

El Editor

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Ajeno es la Paz"
Lic Benito Juarez

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Report Probes Hispanics' Racial Identity

By GENARO C. ARMAS

Hispanics who identify themselves as "white" tend to be better educated and less likely to be in poverty than those who consider themselves "some other race," according to a report released Monday by a private research group.

The Pew Hispanic Center analyzed data from the 2000 census and its own survey in 2002 and found foreign-born Latinos who became citizens were slightly more likely to consider themselves white than noncitizens.

"White" also was more popular among the U.S.-born grandchildren of immigrants than among the U.S.-born children of foreign-born Hispanics.

Sonya Tafoya, the Pew research associate who wrote the report, said, for Latinos, "race goes beyond physical characteristics and skin color."

Tafoya did not offer reasons on which Hispanics base their choices of race, although she noted that intermarriage between Hispanics and non-Hispanic

whites may play a factor in the how second- and third-generation U.S.-born Latinos view themselves.

The census results showed that race among Hispanics appeared "to be a measure of belonging or of political enfranchisement. ... Those feeling more belonging to the American mainstream are more likely to feel white," she said.

The government considers "Hispanic" an ethnicity instead of a race; people of Hispanic ethnicity can belong to any race.

The 2000 census counted 35 million Hispanics. Since then, Hispanics have passed blacks as the nation's largest minority group.

The last census found the two most popular responses to the race question among Hispanics were white (48 percent, or 17 million people) and "some other race" (42 percent, or nearly 14.9 million).

Among Hispanic subgroups, Cubans were most likely to identify themselves as white (85 percent), while Dominicans most often selected "some other race" (58 percent).

In most groups, naturalized citizens were slightly more likely to choose white than noncitizens. For instance, 47 percent of

naturalized Mexican-Americans said they were white, compared with 44 percent of Mexicans who were not U.S. citizens.

"As an immigrant becomes more incorporated into the mainstream U.S. society, they have a higher tendency to identify themselves as white. In some ways, it's intuitive," Tafoya said.

Brent Wilkes, executive director of the League of United Latin American Citizens, a Washington-based advocacy group, urged caution in interpreting the census results because "there isn't a true opportunity for Hispanics to put down what their race really is."

A large number of Latinos have backgrounds that include combinations of white, African and indigenous ancestries, the Pew report stated.

"Some other race" Hispanics typically have lower socio-economic status than white Hispanics. For instance, among Latinos age 25 and older, 54 percent of the "some other race" group had less than high school educations, compared with 44

percent of whites.

Hispanics who chose "some other race" were more likely than white Hispanics to be in poverty (24 percent to 20 percent).

According to the Pew center's 2002 "National Survey of Latinos," 23 percent of white Hispanics spoke only English, compared with 16 percent of "some other race" Hispanics. That survey also found that more white Hispanics (81 percent) than "some other race" Hispanics (66 percent) had ever voted.

Roughly 1 in 5 white Hispanics reported they were Republican, compared with about 1 in 9 "some other race" Hispanics.

The Pew findings were released as the Census Bureau (news - web sites) ends

testing into whether to delete "some other race" as an answer to the race question in the 2010 count. The test had ranked many civil rights groups, who felt the government was trying to force Hispanics into uncomfortable racial descriptions.

One rationale presented by census officials was that Americans in 2000 had more options than ever to identify their racial background since respondents, for the first time, could check off more than one race on their forms.

Rep. Jose Serrano, D-N.Y., ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, which oversees census financing, inserted an amendment into the 2005 congressional budget agreement several weeks ago to prohibit the elimination of "some other race."

Bastion of Cockfighting Is Under Pressure to Ban It

By SIMON ROMERO

OCORRO, N.M. - First it was the actress Pamela Anderson who angered New Mexico's cockfight enthusiasts.

In a letter to Gov. Bill Richardson in October, Ms. Anderson expressed support for a proposal to forbid cockfighting throughout the state, declaring, "The whole country is watching, especially Hollywood, which your office actively courts for the film business." The letter was released by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and was quoted in newspapers all around New Mexico, one of only two states, with Louisiana, that have not banned cockfighting.

Next it was the HBO talk show host Bill Maher, who wrote in a public letter in November: "Cockfighting ... let's see, blood, violence and illegal gambling - sounds more like a Scorsese film than a sport. If this is how you treat your athletes, no wonder you don't have a major league baseball team."

New Mexico may not have any major league teams, but members of the New Mexico Game Birds Association, the state's largest cockfighting advocacy group, say it is proud of the sports it does have. One is cockfighting, a practice, particularly popular among Hispanics, that is believed to have originated in ancient Greece and Persia, pitting gamecocks against each other with metal spurs attached to their legs. The birds often fight to the death.

Massachusetts was the first state to ban cockfighting, in 1836, and has been followed by 47 others. But New Mexico's "galleros," as cockfighting practitioners here call themselves in Spanish, are determined that their state will not be next, even as they face their strongest challenge yet from animal rights activists and some celebrity friends.

"I oppose abortion, but I'm not going to tell Pamela Anderson or even my daughter not to get one - it's their choice," said Louisa Lopez, who operates one of New Mexico's largest cockfighting pits, the Gentlemen's Arena Game Club, on the outskirts of Socorro, a small town south of Albuquerque. "So who are these outsiders telling me what to do? Who are they to come here with their ideas of what's right and what's wrong?"

Even the most fervent galleros - or cockers, as they are called in English - acknowledge that their opponents are on a roll. In November, the Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to Oklahoma's cockfighting ban, enacted in 2002. That choice by the justices placed New Mexico and Louisiana in the cross hairs of groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and Animal Protection Voters.

The activists' efforts appear to have touched a nerve, however, with people in New Mexico's cockfighting pits, its Legislature and even the governor's office. Many are unhappy with what they perceive as meddling by outsiders.

"I'm officially undecided on the issue, but I don't believe it merits the attention it's received," Governor Richardson said in an interview. "Every time it's introduced it distracts from pressing issues like access to health care or drunk-driving fatalities, serious problems affecting our population."

"But it goes beyond distraction sometimes," he said. "Some of the implied threats coming from these Hollywood personalities are condescending and insulting."

New Mexico's cockfighting season gets under way in December and usually lasts through July. The new season coincides with what is expected to be the reintroduction of a bill in the Legislature to ban the sport; hence the noticeable increase in lobbying activity by Ms. Anderson, Mr. Maher and other opponents.

Many of the estimated 10,000 New Mexicans who breed gamecocks describe cockfighting as a part of the state's culture, dating from Spain's colonization of this part of the Southwest four centuries ago. Ronald Barron, president of the New Mexico Game Birds Association, noted that it was a practice shared with other former Spanish possessions where it remains common, like Puerto Rico, Guam, Mexico and the Philippines.

"We're a wild frontier kind of state," said Mr. Barron, a former oil field worker, "and some of the people who come here like the physical beauty of the place, but they frown on the people."

Hispanic Exit Polls on Bush-Kerry:

Fresh Numbers Stir Fireworks

By Sonia Meléndez

NBC News and the William C. Velásquez Institute, whose national exit polls conflicted by 13 percentage points on Election Day in assessing John Kerry's margin of Hispanic support over President Bush, came much closer to agreement during a Dec. 2 panel dialogue at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The fireworks came later.

The following day WCVI issued a press release calling NBC's "unprecedented downward correction... a stunning admission." It added, "We hope other networks follow suit."

NBC shot back a day after that, challenging the Hispanic polling body and "their cause." It explaining that NBC's new data did not constitute "a correction." It added, "We do NOT endorse the WVI poll nor their sampling methodology."

During the panel, the debate was more genteel. NBC elections manager Ana María Arumi started by revealing the network trimmed its original 44-percent pro-Bush figure down to 40 percent and increased Kerry's vote percentage from 53 to 58 by combining 50 state exit polls instead of the national poll it employed on Nov. 2.

That's how Kerry's margin of Latino support doubled from nine to 18 percent, she said. WCVI president Antonio González fol-

lowed by revealing an increase in its Bush-backers figure from 31 percent to 33 percent. It trimmed Kerry from 68 percent to 65 percent. Both adjustments were within its margin of error, he pointed out.

The WCVI poll gap between the two candidates was reduced from 37 percent to 32 percent, maintaining the Democratic Party candidate's traditional two-to-one chasm over the GOP presidential candidate.

With a slight smile, González praised NBC for "taking the lead" among TV networks by re-examining its numbers. He said he hoped it would set an example for other major news agencies that had adopted a 44 or 45 percent figure.

Several major media, including NBC, CBS, CNN and the Associated Press, used data obtained from exit polls conducted by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International. The news agencies chipped in \$10 million for the study, which covered all voters, not just Hispanics.

"Immediately following Election Day there was an enormous rush to judgment," said panelist Adam Segal, director of the Hispanic Voter Project at Johns Hopkins University.

The Republican Party immediately seized on the 44-percent figure as proof that Hispanics were shifting in large numbers to the GOP. Arumi fed the assumption, "No matter how we sliced it, it is clear the Republican Party has made some significant strides."

The WCVI exit poll was the only one that reported no major changes in Latino support for Bush in the past four years.

