker Newt Gingrich left alone most of Clinton's Orders which implemented congressional law along with Orders issued by other presidents since the time of Teddy Roosevelt. Neugebauer, John Boehner and Mitch McConnell do a public disservice when they tell the American people that the Orders are just "scraps of paper."

Muy distinguido Sr. Gerente:

El Diputado Neugebauer y líderes Republicanos han tratado de decepcionar al pueblo Norteamericano cuando dijeron en los últimos momentos del debate sobre Reformar el Sistema de Salud cuando no dijeron que un Orden Ejecutivo emitido por el Presidente Obama sobre el aborto podía ser anulado con una breve moción de una cámara. Durante la Guerra de la Confederación (o Guerra Civil) en 1861 el Presidente Lincoln anuló el Derecho de Habeas Corpus (o Amparo en Países Latino Americanos). El Gobernador Republicano de Indiana, funcionando como Comandante de la Guardia Estatal, detuvo un Abogado Demócrata de Huntington, un pueblo cerca de Ft. Wayne en el norte del Estado y fue condenado a un cárcel militar por 25 años. Pero, El Corte Suprema de los EUA rechazó este Dictamen cuando opinó en 1867 que la protección de Habeas Corpus no estaba suspendido mientras que las puertas del sistema judicial quedaron abiertas, ni los derechos civiles suspendidos en ninguna parte de los Estados Unidos cuando las Cortes Civiles todavía funcionaban. En el Siglo 20, Presidente Roosevelt mandó a los Japoneses Americanos en California a Centros de Detención (llamado Campos de Concentración en Europa) después del ataque contra la Base Naval de Pearl Harbor en Diciembre 1941. En 1948, El Presidente Truman ejecutó la desegregación de las Fuerzas Militares por un Orden Ejecutivo. Los Presidente Reagan y Bush Padre afectaron las relaciones con la Unión Soviética y la China Comunista con Ordenes Ejecutivos que no estaban anulados por el Congreso ni vetado por las Cortes Judiciales. Mandatos emitidos al Ambiente emitido por Bill Clinton estaban rechazado por George W Bush Hijo cuando asumió el puesto de la Casa Blanca. Pero Bush y la Mayoría Republicano encabezado por Newt Gingrich, Líder de la Mayoría Republicano en la Cámara de Representante, dejaron en paz que implementaran otros Ordenes Ejecutivos de Clinton y otros Ejecutivos desde la Epoca de Teodoro (Teddy) Roosevelt.

Neugebauer, John Boehner, y Mitch McConnell consideran el pueblo Norteamericano como tontos y no prestan servicio honesto cuando dicen que las Ordenes Ejecutivos no tienen valor de un simple hoja de papel. Atentamente, Neale J. Pearson, Former Emeritus of Political Science, TTU 3215 - 4th Street, Lubbock, TX, 79413 Neale.pearson@ttu.edu

Sindicatos De La Educación Revelan Preocupaciones En Cuanto Al Plan Para Las Escuelas De Obama

By Luis Carlos López

El presidente Barack Obama haya reautorizado la Ley de Educación Elemental y Secundaria Education Act, que es una revisión de la ley del 2002, promulgada por el entonces presidente George W. Bush, que ningún Niño Quede Afuera, resulta preocupante para los poderosos sindicatos de la educación de este país.

Destacando que los Estados Unidos ahora va a la zaga de muchos países desarrollados en áreas claves de la educación escolar, el mensaje que Obama entregó el 13 de marzo esbozó la perspectiva a grandes rasgos de su administración: "Nuestros competidores saben que la nación que se prepare mejor que nosotros hoy día será el más competitivo que nosotros mañana."

Este mes dos más detalles pedagógicos y de presupuesto referentes a su plan, denominados "Blueprint for Reform."

Los sindicatos ofrecen críticas sin embargo esperada.

Durante una entrevista con Hispanic Link News Service, presidente de la Asociación Nacional para la Educación,

Dennis Van Roekel, afirmó que si bien la Administración actual progresa "en la dirección correcta" para mejorar la educación, el plan de Obama para mejorar la materia en que trata a los maestros, antes que la Asociación, con 3.2 millones de miembros, pueda respaldarlo por completo.

Una fórmula educativa lograda requiere tener tres componentes, indicó: (1) colaboración entre la administración escolar y las juntas escolares, y los empleados y sus sindicatos; (2) evaluaciones que implementen modelos de crecimiento y múltiples medidas; y (3) que todas las escuelas reciban los recursos que necesitan para funcionar.

