

ation Is Becoming Next tiative Battleground

By Louis Aguilar

A Silicon Valley software entrepreneur is bankrolling a drive that could allow California voters to effectively end bilingual education programs in the state's public schools.

Ron Unz, who made an unsuccessful bid for the Republican gubernatorial nomination in 1994, is leading the charge to bring the English Language Education for Immigrant Children Initiative to a statewide vote in June 1998.

Barring any last minute delays, Unz and his supporters hope to begin gathering the necessary 433,000 signatures on July 1 to bring the measure to a statewide vote. The group has 150 days to gather the signatures.

The signature campaign can be accomplished for about \$500,000, he said, adding, "As people here learn about what we are doing, we are getting more contributions all the time. But I expect to put in a good chunk of my own money."

The measure would be a complete reversal to California's approach to bilingual education, which is dominated by Latino immigrants who usually spend three to five years in classes that are taught primarily in Spanish. In all, 1.4 million students are enrolled in bilingual education programs.

"The state legislature ap-

pears unable to try to correct the situation," said Unz. "An initiative seems the best approach."

In the state legislature, there is a bill that has already passed the Senate that would give school districts complete flexibility to choose and design bilingual education programs. Representatives of the Latino Caucus of the California state legislature were to meet with sponsors of the bill to express their opposition, contending it would pave the way to English language instruction.

That is the goal of the Unz measure. He wants all public school students immediately placed in English-language classes. A parent may have the choice of putting his or her child in classes taught in another language, but Unz wants them back in English-language classes by the next school year. If parents still opt for non-English instruction after one year, their children would then be placed in a class that could contain students from a variety of grades.

Unz said he is tapping into mounting disappointment in California that bilingual education has failed. "I don't think anyone can defend the current bilingual education program." It has a 95 percent failure rate, he said, referring to his contention that only 5 percent of bilingual students each year leave the program for regular English-language classes. Theresa

Fay-Bustillos, vice-president of legal programs for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, is one of many who charge that Unz is distorting statistics.

"The 95 percent failure rate seems to be incorrect on several levels," she said. "Overwhelming academic research shows that the most successful bilingual education programs are long-term. The most recent national study suggests that keeping students in native-language classes for at least five years gives them a better foundation for future academic success."

"To characterize a student (as a failure) for not leaving the program after one year is unfair," she added.

Unz said he became interested in the issue after reading a Los Angeles Times article about a group of Mexican immigrant parents in Los Angeles who tried to persuade their children's elementary school, Ninth Street School, to provide instruction solely in English. About 1 percent of the students there master English to test out of the bilingual classes each year.

He also pointed to a Los Angeles Times poll that showed 83 percent of Orange County Latinos favor English-language classes for all children as soon as they begin school, with only 17 percent supporting the native-language instruction methods. That county recently asked the state per-

mission not to follow its bilingual education guidelines.

Gloria Matta Tachman, a Latina public school teacher from Orange County, has agreed to be co-chair of the initiative campaign. Tachman compares the current bilingual education program to the former segregationist policies of the Deep South.

But bilingual educators across the nation and influential politicians in California have scorching criticism for the Unz initiative.

"It is a sweeping step backward," said Jim Lyons, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based National Association for Bilingual Education.

Mike Schroeder, chair of the California Republican Party, said he also opposes Unz's attempt and fears the potential for a racially charged debate over the issue is all too real.

"As the son of immigrants, I strongly believe that people should learn English. But that doesn't mean we should attack Hispanics and Spanish speakers, which is how this debate will be framed. The initiative doesn't provide any real alternative, and that is the danger. Ballot initiatives tend to be taken over by the most extreme elements in the debate. In the wake of Proposition 209 and 187, this is not something we need. California needs racial healing right now."

(Louis Aguilar is editor of the national newsweekly Hispanic Link Weekly Report in Washington, D.C.)