(Continúa en la pagina 5)

Undocumented immigration's cost estimated by organization

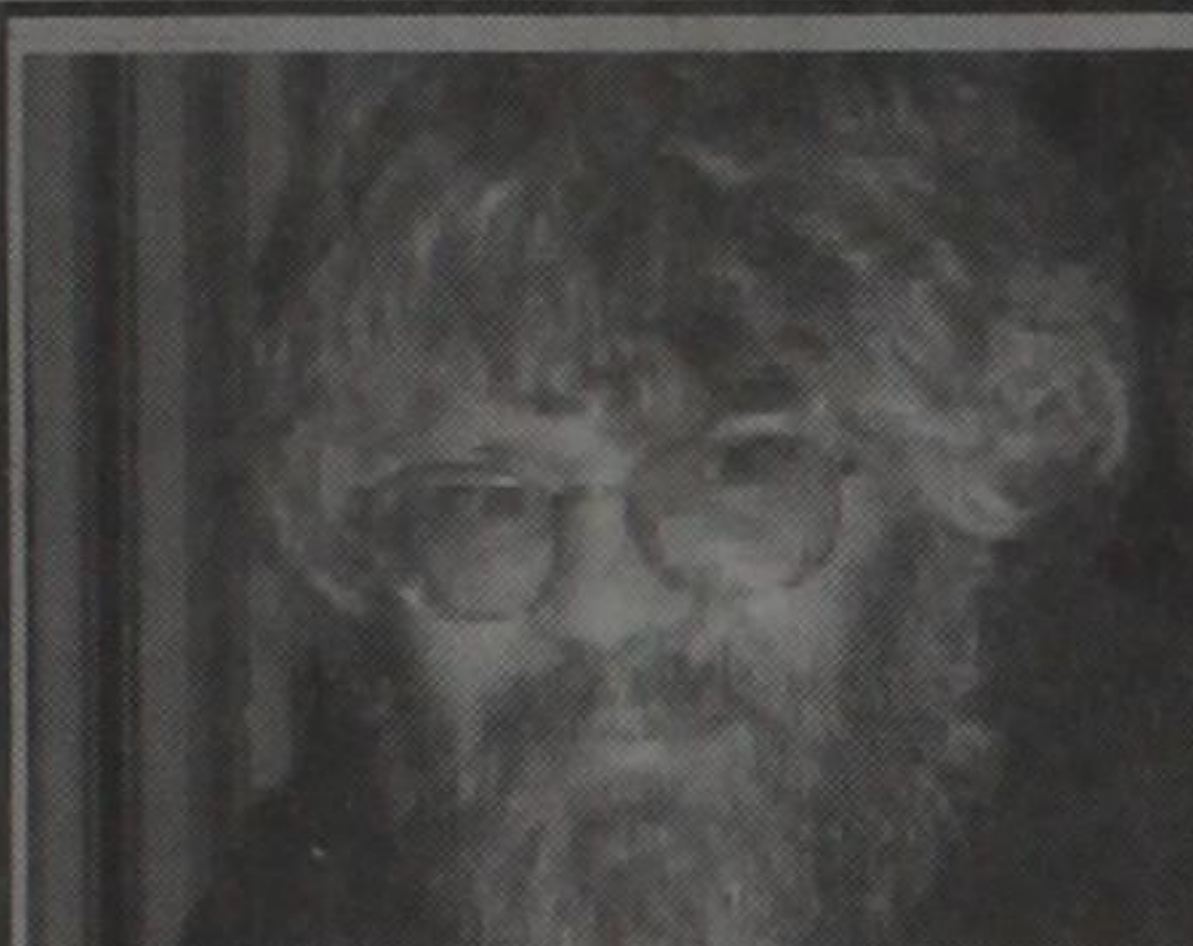
New York, U.S., December 8, 2004 (Notimex) - The cost of undocumented immigration in California costs 10 thousand 500 million to the state annually, a report by the civil organization FAIR estimated today.

The bulk of the economic load rests in health services, education and 'the incarceration of undocumented people' according to FAIR, considered by other civil groups as an 'anti-immigrant' organization.

'California's addiction to illegal labor is breaking the state's finances and placing an enormous state load in the fiscal base of the weakened media class', said Dan Stein, president of the organization that sponsored the report.

The information stated the education system spends seven thousand 700 millions of dollars annually to offer services to undocumented people's children, and a thousand 400 millions more go to health services for them and their families.

(Continued Page 5)



Comentarios

by Bidal Agüero

Today's front page story could leave many of us who are continually stressing teaching of our culture and traditions to our young people think whether we are in the right. Our doubts could be augmented when we read Abel Cruz' statement that asks whether "the day is fast approaching when we will be forced to set aside our culture, our language, and our heritage in order to obtain that elusive gold ring and that perhaps the cultural tendencies that we were born with us are the very traits that keep us from achieving the American dream' certainly."

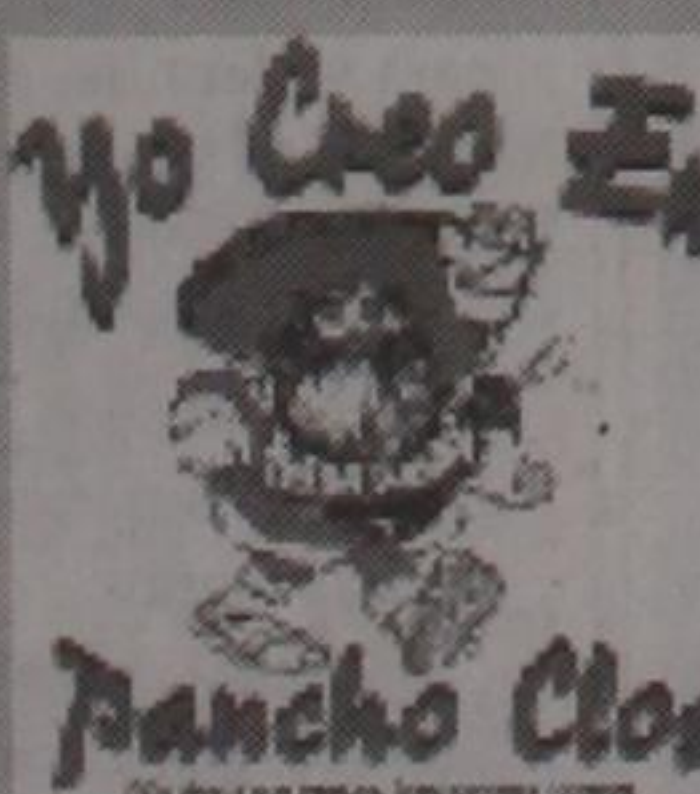
I have never been one to see my "hispanidad" or as I call it, mi chicanismo," as an obstacle. Perhaps this is because I have never lived outside of it. As I tell many of my friends, "I was born in the barrio and still live in the barrio." This is not to say that those that don't live in the actual "barrio" are any less Chicano than I am because to me el barrio goes beyond the place when one lives. Being fanatical about being a Chicano includes ones frame of mind and how a persons life is conducted.

The article on today front brings to question what effect our refusing to assimilate has caused not only on ones self but on young persons who are affected by your lifestyle. Perhaps it is too late for me but I will always wonder whether forgetting my "cause" could have led me to a different life. I will always wonder if I could have been something better. Whatever the answer to that question is, I can only say "hice lo que pude."

On September 19th El Editor will have a special presentation of "The Marvelous Santa Suit" on TV Telemundo Channel 46 - Cox Cable 15. The 30 minute show features a story that was about Christmas and the many challenges faced by working people. We invite everyone to tune in and watch.

We invite everyone to bring out all their kids to visit with Pancho Clos on Dec. 19th at Maggie Trejo Center starting at 2 pm. Pancho has gifts for all the children and senior citizens. We also invite everyone

to send in their Christmas pictures for publication in our Christmas edition. PO Box 11250 Lubbock 79408



The activists' efforts appear to have touched a nerve, however, with people in New Mexico's cockfighting pits, its Legislature and even the governor's office. Many are unhappy with what they perceive as meddling by outsiders.

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Republicans Cannot Count on Bush Hispanic Support

Alfredo Cardenas

Now that the presidential election is over, the postmortems are flourishing. For us in Texas, one particular analysis holds special interest. According to exit polls, President Bush carried 59 percent of the Hispanic vote in Texas, a 16-percent improvement over his 2000 numbers.

Exit polls, of course, have come under heavy criticism this election. And many Hispanic political experts (mostly liberal in leaning and Democratic in preference) argue that while Bush did better than previous Republicans, the president's numbers have been exaggerated.

Texas state Rep. Pete Gallego, D-Alpine, chairman of the Mexican-American Legislative Caucus in Austin, is one who does not agree with the exit polls. He admits that Bush did better than most Republi-

cans, but 59 percent is too high a number.

Moreover, Gallego points out that Hispanic votes for Bush are not transferable to other Republicans. People like the president, Gallego says, but that is far from meaning that more Hispanics are voting Republican.

A look at a red and blue map of Texas tends to support Gallego's contention. While the president won most counties in the state, South Texas was nearly a solid blue. With the exception of Nueces and Cameron counties, Sen. Kerry carried every other South Texas county, those that are heavily Hispanic.

An analysis of Nueces County Hispanic precincts by Texas A&M-Corpus Christi professor Bob Bezdek showed a 12-percent jump in Hispanic support for Bush in 2004, from 14 to 26 percent.

Gallego's premise is more believable when one looks at the lower candidates on the ballot. Republican congressional candidate Rebecca Almandariz Klein only received 20 percent of the Duval County vote, 8 full percentage points below the president. The same was true in Jim Hogg County, where Klein received only 26 percent of the vote. Only in Starr County did Klein's number approach Bush's, where she received 25 percent, 1 less than Bush.

Texas Railroad Commission Chairman Victor Carrillo, also on the ballot as a Republican, received similar support in South Texas. And Anglo Republican candidates did much worse.

Bottom line, any increase in support for President Bush among Hispanics was due to the power of his own personality. Simply put, Hispanics like the president, and their support for him has little to do with party

affiliation.

Republicans, then, must realize that they have a lot of work to do before they can expect to get real Hispanic support. They can start by recruiting and supporting Hispanic candidates for local and district offices in South Texas.

Of the five Congressional districts in South Texas, Republicans had two candidates, Klein and Henry Bonilla, who won re-election. Of the three contested state representative districts in Hispanic South Texas, Republicans ran no Hispanics. Not surprisingly, they lost all three.

This is hardly a strategy for Republicans to make inroads in South Texas. Until Republicans get serious about recruiting Hispanic candidates, they can forget about South Texas ever bleeding red.

Alfredo E. Cardenas is a freelance writer who lives in the Austin area.