"Las evaluaciones severas, para determinar cuáles de las escuelas están con problemas, convertidas en 'ganadores y perdedores — esto no lo respaldaremos", aseveró.

Vocero de la Federación Americana de Maestros (AFT) por su según en inglés), John Cee dijo que un sistema que no le otorga ninguna autoridad a los docentes es una estrategia fallida. "El plan coloca el

100% de la responsabilidad sobre los maestros", explicó. "No puede caer sólo sobre los maestros, o sólo sobre los directores, o sólo sobre los padres. Tiene que ser una colaboración entre todos nosotros para darle a nuestros hijos las escuelas que necesitan y que se merecen".

AFT cuenta con 1.4 millones de miembros.

Al reunirse en privado con periodistas latinos el 26 de marzo, secretario del Departamento de Educación, Arne Duncan dijo que en los últimos diecisiete años el programa académico se ha estancado y que el plan de Obama realiza el logro de los menos avanzados.

Jan Sepúlveda, director de Iniciativas de Excelencia Educativa para Hispanoamericanos con la Casa Blanca, dijo que el enfoque sobre los maestros y la evaluación de su desempeño es clave para crear la brecha obsoleta. La preparación para la universidad y una carrera es un componente clave para ampliar ese éxito, explicó. "Hay una cosa de NCLB (Que Ningún

Niño Quede Afuera) que queremos que continúe, y es el enfoque sobre la igualdad — cómo se va a los subgrupos, no sólo las personas en general. Queremos llevar un paso más allá, pero, con darles a los estados una serie de normas en común al mismo tiempo que se permita la flexibilidad."

El enfoque de transformación que se bosqueja en el plan de Obama requerirá que las escuelas del 5% más bajo escogjan entre cuatro modelos de reforma. Algunos requieren que se despidan al director de la escuela y la mitad del personal si la escuela no logra mejorar. Los críticos esto lo perciben como una interrupción injusta para algunos miembros del personal productivos y sus estudiantes, y que sólo añade al problema.

El índice de deserción escolar para los hispanos y los negros es más del doble del 30% para los blancos. Un informe en el 2009 de la Alianza por Excelente Educación indica que los índices para negros e hispanos son del 69% y 63% respectivamente.

GLORIA, SHAKIRA, ANDY — LADIES IN WHITE

By José de la Haza
HOUSTON— On a trip from a press officer, I was paired with El Heraldo's international page editor Fany Riva Palacio to interview poet María Elena Cruz Varela, a recently freed Cuban political prisoner. That was in 1994, when I was in Mexico City to report on the then U.S. presidential election that year.

That was Mexico's first presidential election after an extremely controversial one in 1988. Both U.S. parties — Republican and Democrat — had sent observers to serve as part of an international delegation.

After talking a pro-democracy leader who had opposed the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, I was impressed how the driving obnoxious was greeted like a rock star. He shook hands with people who were shouting, "¿Cómo taa? ¿Cómo taa?" being greeted, sounding more South Texas than South American to me.

Voters then who welcomed the attention, that it housed a fair process.

At the Hotel María Isabel, Riva Palacio and

I set up our recorders in a sitting area between the lobby and the hotel administrative office, then the press officer introduced us to María Elena Cruz Varela.

María Elena having been released from Cuba that week and, sponsored by the Carter Center, was sent to Mexico to observe the election. She had been a leader of an artists' opposition group called Centro Alternativo. In 1991, it had published a manifesto calling for reforms, national debates and free elections. She was given a two-year prison sentence and then kept under house arrest.

We gathered these facts from the attractive, soft-spoken woman in a white flared dress. She spoke lively, metaphorical words.

Cruz Varela told us about having been tortured. Her words seemed at first like the poet's hyperbole. "What do you mean you are not here?"

"My heart is in Cuba," she said. "I did in Havana."

Two years armed men in uniform marched with the lobby, a look of horror over her face. I felt I was in a movie flashback until I realized those were just armored car personnel with rifles coming to get the recipients from the administrative office.

After the interview, Fany and I in a walk around the block, walked up to our cottage to each other what we had witnessed. We agreed we saw the woman seated, with the look of horror in her face, and her spirit leaving out of her body.