The Color of Success

By Abel Cruz

In a recently released study by the Pew Hispanic Center, and reported on the Los Angeles Times website, "42% of US born (California) Mexican Americans identified themselves as white, compared with 63% of those born in Texas" who also referred to themselves as white. In addition, the study found that "Latinos who perceive themselves as white appear to feel that their place in American society is more secure".

There is no question that race and culture play an important part in a person's life. And although it would be hard to prove, I suspect that life might be easier without having to go around always being referred to as a "minority".

After all, we go through life with enough labels being placed on us.

Only problem though is that just thinking that you're white doesn't make it so.

It does seem that darker skinned people have always had a tougher time than their lighter skinned brethren. This is not just something that happens in a white and black world, but it is also prevalent among our own ethnic groups. Take the "Novelas" on Univision, how many leading ladies do you see that are dark skinned? The majority of the main star characters are blond and light skinned, with darker skinned actors relegated to maids and gardeners.

This type of casting is no accident. Rather it is a direct reflection of how this world operates and perhaps shows why some people, at least in the Pew study, decided that they would rather be white than "some other race".

Perhaps the day is fast approaching when we will be forced to set aside our culture, our language, and our heritage in order to obtain that elusive gold ring? Perhaps the cultural tendencies that we were born with are the very traits that keep us from achieving the American dream?

Sometimes we seem to live in a world that doesn't value diversity. We are forced to change the pronunciation of our surnames so that people who don't speak Spanish will find them easier to pronounce. Younger generations are fast losing the ability to speak Spanish and at times seem ashamed of their culture. And I would bet that kids these days are more familiar with hip hop artist Usher than with Tejano music artist Jimmy Gonzalez. Perhaps, that is their way of denouncing their skin color and proclaiming their whiteness?

Who knows?

But what I do know is that some people tend to run away from labels that portray them as uneducated, unmotivated, lazy, and unambitious; the very labels that some Mexican Americans use to describe other Mexican Americans.

And maybe that's why some people tend to check the box that says "white" when asked about their race? Maybe they are tired of being painted with that "brown brush" and have come to believe in the old Caribbean proverb that says that "money bleaches"?

Just maybe?
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Jose Añade su Capitulo al "Sueño Americano"

Por John Flórez

José juramentó como ciudadano estadounidense en Salt Lake City este otoño, a tiempo para poder votar en las elecciones nacionales. Al salir del auditorio, alzó una hoja de registro de votantes y me gritó, "¡Por esto quise hacerme ciudadano!"

Su gran sonrisa lo dijo todo - "Tengo el orgullo de ser de los Estados Unidos".

No sólo no cabía en mí la felicidad que sentía por él, sino también por mí mismo, con el orgullo de ser ciudadano de este país. Yo nací aquí, pero tengo raíces de familia como las de José que se rastrean por Zacatecas, México.

Al ver desplegarse la ceremonia de ciudadanía, pensé en mis padres, inmigrantes, y las dificultades con las que lucharon al escapar la devastación de la Revolución Mexicana para buscar mejor vida para sus hijos. De ahí mis pensamientos pasaron a las docenas de personas haciendo cola con José. Me imaginaba cómo cada participante tendría una historia similar - una historia llena de conflictos, miedo a lo desconocido, pero llena de esperanza, con la voluntad de Dios, por un mañana mejor.

Ver a cada uno de los participantes entrar en el auditorio, frentes en alto, agitando las hojas de naturalización para los amigos y familiares que los veían desde el balcón, fue como ver a los seres queridos casarse y compartir con ellos ese momento especial.

Ojalá que todos los que nacimos en los Estados Unidos pudieramos ver el orgullo que manifiestan los postulantes a la ciudadanía con sus sonrisas, porque nos sentiríamos tan bendecidos como ellos ese día especial. Lo más iluminador fue el impulso que mostró cada uno por realizar su deseo de hacerse ciudadano de este país y cómo bregaron por territorio desconocido para llegar a su objetivo.

Personas de muchas naciones esperaron pacientemente, tan cortesmente, su turno de la cola larga y lenta para obtener los documentos necesarios para la juramentación. Pronto compartirían un lazo como ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos. Si pudieramos enfriar esta manera de tratarnos, qué tremendo sería el mundo, me dije a mí mismo.

Fue maravilloso verlos salir a la carrera después para abrazar a los que llegaron a apoyarlos. El orgullo que exhibían mostrando sus certificados me recordó, de alguna manera, a las emociones de las que he sido testigo, a lo largo de los años, al asistir a ceremonias de graduación de la secundaria.

Algo revelador que aprendí ese día fue lo que un mexicano, recientemente juramentado como ciudadano estadounidense, quería comer en celebración de su nueva nacionalidad - comida china.

Mi amigo me dio un resumen, hablando rápidamente de cómo se sentía bendecido al poder votar y participar en este país como todos los demás.

Habló de nuestra tierra de oportunidades, de cómo el que quiera trabajar puede convertirse en casi cualquier cosa que quisiera. Lo que más orgullo le daba era que su hija -- próxima a ser adolescente -- pudiera ver "el sueño americano" de su padre realizarse mediante el deseo y el trabajo arduo, frente a sus propios ojos...

No sé si sea nunca dueño de una gran empresa. En su vida el dinero no es el impulso. Pero le da orgullo haber podido convertir la casa por la que ahorró años para comprar en un verdadero hogar para su familia, arreglarla bien, cuidar de su propio jardín, ir a la iglesia.

¿Qué tan "americano" es eso? Con ciudadanos nuevos como José, el "sueño americano" está en buenas manos.

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Las Encuestas de Salida Hispanas Sobre Bush-Kerry: Nuevas Cifras, Nuevas Chispas

Por Sonia Meléndez

Se acercaron mucho más a un acuerdo NBC News y el Instituto William C. Velásquez, cuyas encuestas de salida el día de las elecciones diferieron por 13 puntos porcentuales al evaluar el margen hispano de apoyo que tenía John Kerry sobre el presidente Bush, en un diálogo realizado el 2 de diciembre en el Club Nacional de la Prensa, en Washington, D.C.

La explosión llegó más tarde.

Al día siguiente del diálogo, el Instituto emitió un comunicado de prensa tildando "la corrección sin precedente hacia cifras más bajas (de NBC) ... una admisión sorprendente". Añadió, "Esperamos que las otras redes televisas le sigan el ejemplo".

Un día después la NBC lanzó su reto a la organización hispana de encuestas y "su causa". Explicó que los nuevos datos de NBC no constituían "una corrección". Agregó, "NO apoyamos la encuesta del Instituto ni su metodología de muestreo".

El debate del 2 de diciembre había tenido un tono más refinado. Administradora de elecciones de la NBC, Ana María Arumi, comenzó con la revelación que la red había reducido la cifra original de 44 por ciento a favor de Bush a 40 por ciento, y aumentó el porcentaje de Kerry de 53 a 58 por ciento al combinar las encuestas de salida de 50 estados en vez de utilizar la encuesta nacional que había implementado el 2 de noviembre.

Así fue que el margen de apoyo latino para Kerry se dobló de nueve a 18 por ciento, indicó.

Presidente del Instituto William C. Velásquez, Antonio González, le siguió la pauta con revelar un incremento en su cifra de apoyo para Bush de 31 por ciento a 33 por ciento. Recortó el apoyo a Kerry de 68 a 65 por ciento. Ambos ajustes caían dentro del margen de error, señaló.

La brecha entre los dos candidatos de la encuesta del Instituto se redujo de 37 a 33 por ciento, con lo cual se mantuvo el abismo dos-a-uno tradicional del candidato demócrata sobre el candidato presidencial republicano.

Esbozando una sonrisa discreta, González elogió a NBC por "haber sido la primera" entre las redes televisivas en volver a examinar sus cifras. Dijo que esperaba que fuera un ejemplo para las otras grandes agencias noticiosas que habían adoptado la cifra

de 44 por ciento a favor de Bush.

Varios medios importantes, incluyendo NBC, CBS, CNN y Associated Press, utilizaron datos que obtuvieron de encuestas de salida realizadas por Edison Media Research y Mitofsky International. Las agencias contribuyeron con \$10 millones para el estudio, que cubrió a todos los electores, no sólo a los hispanos.

"Inmediatamente después del día de las elecciones hubo una enorme precipitación hacia el juzgar los resultados", dijo panelista el 2 de diciembre, Adam Segal, director del Proyecto de Electores Hispanos de la universidad de Johns Hopkins.

El partido republicano se aferró de inmediato de la cifra de 44 por ciento como prueba del movimiento de grandes números de hispanos hacia el partido republicano.

Arumi fomentó la sugerencia, "Como quiera que se vea, queda claro que ha avanzado significativamente el partido republicano".

La encuesta de salida del Instituto fue el único en reportar que no hubo ningún cambio de importancia entre el apoyo latino por Bush en los últimos cuatro años. González reconoció que había habido "algún agite". Sus datos, dijo, mostraron avances importantes republicanos entre los latinos en Texas y Arizona, pero que estos se vieron neutralizados por los avances demócratas en Colorado y Florida.

En una conversación con Hispanic Link más tarde, Joe Lenski, vice-presidente de la agencia de encuestas contratada por las redes televisivas, Edison Media Research, dijo que la cifra de 40 por ciento a la cual se remitió NBC el 2 de diciembre corresponde a una copilación que realizó Edison de los datos de encuestas estado por estado sobre los 4, 437 electores hispanos, mientras que la cifra de 44 por ciento es un reflejo de su encuesta nacional que incluyó a 1,031 latinos. Lo último tiene un margen de error de 5 por ciento, mientras que el margen para la encuesta por estado es menor, explicó.

Panelista el 2 de diciembre, José de la Isla, autor del libro "The Rise of Hispanic Political Power", le dio el siguiente resumen a Hispanic Link más tarde: "Las diferencias entre las organizaciones de encuestas demuestran que los encuestadores no aprendieron de sus calamitosos cálculos erróneos de hace cuatro años".

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Jose Adds His Chapter to the 'American Dream'

By John Flórez

José was sworn in as a United States citizen in Salt Lake City this fall, in time to vote in the national election. As he walked out of the auditorium, he held up a voter registration paper, and hollered over to me, "This is the reason I wanted to be a citizen!"

His big smile said it all - "Proud to be an American."

I was not only bursting with joy for him, but for myself, proud to be a citizen of this country, too. I'm native-born, but with familial roots like José's that trail through

Zacatecas, Mexico.

While watching the ceremony unfold, I thought of my immigrant parents and the struggles they endured while escaping the devastation of the Mexican Revolution to pursue a better life for their children. Then my thoughts shifted to the dozens who were queued with José. I was imagining how each participant had a similar story to tell - a story of strife, fear of the unknown, but hope, "con la voluntad de Dios." - God willing - for a better tomorrow.

Seeing each of the participants enter the auditorium, heads held high, waving naturalization papers to friends and family in the balcony, was like watching loved ones get married and cherishing that moment with them.

If only all of us born in The United States could see the pride the applicants exuded with their smiles, we would feel just as blessed as they were on that special day. Most enlightening was the drive of each person in his or her desire to become a citizen of this country and how they struggled through unfamiliar territory to reach their goal.

People from many nations waited patiently, so courteously, for their turn in the long, slow-moving line to obtain the necessary documents for the swearing in ceremony. They would soon share a common bond as U.S. citizens. If we could only bottle this way of treating each other, what a great world it would be, I told myself.

It was wonderful to watch them race out afterwards to hug their supporters. The pride they exhibited showing their certificates somehow reminded me of the emotions I have witnessed over the years attending high school graduation ceremonies.

One revealing thing I learned that day was what a Mexican, just sworn in as a U.S. Citizen, wants to eat to celebrate his citizenship - Chinese food.

My friend debriefed me, talking rapidly about how blessed he was to be able to vote and participate in this country just like everyone else.

He talked about our land of opportunity, of how anyone who is willing to work can become almost anything that he or she wants to become. He was most proud of the fact that his soon-to-be-a-teenager daughter could see her father's "American Dream," through desire

and hard work, unfold before her eyes...

I don't know that he'll ever own a big company. Money isn't the driving force in his life. But he prides himself in being able to convert the house he saved years to buy into a real home for his family, to fix it up nice, to take care of his own yard, and go to church.

How "American" is that? With new citizens like José, the "American Dream" is in good hands.

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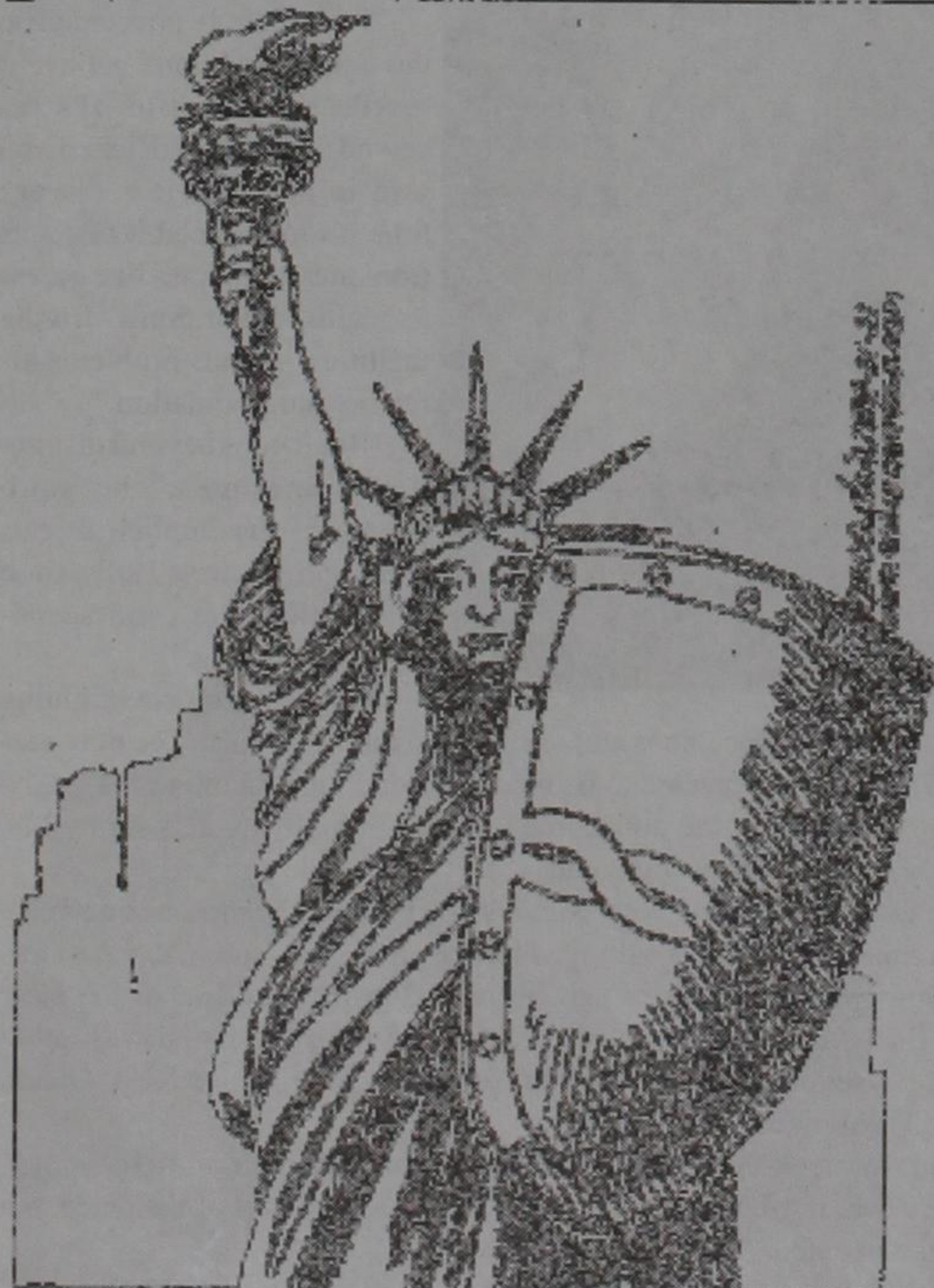
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Léa El Editor Primero



El Plan Federal para rastrear a los Estudiantes Universitarios crea Preocupación en los Latinos

Por Sonia Meléndez
El Congreso considerará una propuesta federal temprana el próximo año que, si se aprueba, resultará en la creación de una base de datos nacional mediante la recolección de información individual de todos los estudiantes de institutos y universidades.

La idea está atrayendo una atención crítica de algunos grupos de educación latinos y ya está generando preocupación. Tal medida, temen, puede llevar a una invasión de privacidad que tiene implicaciones particulares para los estudiantes latinos y sus familias.

Como se propuso, el concepto es muy simple:

El Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos está estudiando la viabilidad de que su Centro Nacional de Estadísticas de Educación recolecte información individual de matrícula y ayuda económica para cada estudiante de educación superior. En un promedio anual, hay unos 15.3 millones de estudiantes matriculados.

La propuesta está diseñada para rastrear las tarifas de la matrícula, la instrucción y la graduación del estudiante. Ahora se les requiere a los administradores de los institutos y universidades reportar estas estadísticas en un formulario resumido, dejando brechas en las cifras nacionales, dice el departamento.

Recalca que el punto importante es que cuando los estudiantes se transfieren de una universidad a otra, pueden aparecer en los expedientes federales como desertores.

La propuesta tiene el potencial de afectar a más de 1.7 millones de estudiantes hispanos.

La Asociación Hispana de Institutos y Universidades (HACU, por sus siglas en inglés) entiende que la propuesta es peligrosa y afecta a los estudiantes y a las instituciones a las que asisten.

"Para los estudiantes esto significará que ellos deben proveer información personal detallada a una agencia gubernamental sin ningún tipo de seguridad de cómo se utilizará esta información en el futuro", dice el presidente de HACU, Antonio Flores. "También creará un verdadero conflicto entre los derechos estatales y los derechos del gobierno federal para conseguir información".

El predice que surgirán conflictos en estados como Texas, donde hay una legislación en algunos lugares que permite que los estudiantes indocumentados que se han graduado de escuela secundaria allí, se matriculen en instituciones estatales y paguen tarifas del estado.

Los hispanos no están solos con su preocupación.

Algunos adversarios del plan, entre ellos la Asociación Nacional de Institutos e Universidades Independientes, han

comenzado a presionar al Congreso para bloquear la idea. Una de sus preocupaciones es que la información será divulgada y podría poner en peligro el estado de otros miembros de la familia. Requerir que los institutos de aprendizaje superior reporten tales cosas como los números de seguro social de los estudiantes puede desanimar a los latinos a buscar una educación porque ellos o algunos miembros de su familia pueden estar indocumentados, dicen los oponentes.

Mientras el Consejo Nacional de La Raza (NCLR, por sus siglas en inglés) no ha asumido una posición oficial todavía, su analista de política de educación, Melissa Lazarin, dice que el NCLR ha estado monitoreando la propuesta.

El presidente de la HACU, Antonio Flores, también menciona el asunto de que requerir que los institutos y las universidades recolecten y reporten grandes cantidades de información individual, aumentaría los costos administrativos de las instituciones, sin un beneficio equilibrado de asistencia federal.

HACU representa a 390 instituciones afiliadas cuya matrícula es al menos 25 por ciento hispana.

Entre los partidarios del plan está la Asociación Americana de Institutos y Universidades Estatales. Ellos argumentan que el sistema actual tiene muchas limitaciones que previenen a instituciones de aprendizaje superior a evaluar completamente el progreso de los estudiantes.