Nearly a decade later, in the spring of 2003, the Cuban government arrested and tried 25 human rights defenders, journalists and 28 lawyers. They were given sentences up to 18 years in prison. Ladies in White formed two weeks after the arrests. Each Sunday after Mass at St. Rita's in Havana, they form a silent procession to a nearby park. They dress in white, like the Argentine mothers of the "disappeared" during the Dirty War there (1976-1983). The Ladies in White each wear

a button with the photo of the jailed relative and a number to signify the sentence.

On March 26, singer Gloria Estefan led a march in Miami in tens of thousands to support the Ladies in White in Havana. From Bogota, singer Shakira sent a message of support, saying singing could "rise the tide" of the way of the Alliance for Excellent Education, as her Andy Garcia led a march calling attention to the Cuban prisoners. In New York City, young Cuban Americans held a silent march in front of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The mobilization signals the next generation to give in response. They use their slogan, "This is not a Cuban issue, it's a human issue."

It is the recognition that everyone has the right to remain intelligent—body and soul. Violating it for political reasons is to take away the last initiative, the most personal of rights.

[José de la Haza writes a weekly commentary for Hispanic Link News Service.

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¿Que Pasa?

Go Red Women Luncheon!

Women across the South Plains are invited to attend The American Heart Association's Go Red for Women Luncheon to learn how to fight heart disease, the No. 1 killer of women. This year's luncheon will take place on Thursday, April 8, from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Kaulping Education Conference Center (21st Street & Lovinville Avenue, 6th floor of West Parking Garage).

The event features complimentary health screenings, vendor exhibits and physician-led discussions from 10 - 11:45 a.m. The program and luncheon will begin at noon with Marsha Sharp serving as master of ceremonies. This year's guest speaker, Diana Jordan, was selected as "one of the funniest people on the planet" by Oprah Winfrey, Jerry Seinfeld, Robin Williams and Bill Cosby. Jordan, a health care humorist, will share her program, "Laughing for Heart Health." If you are interested in taking part in Go Red activities or attending the Go Red Event & Luncheon, please call the American Heart Association at (806) 748-2500.

Water Restrictions Begin

Water restrictions will go into effect Thursday, April 1, in order to minimize water lost to evaporation during the warmer and windier times of the day. The City continues to allow watering between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. Water use between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. is restricted in order to minimize evaporation. The restrictions are part of the City's irrigation ordinance, which applies from April 1st to September 30th each year, and are designed to minimize water lost to evaporation during the warmer and windier times of day. Exceptions are allowed for newly planted grass or landscaping, soaker hoses, and watering by hand.

The City continues to allow watering two days per week with up to one and a half inches of water for each area of the yard. Citizens can help stop the waste of water by eliminating significant runoff while watering lawns and gardens. To report violations, please call the Water Hotline at 775-3952.

SPC Byron Martin Center to offer forklift certification course LUBBOCK - South Plains College Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center, 3201 Ave. Q, will offer a Powered Industrial Forklift Certification course on April 1 from 8 a.m. to noon in Room 142. The course costs \$140.

The course will cover the Powered Industrial Trucks Standard 29 CFR 1910.178. This stand impacts all industries that use trucks, except for agricultural operators. Topics will include OSH standards, ANSI standards, mechanics of the forklift, load handling procedures and others. Upon completion of the course, students can take a written and driving evaluation test. Passing both segments will make students eligible for the forklift certificate.

For more information, contact Terri Mahaffey at (806) 716-4681.

"Girl Talk"

Covenant Health System will host a free event called Girl Talk on Thursday, April 15 from 6 - 8:30 p.m. Girl Talk is for young girls between the ages of 10 - 13 and their parent or guardian. The educational event will focus on topics such as physical and emotional changes to communication and self-esteem issues. Dinner will be provided to participants. Due to limited seating, an R.S.V.P. is required by Friday, April 9. To R.S.V.P., please call 1.866.4COVENANT.

Obama Signs Final Elements of Health Care Overhaul

President Barack Obama on Tuesday signed into law the final elements of the ambitious health care reforms that engulfed his first year in the White House.

The legislation also included a major expansion of the government's loan programs for universities and subsidies for poorer students.

Obama early last week signed the overriding health bill into law, marking the biggest legislative vic-

tory of his young presidency and the culmination of a bitter and divisive political debate.

The second signing ceremony Tuesday came after Congress late last week approved a round of changes to the underlying legislation, which for the first time aims to provide all Americans with at least basic health insurance.

Signing the bill at a university in Alexandria, Virginia, Obama said

the health overhaul represented "meaningful progress" that "enshrines the principle" of universal health coverage in US law.

The two-step approval process was part of a complicated set of procedural maneuvers used by left-leaning Democrats to get Obama's top domestic priority through the legislature over stiff Republican opposition.

The second package stepped up

government insurance subsidies to the poor, increased tax credits to small businesses and delays the introduction of a tax on the most expensive health insurance plans.

The controversial health reforms have sharply divided the country, and last week sparked cases of vandalism of political offices and death threats to some legislators, mostly Democrats who supported the reforms.

Four Health Care Reform Policies that Positively Effect the Latino Community

While the largest changes to the health care system will not be implemented until 2014, here are four key provisions that show promise to reach the Latino community in the immediate months:

1. Insurance Options for Sick Americans. Uninsured because you have a medical problem? You are not alone. Latinos are disproportionately affected by certain chronic diseases and health conditions that often result in denial of health insurance or unaffordable premium rates. By the end of June 2010, the government is expected to set up new insurance options for individuals with serious health conditions who were previously "uninsurable" or "priced out" of insurance.
2. Guaranteed Coverage. Know someone who was sick and lost their insurance? Effective immediately, health

insurance companies can no



longer take away coverage if a person gets sick. In addition, in about six months health coverage can no longer be capped by insurance companies, guaranteeing for insured individuals the benefits of insurance over the lifetime of a policy.

ability. Own or work in a

small business? Many small businesses desperately want to provide health coverage for their employees but cannot afford it. In the next few months, low-wage firms with less than 25 employees can receive a tax credit for up to 35% of their contributions toward their employees' health coverage, if they

contribute at least half of the costs of the health care premiums for their employees. Nonprofit organizations are also eligible for a tax credit of up to 25% of their contribution toward health coverage. This tax credit will increase over time, and benefits for businesses will also expand in the future.

4. Options for Young Latinos. Young, driven, but without health care? You join nearly half of Latinos under the age of 26, who are among the most at risk of being uninsured. Now young adults will be able to remain on their parents' plan until age 26. With unemployment disproportionately affecting the Latino community, young Latinos who face bleak job prospects will now be able to maintain much-needed health coverage.

We are Closed Easter Sunday so that our team members may spend the holiday with their families.

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Mexican Director Guillermo del Toro Takes Reins for 'The Hobbit'



Mexican filmmaker and fantasy enthusiast Guillermo del Toro will direct "The Hobbit" — a prequel to the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy — taking the reins from director Peter Jackson.

"The Hobbit" itself will come out as a two-part series. The first installment is set to come out in December of 2011; the second, a year later.

Jackson, meanwhile, made the decision to pass the directing torch to del Toro, and is still working on the series as a producer and screenwriter, the Associated Press reports.

Part of the idea is to bring a fresh perspective to the series. Del Toro, 45, is well known for his work on acclaimed films such as the Spanish-language "Pan's Labyrinth" and the comic-book inspired "Hellboy" series.

Born in Guadalajara, del Toro's rise to prominence hasn't come without a price. In 1997, his father — automotive entre-

preneur Federico del Toro — was abducted by kidnappers demanding a steep ransom. Federico was released after the del Toro family paid up. Shortly after, the family moved abroad.

Interestingly, in a 2006 interview with Salon.com, del Toro seemed to pool-pool the idea of "The Hobbit."

"I was never into heroic fantasy. At all. I don't like little guys and dragons, hairy feet, hobbits — I've never been into that at all," he said. "I don't like sword and sorcery. I hate all that stuff."

But in April of 2008, shortly after it was announced he would direct the series, he sounded clearly enthused in an interview with JRR Tolkien fan site TheOneRing.net.

"When we did this we got really excited because this second film is not a tag on, it's not filler, it's an integral part of telling the story of those 50 years of history lost in the narrative. There will be certain things that we will see from the first movie but from a different point of view, but it will feel like a volume, in the 5 volumes of the entire story."

America Ferrera Goes From 'Ugly Betty' to Gorgeous Dragon Slayer



Los Angeles, the daughter of a single-mother immigrant from Honduras and the youngest of seven children. She excelled at an early age in her school's theater program, and used to take the bus to her auditions.