"Creemos que si las instituciones van a ser las responsables, se necesita mejor información, y la mejor manera de conseguirla es por el desarrollo de una exhaustiva estrategia nacional de recolección de información", de acuerdo a su declaración de apoyo.

Actualmente, 39 estados tienen algún tipo de sistema de rastreo para la educación superior. Estos estados recolectan información en instituciones públicas. Entre estos están California, Florida y Arizona.

La palabra final que le da el poder al Departamento de Educación a implementar el nuevo sistema se dará en la próxima reautorización de La Ley de Educación Superior.

El Departamento de Educación ha celebrado reuniones públicas con los interesados principales de las escuelas, los departamentos de educación estatales y varios otros partidos interesados en obtener reacciones y sugerencias.

Según el tiempo de decisión se acerca, se espera que más organizaciones hispanas den una opinión pública con preocupaciones específicas sobre el asunto.

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Federal Plan to Track College Students Raises Latino Concerns

By Sonia Meléndez
A federal proposal to create a national database by obtaining individual information on all college and university students is expected to be considered by Congress early next year.

The idea is attracting critical attention of some Latino education groups and already generating concern. Such an action, they fear, could lead to an invasion of privacy which has particular implications to Latino students and their families.

As proposed, the concept is simple enough:

The U.S. Department of Education is studying the feasibility of having its National Center on Education Statistics collect individual enrollment and financial aid information for each student in higher education. On annual average, there are some 15.3 million students enrolled.

The proposal is designed to track the students' enrollment, tuition and graduation rates. Now college and university administrators are required only to report these statistics in a summary form, leaving holes in national figures, the department says.

It makes the point that when

students transfer from one college to another, they could appear in federal records as drop-outs.

The proposal has the potential to affect more than 1.7 million Hispanic students.

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities finds the proposal to have dangers affecting both students and the institutions they attend.

"For students this will mean that they must provide personal detailed information to a government agency without any type of assurance how this information will be used in the future," HACU president Antonio Flores says. "It will also create a real conflict between state rights and federal government rights to get information."

He predicts conflict rising in states such as Texas, where there is legislation in places permitting undocumented students who have graduated from high school there to enroll in state institutions and pay in-state tuition fees.

Hispanics aren't alone in their concern.

Some of the plan's foes, among them the National Association of Independent Colleges

and Universities, have already begun lobbying Congress to block the idea. One of their concerns is that information would be divulged that could endanger the status of other family members. Requiring higher learning institutions to report such things as pupils' Social Security numbers could discourage Latino students from seeking an education because they or some family members could be undocumented, opponents say.

While the National Council of La Raza has not outlined its official position yet, its education policy analyst Melissa Lazarin says NCLR has been monitoring the proposal closely.

HACU's Flores also raises the issue that by requiring colleges and universities to collect and report large amounts of individual data, the institutions' administrative costs would increase, with no balancing benefit of federal assistance.

HACU represents 390 member institutions with at least 25 percent Hispanic enrollment.

Supporters of the plan include the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. They argue that the current system has many limitations pre-

venting higher learning institutions from fully evaluating students' progress.

"We believe that if institutions are to be held truly accountable, better data are needed, and that the best way to accomplish this is through the development of a comprehensive national data collection strategy," according to its statement in support.

At present, 39 states have some type of record system for higher education. Among them are California, Florida and Arizona.

The final word giving the Education Department the power to implement the new system will come in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The Education Department has held public meetings with key stakeholders from schools, state education departments and several other interested parties to get feedback and suggestions.

As decision-time draws closer, more Hispanic organizations are expected to go public with specific concerns on the issue.

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NCLR Releases Publication on the Need for Immigration Reforms

Washington, DC - The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., today released a new issue brief, Immigration Reform: Comprehensive Solutions for Complex Problems, surveying the issue of immigration, a topic which has been rekindled by President Bush's recent announcement that he will push to enact the guestworker program that he proposed in January 2004 and several bipartisan proposals introduced in Congress to reform the immigration system.

Janet Murguía, NCLR Executive Director stated, "Nearly everyone on all sides of the immigration debate agrees that the current system is broken and needs to be fixed. There are not enough legal channels for needed workers to enter the U.S. lawfully, leading them to come unlawfully. As a result, many people are risking their lives crossing the border, working in dangerous jobs for low wages, and hiding in the shadows of our communities. This is not good for our economy or for our communities."

Moreover, those attempting to follow the rules and enter lawfully through the family immigration system are caught in tremendous backlogs. "Legal permanent residents wait seven years or more to reunite with their spouses and children; this is unacceptable and not consistent with our American values and traditions," continued Murguía. "We need to seriously examine the failures of the current system and design comprehensive reforms that truly fix the system; we cannot simply put another band-aid on the problem."

The report documents how the current immigration system is set up, explains why the current system is inadequate and needs to be overhauled, and lays out NCLR's principles for comprehensive immigration reform. According to Murguía, "NCLR hopes that this issue brief will serve to inform the immigration debate as it unfolds over the next year. We urge the President and Congress to act on comprehensive immigration reform as soon as possible."

La Cámara Baja aprueba la reforma de los servicios del espionaje nacional

La Cámara de Representantes aprobó anoche por 336 a 75 votos la mayor reforma los servicios de inteligencia o espionaje en 50 años.

Quedaron fuera del proyecto de ley las cláusulas migratorias restrictivas contenidas originalmente, entre ellas la de prohibir el uso de matrículas consulares como forma de identificación, restringir la concesión de licencias de conducir para los indocumentados, ampliar las deportaciones expeditas y dificultar la obtención de asilo.

Al final, la medida se aprobó con un mayor apoyo demócrata en una Cámara Baja controlada por los republicanos, evidencia de las divisiones internas de este grupo en torno al tema migratorio y de seguridad nacional.

Un total de 183 demócratas, 152 republicanos y un independiente votaron a favor; 67 republicanos y ocho demócratas votaron en contra; y 8 republicanos y 14 demócratas no votaron por la medida que crea un centro nacional antiterrorista y el puesto de Director Nacional de Inteligencia (DNI) que supervisará el entramado del espionaje nacional repartido ahora entre 15 organismos. El director del DNI tendrá facultades en el manejo del presupuesto de esas agencias.

El Senado vota hoy, miércoles, el proyecto conciliado que se basa en las recomendaciones de la comisión especial independiente que investigó los ataques terroristas del 11 de septiembre

de 2001 y la respuesta de las diversas agencias gubernamentales, particularmente las de espionaje, antes, durante y después de los siniestros.

El voto tardío se produjo tras intensas negociaciones entre la Casa Blanca y los republicanos más radicales del Congreso, quienes insistían en la inclusión de más restricciones migratorias. El otro factor de retraso, mantener la llamada cadena militar de mando en el Pentágono, se solucionó el lunes dando luz verde al voto sobre la medida que el presidente George W. Bush espera promulgar de inmediato.

Bush, en una carta al Congreso, prometió que los temas migratorios se considerarán en el futuro. En este sentido, F. James Sensenbrenner, congresista republicano de Wisconsin que preside el Comité de Asuntos Judiciales de la Cámara Baja y quien encabezó la lucha a favor de incluir las restricciones migratorias, convocó a una rueda de prensa para hoy, miércoles, a fin de adelantar sus intenciones de promover las medidas migratorias que quedaron fuera de este proyecto en legislaciones que someterá ante la nueva sesión 109 del Congreso que comienza el próximo mes de enero.

Primer asunto
El congresista republicano de California, David Dreier, dijo al término de la reunión del caucus republicano ayer en la mañana que sin duda en la primera pieza legislativa disponible en el Congreso 109 que llega en enero intentarán incluir las medidas

migratorias desechadas en este proyecto, entre esas, dijo, "el asunto de las licencias, del asilo" y el objetivo de completar una valla de tres y media millas en la frontera entre California y México.

Sensenbrenner insistió ayer en que la medida está "incompleta" aprobada y no garantiza en su forma actual la seguridad de los estadounidenses. Empero, el proyecto aprobado sí incluye una serie de medidas migratorias, entre esas una que le pide al gobierno federal que emita unas normas o estándares sobre la información que deben contener las licencias de conducir.

Asimismo, incrementa la cifra de agentes fronterizos a tiempo completo en 2,000 anualmente por cinco años fiscales consecutivos a partir del año fiscal 2006 que se inicia el día 1 de octubre de 2005. Un 80% de esos agentes se destinarían a la frontera sur y 20% a la frontera norte.

De esa forma casi se duplicaría en cinco años la cifra actual de agentes fronterizos, 11,200, de los cuales mil están destinados a la frontera con Canadá y el resto a la frontera con México.

Incrementa además la cifra de agentes para reforzar las leyes migratorias en el interior del país a 800 anualmente por cinco años fiscales consecutivos. Al presente hay 5,500 e incrementa la cifra de camas para centros de detención y remoción del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (DHS) en 8,000 camas anuales por cinco años.

continúa en la página 5

Bush to Support Undocumented Driver Licenses Denial

The U.S. congress will retake next year the discussion on the subject of driver licenses for undocumented people, under a promise of president George W. Bush to the republicans, revealed the local press today.

Bush made the offering as a concession to legislators that opposed the Reform Law of Intelligence services, that was approved this Tuesday night by an ample majority in the House of Representatives, where it had been stopped weeks ago.

In a letter to these legislators, revealed on Wednesday by the newspaper The Washington Times, Bush offered to work with the Congress "to respond to these subjects, including improving the laws of asylum and the standards for the emission of driver licenses".

The approval of the law was stopped weeks ago after two influential republican legislators opposed, considering that it weakened the capacity of control of the Pentagon and that omitted what they considered faults in national security.

Congressman James Sensenbrenner specially insisted on the necessity to incorporate to the law new guides to prevent the issuing of driver licenses to undocumented people, repudiating an effective practice in 15 states of the country.

Sensenbrenner said to the newspaper that Bush's offering to support a legislation on the subject the next year, could be something delayed.

"This forecasts are not so controversial. How we are going to face mourning families in the future and tell them that although

we could have done more, legislative obstacles were elevated too much, I cannot, that's why I'm against that law", explained.

Legislators like the also republican Tom Tancredo, one of most critical to the relaxation of the migration laws in the Congress, insisted that they won't let the promise loses itself in the air and that they will insist on Bush fulfilling it.

"Though I'm disappointed that the Congress has badly wasted this historical opportunity, I am encouraged by the commitment of the president, and have all the intention to assure that he fulfills it", said the legislator of Colorado.

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TELEMUNDO

Fox Rejects Congressional Budget

On November 18th, Mexico's President Vicente Fox announced his decision to "impugn" the 2005 national budget approved by Congress. The effect of the announcement on Mexican politics is akin to shaking up a pop bottle then uncorking it.

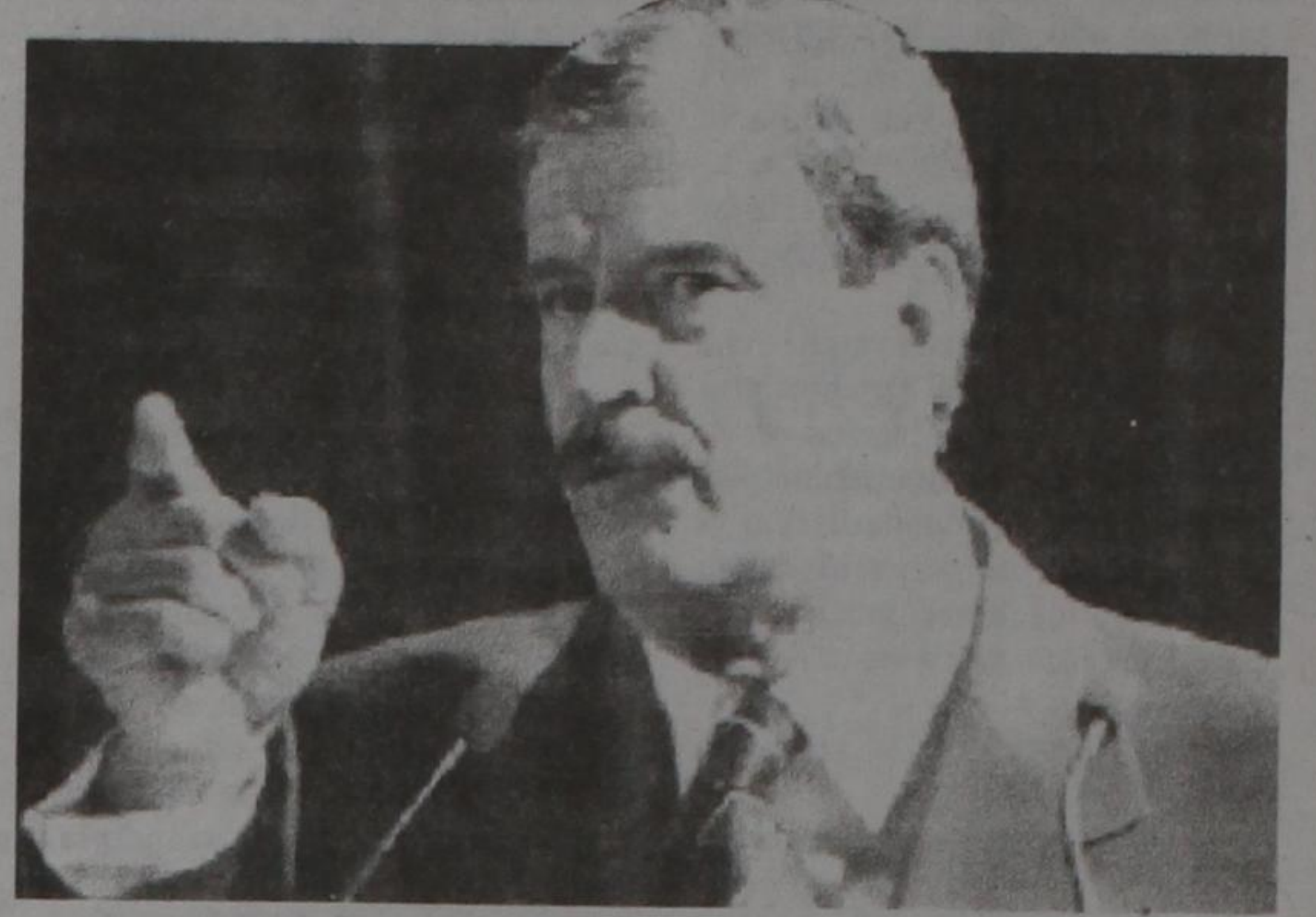
In a marathon session ending at 4:30 in the morning, the Chamber of Deputies voted 323-137 to approve a budget that re-assigned 112 billion pesos within the executive's federal budget proposal. After expressing his strong disapproval, Fox made the drastic move to formally reject the final budget approved by Congress that morning.

The showdown had been shaping up for days. Many points of the presidential proposal proved highly controversial. The Fox administration pays members of its upper echelons astronomical salaries and benefits, a fact that rubs raw in a society still facing serious poverty problems. Moreover, the president and his wife have faced criticism for their opulent lifestyle, much of which is supported by public funds. In reaction, the new congressional budget cut funds to the presidency and also downsized the budgets of other cabinet offices.

Another point of contention was the president's estimation of oil revenue. Despite the fact that

oil reached record prices this year and one congressional study predicts an average of around \$29 dollars for next year, the Fox administration estimated an extremely modest \$23 a barrel as the basis for its budget. Congressional critics argued that the Fox administration was deliber-

ately underestimating the price of oil so that it will be able to tap the resulting surplus revenues as a sort of discretionary fund beyond control of the legislature. In fact, this is what happened with unplanned oil earnings this year, much of which went to debt payment despite calls by administration critics that this windfall revenue be used to sup-

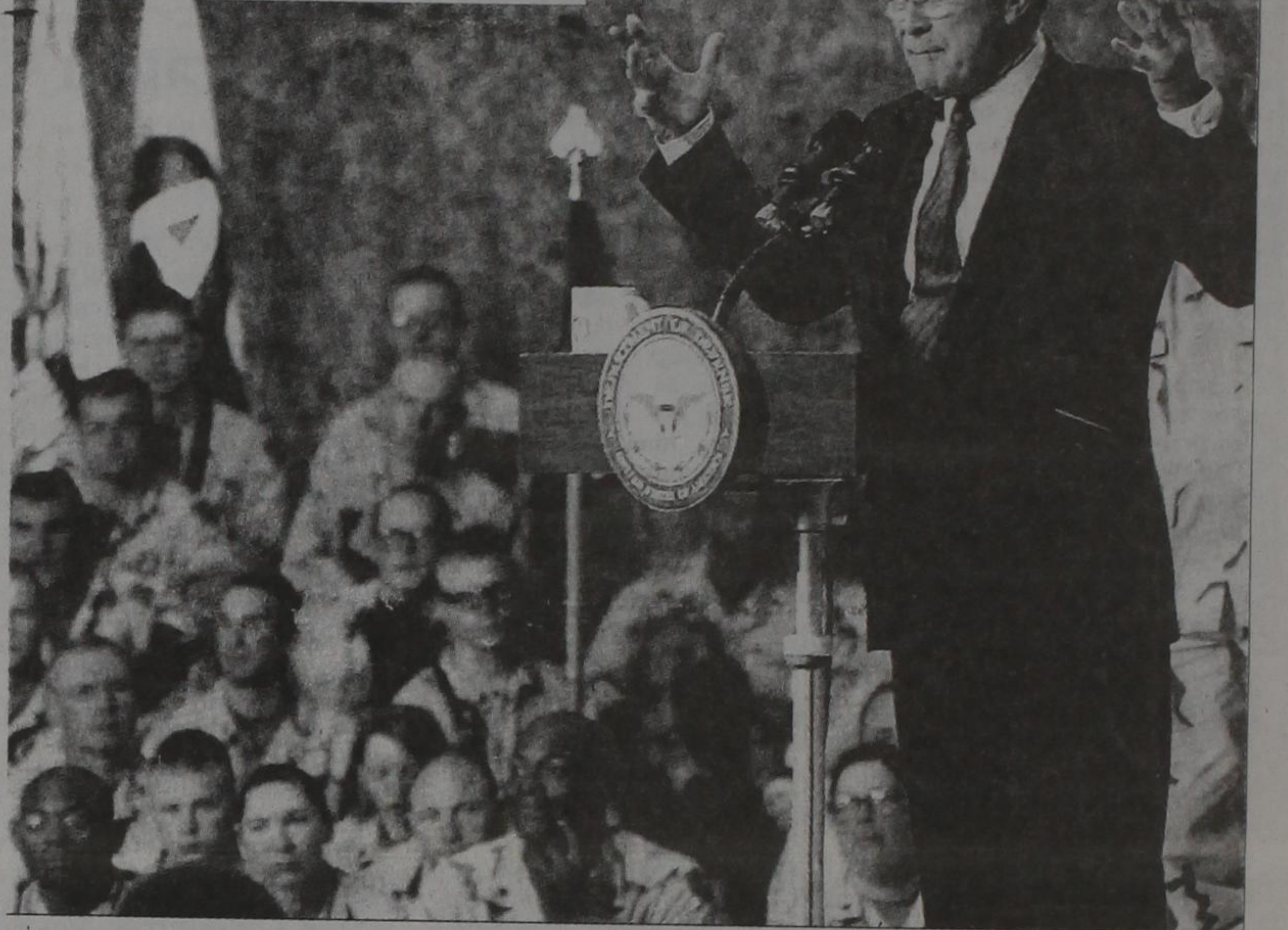


port badly underfunded social programs. To ensure that Congress will have role in spending a surplus revenue, the congressional budget included a clause that would ensure the close monitoring of windfall earnings. The Chamber of Deputies

budget also includes a 16% increase in funding for education, significant additional funding for rural programs and health, and a cut in funds destined to the IPAB—a program designed as part of the bank bailout to pay private bank debt that is still undergoing audit. Congress's budget also channels major ad-

continued on page 5

Soldados se quejan Ante Rumsfeld



Campamento Buchring, Kuwait — Soldados estadounidenses se quejaron el miércoles ante su secretario de Defensa por la carencia de blindaje en sus vehicu-

los y los largos periodos de estancia en Irak. El secretario Donald Rumsfeld respondió tajante: "Se va a la guerra con el ejército que se

tiene". Fue una rara difusión pública de discrepancias al interior del ejército.