Ferrera said she's eager to see how the film will be

received. "I think people will be really excited to see a kick-ass female in this very male-dominated Viking world," Ferrera said, according to TV critic Rob Owen. "I just loved the idea of her as a Viking warrior and dragon slayer among

these big, burly, tall men with dead buffaloes around their shoulders. I thought it was super-cool that there are no questions asked about her being the girl. It's not a big deal. I thought that was very cool, especially when I learned there really were female Vikings who were warriors."

Meanwhile, ABC's "Ugly Betty" will air its finale on April 14.

"It ends with a lot of change and Betty is sort of propelled into the next stage of her life," she said. "It's very exciting and it's very appropriate. It feels like a wrap up and also like anything is possible afterwards, and I think it will leave people wanting more."

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In Open Letter to Sean Penn, Maria Conchita Sets Record Straight on Hugo Chavez

Oscar-winning actor Sean Penn is being taken to task by actress and Grammy-nominated singer Maria Conchita Alonso for his strident support of Hugo Chavez, the socialist president of Venezuela — where Conchita was raised.

In an open letter to Sean Penn in NewsBusters.Org, the conservative Chavez, 52, said Conchita, as an individual, controls all branches of government in defiance of Venezuela's constitution, and that the government controls 92 percent of the country's media communications.

Penn made headlines after saying, in an HBO interview with Bill Maher that aired March 8, that journalists who refer to Chavez as a dictator should be

jailed. Over the past few years, Conchita has spoken out about her dislike of Chavez, airing her views on Fox News shows such as "The O'Reilly Factor" and Sean Hannity's "Hannity's America."

In her open letter to Penn, Conchita suggests that Penn was erroneous in claiming that elections in Venezuela have been fair and open.

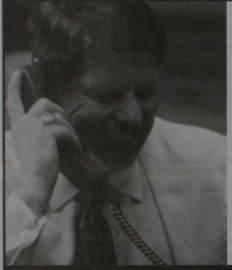
"You said that all Chavez-winning elections in Venezuela were 'transparent,'" she wrote. "Then WHY didn't the government allow a manual recount of the votes and computer information when doubt set in? After all, how do you explain how these votes that were strongly favoring the

opposition mysteriously reflected the opposite results the morning after, thus permitting Chavez to continue on?"

Maria Conchita, who also has worked as an actress in movies such as "The Running Man" and "Predator 2," was born and raised but moved to Venezuela at age 5.

"Being born in Cuba, a country where freedom of speech is non-existent, it's starting to observe how Venezuela, where I was happily raised, is fast becoming Cuba's mirror image. Dismantling of fundamental democratic rights deserved by its people and citizens of the world," she wrote.

Conchita's first breakthrough hit was the song "Love Maniac" in 1979, when she performed under the name A'mbar.



Mark Griffin's Education Pledge:

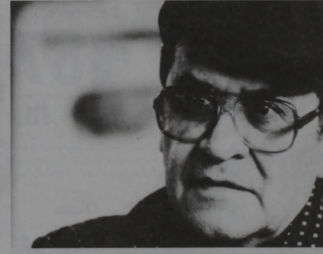
"I understand public education and its importance to our children, to Lubbock and our future. I'll be a strong advocate in Austin for parents, students, teachers, and for quality schools! The job of improving our schools and strengthening local control is not done. Yes, I will focus on education!"

Mark Griffin

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 Early Voting: April 5 - 9
 Election Day: April 13

Legendary Teacher Jaime Escalante has Passed Away



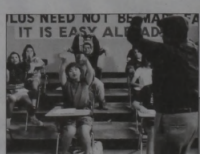
"Jaime exposed one of the most dangerous myths of our time — that inner city students can't be expected to perform at the highest levels," said Edward James Olmos, who played Escalante in Stand and Deliver. "Because of him, that destructive idea has been shattered forever. This is a legacy that changed American education, and I will work to ensure that it continues long into the future."

Reno, NV — The family of famed teacher Jaime Escalante, 79, has announced that he passed away at 2:27 pm. The cause of death was coronary and respiratory failure, precipitated by cancer.

A native of La Paz, Bolivia, and the son of two elementary-school teachers, Escalante came to America in 1963 at age 33. Although he was already an accomplished and popular science and mathematics teacher in Bolivia, he spoke almost no English and had to return to school to become a certified teacher in California.