En sus declaraciones preparadas con anterioridad en la base militar en Kuwait, donde los soldados estadounidenses se preparan para iniciar su misión en Irak, Rumsfeld había arengado a la tropa y les había exhortado a ignorar a los críticos de la guerra en Irak y a ayudar a "ganar la prueba de las voluntades" ante los insurgentes.

Sin embargo, algunos de los soldados tenían sus propias críticas, no tanto de la guerra en sí, sino de la forma en que se está librando.

Por ejemplo, el cabo Thomas Wilson, del 278 Equipo de Regimiento de Combate, preguntó a Rumsfeld por qué el blindaje de vehículos sigue escaseando casi tres años después de que comenzara la guerra en Irak.

"¿Por qué los soldados tenemos que revisar los basureros locales en busca de metal de desecho y cristal antibalas usado para mejorar el blindaje de nuestros vehículos?", preguntó Wilson, provocando estruendosos aplausos y vivas entre los aproximadamente 2,300 uniformados reunidos en un enorme hangar para participar en una sesión de preguntas y respuestas con el secretario de Defensa.

Rumsfeld titubeó y le pidió a Wilson que repitiera su pregunta. Después, respondió que "uno va a la guerra con el ejército que tiene", no con el que uno quiere, y dijo que el ejército está presionando a los fabricantes del blindaje para que lo produzcan lo más rápido posible.

Sin embargo, ese refuerzo no siempre es la solución. "Uno puede tener todo el blindaje del mundo en un tanque y aun así éste puede ser despedazado", explicó Rumsfeld.

Otro soldado quiso saber cuánto tiempo más el ejército seguirá empleando la medida "detener las pérdidas" para evitar que los soldados que ya terminaron su periodo de servicio regresen a sus hogares.

Rumsfeld respondió que esa medida es simplemente un hecho que se da por sentado en la vida de los soldados en tiempo de guerra.

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In Honor of:

Our Lady of Guadalupe

In honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a procession was held last week at the Holy Center. It was a very moving and festive celebration, in which many people attended. Another event will be held this Friday. The choirs of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church have recently recorded a 13 song CD featuring songs in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The choirs will perform their songs live at the event on Friday and the CDs will go on sale.

On Saturday, Dec. 11 at 8 pm at Mariachi Concert featuring Lori Juarez and starting at 11 pm there will be Mass and Mañanitas with Bishop Plácido Rodríguez.

Both day events are free and are going to be held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 1120 52nd Street.

El Editor

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Immigrants

(from front page)
FAIR, doesn't mention economic contributions made by undocumented immigration to California or the rest of the country.

A recent UN report analyzing the migratory patterns in the world and their economic and social impact, considered that the economical contribution of undocumented immigration to the United States "exceeds 30 thousand million dollars".

Although the UN doesn't make a classification by organization, it does emphasize that California gathers "the most part of cost added of immigration to public finances, but also its benefits".

A 1994 report by the Urban Institute, considered that the cost of undocumented immigration for the Californians, ascended then to a thousand 100 million dollars.

The enormous increase in the cost of undocumented immigrants in ten years from it, is a consequence of their rapid growth, says FAIR.

It's reasonable to expect those cost to increase if no action is taken to revert that tendency", concluded.

FRESH NUMBERS

(from front page)

González acknowledged that "some churning" had occurred. His data, he said, show the GOP making significant Latino gains in Texas and Arizona, but those are offset by gains of Democrats in Colorado and Florida.

Contacted by Hispanic Link later, Joe Lenski, executive vice president of the contracted polling firm Edison Media Research, said that the 40 percent figure which NBC switched to on Dec. 2 corresponds to a compilation of Edison state-by-state survey data on 4,437 Latino voters, while 44 percent reflects its national survey that included 1,031 Latinos. The latter has a 5 percent margin of error, while the state-by-state margin is lower, he said.

Panelist José de la Isla, author of "The Rise of Hispanic Political Power," summed up to Hispanic Link afterwards, "The differences among polling organizations demonstrates that the pollsters didn't learn from their calamitous miscalculations of four years ago."

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La Cámara
viene de la pagina 3

Por otro lado, si bien las cifras referentes al número de camas en centros de detención y de agentes del interior agregados cada año provenían del resumen del proyecto de conciliación legislativo y fueron corroboradas por el Foro Nacional de Inmigración, algunas agencias noticiosas las colocaban ayer en la mitad.

La medida requiere además que el DHS desarrolle un plan para la vigilancia de la frontera sudoeste con aviones no tripulados; fortalece los requisitos para la aprobación de visas y criminaliza el contrabando humano.

Asimismo, el proyecto final contiene la enmienda a la ley de seguridad nacional para la protección de los derechos y las libertades civiles que contempla que la Oficina del Inspector General del DHS investigue los alegatos de abuso que pesen en contra de agentes del DHS.

Hacia el futuro

Lynn Tramonte, asociada de política pública y comunicaciones del Foro Nacional de Inmigración, dijo a La Opinión que éste y otros grupos pro inmigrantes están satisfechos de que las cláusulas migratorias más extremistas quedarán fuera del proyecto final.

"Pero lo ocurrido es una indicación de lo que podría ocurrir el año entrante ante la oposición del sector más radical del Partido Republicano a cualquier reforma migratoria y demuestra cómo el Presidente tendrá que apelar al partido de la oposición, los demócratas, para el avance de esas reformas", pronosticó Tramonte.

Contra lo dicho por Sensenbrenner y otros, el congresista demócrata de Nueva Jersey y presidente del caucus demócrata de la Cámara Baja, Bob Menéndez, declaró que la medida contiene las cláusulas migratorias adecuadas y que la medida de inteligencia no es el vehículo ni éste es el momento adecuado para batallas de poder y control.

"Se trata de la primera amplia reestructuración de nuestro aparato de inteligencia. Es el momento de honrar la memoria de aquellos que perecieron el 11 de septiembre de 2001. Es hora de garantizar la seguridad de Estados Unidos", sostuvo Menéndez.

La medida mantiene la llamada cadena militar de mando en el Pentágono, quien mantendrá el control de la información de inteligencia que provee a las tropas en tiempo real.

Soldados Se Quejan
viene de la pagina 4

ditional funding to state governments. Legislators placed many new clauses in the budget that require greater accountability from the executive branch.

On national television, President Fox called the budget irresponsible, warned of "impulsive Parliamentarianism" and accused the opposition parties in Congress of having underlying electoral motives for the modifications. However, he did not define the legal measures he planned to take.

There is a good reason for this omission. According to the reading of many constitutional experts, there are no established legal channels that would permit a president to reject a budget duly approved by the legislature.

The Mexican constitution grants final budgetmaking authority to the lower house of Congress. The constitution makes no provisions for a right to presidential veto on budget-making.

A constitutional controversy claiming that Congress's budget is technically illegal may be possible. But this would create the question of how to finance the nation's operations during the court case, which experts say could take up to a year. The other option, in which the president returns the budget with "observations," would lead to a political stand-off with unknown consequences.

Although this is the first time in recent history that a president has announced intentions to challenge a budget, it is not the first time Congress has made major changes to the executive proposal. Past presidents have simply tolerated congressional revisions. Fox's decision shows a lack of statesmanship and has provoked the ire of most of the legislature.

In his message to the public, Fox stated repeatedly that his government has worked to end the disproportionate presidential power cultivated during 70 years of one-party rule. But then, as if contradicting himself, he proclaimed his intention to defy Congress's ruling on the budget in a clear test of force between the executive and legislative branches. Once again the Fox administration's commitment to building a more equitable balance of power seems dubious at best.

Considering the murky legal grounds, the confrontation is

likely to inject even more uncertainty into a political situation which was already showing signs of departure from the norms of legality, civility, and consensus-building.

This year's combination of political scandals, fallen expectations, and internecine warfare among political elites already presaged a tense lead-up to the 2006 elections, where Mexico City mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrado, widely considered the arch-rival of Fox and the PAN party, is an early favorite. On recent tours abroad, President Fox has touted Mexico's stability as its greatest long-term capital. This latest crisis over the 2005 budget calls into question basic principles of governance and adds to an increasingly tense political climate.

Aplazan debatir voto en el exterior

Ciudad de México - Legisladores de oposición decidieron aplazar por lo menos hasta febrero la discusión de una iniciativa que le daría a millones de mexicanos que viven en el extranjero la posibilidad de votar.

Esto conllevaría más presión para crear al menos un sistema de boletas de voto para estas personas ausentes antes de las elecciones presidenciales del 2006.

Enfrascados en una amarga batalla por el presupuesto federal para el 2005 con el gobierno del presidente Vicente Fox, los miembros del bloque más amplio del Congreso reconocieron el miércoles que no llevarán la

Bastion of Cockfighting is Under Pressure to Ban It

"I find this ironic and a little sad," he said, adding that cockfighting generated about \$50 million a year for New Mexico's economy.

Cockfighting has never been for the faint of heart. It is usually associated with frenzied gambling, as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz pointed out in his classic essay on the sport, "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." Purses in New Mexico can reach more than \$10,000, making the loss of a prized gamecock, bred through generations of pedigree to fight to the death, a risk that most galleros are prepared to take.