He worked at a series of jobs as he studied, from a restaurant to a computer company, and in 1974 attained his goal. Arriving at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles, he encountered a culture of low expectations, gang activity and administrative apathy. His success in overcoming these odds and enabling "unteachable" students to master advanced mathematics made him a national and international hero. The 1988 movie about his Garfield AP Calculus

program, Stand and Deliver, remains one of the most popular and beloved films ever made about the teaching profession. His career has been



not only to me but to anyone taught by him or who saw Stand and Deliver is that no matter who you are or where you came from you can achieve anything," said actress Vanessa Marquez, who played a student in the film. "It is no surprise that after meeting him I need all of my math classes in college and I have used what I learned from him for the past 23 years. He will always be a part of my life." Escalante is survived by his wife, two sons, and six grandchildren.

Services are pending. The best way to honor the life and work of this great man is to keep it going and I, along with others whose lives he touched, intend to do that," said Olmos, in lieu of flowers I am asking those who share this goal to send donations to the Jaime Escalante Legacy Project at 236 West Mountain Street, Suite 105, Pasadena CA 91103. Special Thanks to Kirk Whistler of Latino Print Media Network for providing article on behalf of Edward James Olmos.

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Butler the team, now the time for major mid-major breakthrough



For years, teams like Butler have gotten our hopes up -- and gotten our hopes up in vain, I may add. I'm talking about you, George Mason. And you, Davidson. And Kent State and Utah and UMass and on and on.

Enough is enough. It's no longer a cute story when a team like Butler does what George Mason did in 2006, when that school reached the Final Four, or even exceeds Davidson in 2008 or Kent State in 2002, when those schools reached the Elite Eight.

Butler is in the 2010 Final Four, and if that's where the story ends for Butler, that'll be a shame. And not just for Butler, but for us. That'll be a shame for us as college basketball fans, because we're ready for one of these smaller schools to finish what it started and give March some real Madness. Even if the national championship game, technically, is in April. Don't be such a stickler. You know what I mean.

And what I believe is this: Butler is the team, and this is the year, for the big breakthrough.

For one thing, Butler is that good. I wrote it before in the Bulldogs beat Kansas State in the West Regional title game, and I'm writing it now. Along the way some Butler fans have gotten mad at me for not giving Butler enough credit -- for saying Syracuse missed Arizne Onuaku in the Sweet 16, and for saying Kansas State was exhausted in the regional final -- but Butler could have beaten Syracuse with Onuaku, and Butler could have beaten a fresh Kansas State. Pity we'll never know for sure.

But what I do know is this: Butler can win this whole thing. It's possible that Butler should win this whole thing, for two reasons: Butler is that good, and the rest of the Final

Four is that vulnerable. Butler's good for the reasons I wrote about before the West title game, and also for reasons I hadn't realized until watching the Kansas State game.

Specifically, the Bulldogs are magical on offense, doing stuff that simply can't be defended. Butler runs its offense on spacing and timing, like those great Princeton teams of the 1990s, or even like a great college football passing team. Twice against Kansas State, Butler guard Shelvin Mack threw a 30-foot volume pass from the perimeter to the low block, not to a player but to a spot, trusting that a Butler teammate would hit that spot at the right moment. And both times a teammate materialized out of the ether to finish off the unstoppable play.

This team has NBA talent, yes. Shooting guard Gordon Hayward will make a lot of money, and Mack and forward Matt Howard should someday make NBA cameos, at the least. But this team runs some of the best offensive sets in the game. It hasn't won 24 games in a row, and beaten the West's top two seeds, on wishful thinking.

If and when the Bulldogs push their winning streak to 26, it will be because of their strength -- and also because of this Final Four's weakness. Butler can beat Michigan State in that national semifinal. Butler could beat Michigan State with Kalin Lucas, and it should beat Michigan State without him. And Butler would be able to handle whoever's waiting in the title game, too. In another universe, this particular battle between Duke and West Virginia would have looked sensible in the Sweet 16. They're good teams, but they're not scary-good. Butler can beat either. Probably even should beat either. Butler's that good.

And we're that ready. All of

us -- minus you MSU fans in Michigan, you WVU fans in West Virginia, and you Duke fans in New Jersey. You're excused from this conversation for obvious reasons. But the rest of us, we need this. We need one of these mid-major teams to sneer some icing on that cake.

Oh, and Butler? You are a mid-major. Nothing wrong with that. The Horizon League in general is ranked 14th out of 32 in Jerry Palm's conference RPI ratings, which is about as middle as middle gets. And Butler, specifically, loses its coaches to bad major jobs. Barry Collier went to Nebraska and Todd Lickliter went to Iowa, for crying out loud. When you lose a coach to Nebraska or Iowa, you're a mid-major.

Don't get angry about being called a mid-major, Butler. Get even. Go out and win this thing, and strike a blow for the democracy of college basketball -- a position people like to take every March, even if it's a position that I personally don't believe. When democracy extends only to a certain point, that's not democracy. That's condescension. And that's what the NCAA tournament has been: a condescending version of democracy.

Small teams beat big teams and March is Madness and anything can happen -- until the last few rounds. Then democracy goes out the window. College basketball becomes a police state, manhandled by Duke and North Carolina and Kansas and Connecticut and all the other bullies from the BCS. Seriously, look at the list of recent NCAA champions. It's exclusively elite. As the Final Four approaches, the NCAA tournament stops looking like the House of Representatives and turns into the Senate.

And I, for one, have seen enough of Joe Biden to last a lifetime.

Accept the Needles, Manny Pacquiao, and Let's Go!

WBO world welterweight champion Manny Pacquiao said last week that he is still waiting for "Pretty Boy" Floyd Mayweather Jr. to challenge him to fight.

Unfortunately, Pacquiao (51-3-2, 38 KOs) must realize that a lucrative matchup pitting him against Mayweather (40-0, 25 KOs) will never occur because the two insanely stubborn and egotistical camps can't agree on a drug testing protocol for the bout. "I came this far in my boxing career without Mayweather, so I see no need to call him out," said Pacquiao, 31, the first boxer in history to win seven world titles in seven different weight divisions. "He needs me to bolster his career. I am open to him fighting me anytime he wants to."

Mayweather is scheduled to fight current WBA welterweight champ "Sugar" Shane Mosley May 1 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

"Pretty Boy" will be favored versus Mosley (46-5, 39 KOs) and he should emerge victorious with a decision victory in a tad more than a month.

However, Mosley is a worthy adversary and he will inevitably pose problems for Mayweather.

"Styles make fights," said Roger "Ph" Perron, 73, a longtime trainer from Brockton who now works with Mike and Rich Cappiello at their gym, Cappiello Brothers Boxing and Training.

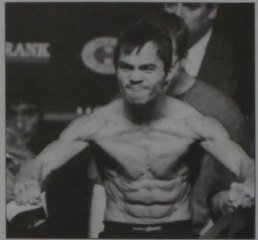
"Mosley is the one guy that can beat Floyd. Mosley has quick hands, he will press the fight, and he is a legit welterweight who has fought real champions."

Perron also stated his contention that Mosley will actually be a more difficult opponent for Mayweather than Pacquiao would have been.

"Mosley is a tough guy. I think Floyd would have beaten Pacquiao, but I don't know if Floyd can take Mosley."

Boxing fans want, and deserve, to see Pacquiao versus Mosley. Boxing has aptly been

called "the red light district of sports" and fans rarely receive



what they warranted.

Despite an estimated purse that could pay both prizefighter's in excess of \$30 million apiece, Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather will never fight.

Typically, boxing and its deprived fans will be the biggest losers yet again.

Unless, of course, Pacquiao finally relents and justifiably agrees to Olympic-style testing.

Approximately \$30 million is a great amount of cash to squander rather than allowing random blood samples to be drawn.

YSIDRO GUTIERREZ ENDORSES JOHN FRULLO



"Even if you didn't vote in March, I encourage you to vote for John Frullo in the April run-off election. John will represent all of Lubbock." - Ysidro Gutierrez

EARLY VOTING: April 5th-9th, 2010 | ELECTION: April 13th, 2010

VOTE FOR JOHN FRULLO for State Representative District 84

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1090	\$250,000 Bingo - Probabilidades son de 1 en 3.14	\$10	22/04/10	19/10/10
1208	Tripler - Probabilidades son de 1 en 4.85	\$3	01/05/10	28/10/10
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1188	Stacking Stuffer - Probabilidades son de 1 en 3.79	\$3	02/06/10	29/11/10
1189	Winter Winnings - Probabilidades son de 1 en 3.82	\$5	02/06/10	29/11/10
1192	Jingle Jumbo Bucks - Probabilidades son de 1 en 3.36	\$10	02/06/10	29/11/10
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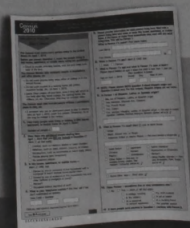
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