Nor is cockfighting the only

practice involving roosters that some outsiders would find shocking. Another, common in some Hispanic villages or Indian pueblos until a couple of decades ago, was "correr el gallo," the rooster pull, in which the bird was buried up to its neck in a dirt mound and men on horseback competed to uproot it. The rooster was usually killed in the process.

To be sure, many New Mexicans do not agree that cockfighting should be preserved, or even portrayed as a part of the state's heritage. Martin Chavez, the mayor of Albuquerque, has called it barbaric.

"The idea of putting razor blades on the feet of these birds and allowing them to tear each other up is obscene," the mayor said.

Though Mr. Chavez supports a ban, he acknowledges that earlier efforts to enact one have been accorded little importance, with the required legislation handed off to freshman lawmakers as a way of testing their mettle with one of the state's more fragile issues.

Some legislators suggest that a statewide ban is not needed,

since individual counties have the power to adopt their own. In fact, 13 of them have already done so, making cockfighting a misdemeanor. Making the practice a felony, which would be expected under a state ban, might prove too delicate a matter in the 20 counties that now consider it legal, particularly along the Mexican border, where it is most prevalent.

"I've seen rooster fights used to determine who's running for school board or who's coming out on top in a disputed cattle sale," said Benjie Regensburg, a legislator from the northeastern town of Cleveland who is an outspoken opponent of a ban.

Mr. Regensburg said a poor state like his had issues far more important than whether to forbid cockfighting.

The sport's critics, he declared, "say it's brutal, but these are people who value the life of a rooster more than a human being."

Christmas is Right Around the Corner! Are Your Ready??!

iniciativa de ley al pleno del Congreso sino hasta después de que los legisladores regresen a sesionar el año próximo.

"Estamos buscando apoyo para nuestra iniciativa, la cual estaremos votando en febrero", dijo el legislador Omar Bazán, del PRI, que tiene la mayoría en el Congreso.

Aproximadamente el 14 por ciento del electorado del país vive en el extranjero, principalmente en Estados Unidos, y sus votos serían suficientes para inclinar la balanza en las elecciones presidenciales del 2006.

El voto en el exterior ha generado por lo menos un apoyo en retórica de los principales partidos políticos.

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**Christmas 'En Mi Pais' (In My Country):
A Banco Popular Musical
Special with 20 Latin Singers**

Banco Popular North America, the country's largest Hispanic-owned financial institution, announced today the release of "En Mi Pais" (In My Country), its latest musical production featuring over 20 Puerto Rican and Latin American singers. Filmed on location last August at the beautiful colonial-style "Central Aguirre" hacienda in Salinas, Puerto Rico, "En Mi Pais" brings home the joy of the holiday season and the traditions that are the cornerstone of the Christmas celebration throughout the Americas continent.

Although already in its 13th edition, this year's musical special marks a series of important firsts for this popular holiday tradition. Chief among this year's important developments is the television broadcast of "En Mi Pais" in nearly 50 top U.S. Hispanic markets, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Panama and Dominican Republic. Conversations are also underway for the transmission of the show in Mexico during the month of December. Over two million viewers are expected to enjoy this year's Banco Popular music special according to Bank officials.

"This year's music special captures a celebration of friends and family from Puerto Rico and Latin America gathering to share holiday traditions that unite their countries and diverse Hispanic cultures," said Tere Loubricel, Executive Vice President of People, Communications and Planning at Popular, Inc.

"Christmas is a very special time for Latin American families. So this special, already the Bank's 13th annual production and holiday tradition, celebrates the values of this important time of the year for our communities."

This year, Banco Popular has partnered with Mexico's Azteca America to broadcast "En Mi Pais" in their 38 U.S. Hispanic markets as the newest feature within their popular holiday schedule. Azteca America will air the show as a two-part series on Saturday and Sunday, December 11 and 12, respectively, during the early evening programming schedule.

A large hacienda house, typical of estate homes located in the country site nearby a Caribbean sugar mill, is the scene where singers, friends and guests gather to share stories and songs from different Latin countries. Director Paloma Suau conceived "En Mi Pais" as a musical Christmas card with a message of unity, friendship and brotherhood, while highlighting Latin America's cultural richness.

Central Aguirre's opened its doors to welcome such leading Puerto Rican talents as Jose Feliciano, La India, Victor Manuelle, Ednita Nazario, Lucecita Benitez, Danny Rivera, Tommy Torres, and Mapeye, among others. Also participating are renowned Latin American singers including: Alejandro Fernandez, Lila Downs, Julieta Venegas and Sin Bandera, from Mexico; Ru-

ben Blades from Panama; So-
raya, from Colombia; Cachao,
from Cuba; Oscar D'Leon, from
Venezuela; Millie Quezada, from
the Dominican Republic; and
Tania Libertad, from Peru.

"En Mi Pais" is the 13th edition of the musical special series offered by Banco Popular every year. "The musical special is more than a contribution to the Latin American legacy of popular music. It is a commitment to education for the Hispanic communities we serve," said Richard L. Carrion, chief executive officer and chairman of the Board of Directors of Popular, Inc.

**Castillo
comes strong
late to take
decision over
Casamoyer**

Mexico's Jose Luis Castillo retained the World Boxing Council lightweight title Saturday night, rallying in the late rounds for a split decision over Joel Casamoyer at Mandalay Bay Events Center.

Judges Dr. James Jen Kin, Carol Castellano and Dave Moretti all gave the 30-year-old Castillo (51-6-1) the last three rounds.

"He was difficult as expected, but by the eighth, ninth rounds I knew this was my fight," Castillo said. "He was very fast, but not as fast as expected."

Casamoyer, the former WBA super featherweight champion in his first title fight at 135 pounds, was clearly the better fighter early. He found the range early with left hands and kept circling away from danger. But Castillo eventually caught up with the 33-year-old Cuban challenger.

"I am very disappointed," Casamoyer said. "Of course, I thought I won. I was able to fight my fight and he never hurt me. He was easy to hit."

On the undercard, Jeff Lacy successfully defended his IBF super middleweight title with a unanimous decision over Omar Sheika. Lacy improved to 18-0.

Motorcycle Club

Los Carnales y LULAC 263



The Lubbock Chapter of Los Carnales Motorcycle Club presented a \$500 check to LULAC Council 263 (local council) recently for scholarships to deserving high school students to attend college. In the photograph, Ruben Albares, President of LULAC Council 263, is shown receiving the check from Los Carnales officers and members at LULAC Offices on Avenue O.

**Bush urges major leagues to
take 'strong steps' on steroids**

President Bush urged Major League Baseball on Wednesday to take "strong steps" to confront the use of steroids and other illegal performance-enhancing substances by players.

Bush spoke up on the issue — which he also noted in his State of the Union address in January — as players and league management worked toward an agreement on tougher testing for steroids. Drug use "diminishes the integrity of sports," Bush's spokesman said.

"The president believes it's important for Major League Baseball management and the players union to act by taking strong steps to address the problem," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said. "Professional baseball players

are people our children look up to. Players who use drugs undermine the efforts of parents and coaches to send the right message to our children."

McClellan did not spell out what would constitute "strong steps" by the league. Bush, a former managing partner of the Texas Rangers, is not involved in negotiations between players and baseball management, limiting his role to public remarks through his spokesman.

But Bush has relied on Roland Betts, another former partner in the Rangers, to communicate his thoughts to baseball, McClellan said.

In May or June, Betts conveyed Bush's conviction that the major leagues need "a tough steroids testing policy,"

McClellan said.

Baseball commissioner Bud Selig repeatedly has called for more frequent testing and harsher penalties for steroid use, stepping up the intensity following reports of grand jury testimony by sluggers Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield.

Bush praised the efforts of Arizona Sen. John McCain, who has threatened to propose federal legislation that would override the drug-testing provisions in baseball's collective bargaining agreement.

In his State of the Union address, Bush called for U.S. sports leagues to adopt tougher anti-doping policies and for athletes to set a better example for youngsters.

**Paulina Rubio surprised
by Grammy Nomination**



"Surprises keep on coming and they're getting better each time," said Paulina Rubio about her Grammy nomination in the best Latin pop album category for her album "Pau-Latina".

According to Tuesday's nominations for the music awards to be given on February, Paulina is competing against "Amar sin mentiras" by Marc Anthony; "El rock de mi pueblo" by Carlos Vives; "Sinvergüenza" by Bacilos; and "MTV-Unplugged" by Diego Torres.

"Pau-latina" stands as the best selling album in Latin America for the year 2004, according to the "golden girl" publicists.

The Mexican pop singer said

that she has worked very hard on her recent album and that she feels satisfied with the results and her Grammy nomination.

"It was a blast for me to perform "Perros" at the Latin Grammy Awards and being nominated for the American Grammy is a great surprise."

Paulina emphasized that the recording had the participation of important peers and that's very valuable for her as an artist.

On the market since February 10, "Pau-Latina" has sold 500 thousand copies in America and Spain, and has produced three hit singles to date: "Te quise tanto", "Algo Tienes" and "Dame otro Tequila".

**Mantenga
su peso bajo
control durante
las festividades**

La gran mayoría de las personas comienzan el año nuevo con cinco o más libras de peso adicional luego de los convivios decembrinos en que abundan las oportunidades de disfrutar una variedad de platillos.

Estos consejos de las educadoras de nutrición del programa de Extensión Cooperativa de la Universidad de California pueden ayudarle a mantener controlado su peso sin dejar de disfrutar de la temporada festiva:

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•En vez de sodas embotelladas que contienen demasiada azúcar, pida refrescos hechos con frutas naturales o agua mineral.

•Al servirse postres, prefiera frutas o límitese a porciones pequeñas de postres demasiado dulces.

•Dedique más tiempo que de costumbre a la actividad física en la temporada festiva. Tenga en mente la frecuencia de reuniones y fiestas y la cantidad de calorías que añade a su alimentación usual. Aproveche cualquier oportunidad para subir y bajar escaleras. Siempre que le sea posible, camine en vez de usar el automóvil.

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