News Briefs

Budget Analysis: Tax Bill Hurts Poor

A budget and policy analysis group says the tax bill written by House Republicans and recent and proposed welfare changes would cut the incomes of the poorest 20 percent of families by an average of \$420, reports Associated Press.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, HN0026@handsnet.org, said 87 percent of the benefits of the tax and welfare changes would flow to the 20 percent with the highest incomes.

"The bottom 60 percent of the population - numbering more than 160 million people - would share 4 percent of the net benefits," according to the study.

The conclusion is contrary to statements by the chief author of the bill, Rep. Bill Archer, R-Texas, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee. He says 71 percent of the benefits would go to people who earn between \$20,000 and \$75,000 a year.

Deloitte & Touche, a major accounting firm, concluded that the biggest winners in a tax plan developed by Senate Republicans would be families with children and incomes between \$20,000 and \$50,000. The Senate bill is similar to the House plan.

The analyses were released as the House and Senate prepared to vote this week on the tax bills and accompanying changes in the welfare system.

Archer's bill, scheduled for a House floor vote Thursday, calls for a net \$85 billion tax cut over five years. It includes a \$500 tax credit for children under age 17, as major reduction in capital-gains and estate taxes and a cut in the alternative minimum taxes, which are aimed at ensuring some tax is paid by high-income individuals and profitable corporations no matter how many deductions and credits they take.

The analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities seeks to provide a greater picture of the tax and welfare bills' effect on taxpayers by measuring the effects of tax changes on different income groups as well as welfare changes proposed this year as well as last year. Iris Lav, the center's associate director, said last year's bill was included in the study because the new welfare proposals make major changes aimed at fixing the 1996 welfare overhaul.

The study finds the combined effects would reduce after-tax income of the poorest 20 percent of families by an average of \$420. The most affluent 20 percent would see after-tax income rise by \$2,500, the study added.

Deloitte & Touche concluded that a married couple with children ages 10 and 13 and a household income of \$35,000 would have their federal income taxes cut by \$1,052 under the Senate bill - a 40 percent cut from current law.

The analysis showed families with two children and incomes above \$75,000 would receive about 25 percent of the tax bill's benefits. The Senate bill is roughly similar to the House version, except the Senate plan calls for a 20-cent-per-pack increase in cigarette taxes.

[See the Center on Budget's reports, "Archer/Roth Plans Deny Wrkg Families" and "Roth Tax Plan Backloading Benefits Wealthy" in HandsNet/Budget Tax & Policy/Federal Tax Issues]

Domestic Partner Plans Flourish

According to a survey by accounting firm KPMG Peat Marwick says 13 percent of all U.S. employers have quietly extended health benefits to the partners of gay workers, reports Associated Press.

For companies with more than 5,000 workers, the figure is one in four.

For the firms that have led the trend, domestic partner benefits are a simple matter of economics. Gays and lesbians are estimated to comprise anywhere from 2 percent to 10 percent of the workforce. With unemployment near a 24-year low and labor demand high, few employers are willing to ignore a significant share of the pool of skilled, educated employees.

The KPMG report, a telephone survey of 1,502 companies with more than 200 workers, debunked one commonly expressed concern of employers, that covering same-sex partners will drive up health care costs.

Insuring unmarried employees can actually be cheaper. Under so-called point-of-service plans, which allow the most flexibility within managed care, the average monthly cost for domestic partners is \$326 a month, compared to \$339 for married couples, the study found.

Indemnity plans for domestic partners are more pricey - \$455 vs. \$298 - while HMO plans are about the same, \$319 for domestic partners and \$307 for a husband and wife.

Gays say there's a reason beyond price to offer benefits to same-sex partners: family values.

"If the whole purpose of giving tax incentives and benefits to married couples is to create communities and families that care for each other and relieve any burden on the government to do that, it makes sense to encourage employer groups and others to do the same for gays," said Jackson, the Kaiser Permanente worker.

While the city of San Francisco encourages equal treatment in the workplace - requiring all firms that do business with the city to extend benefits to same-sex partners - Uncle Sam does not.

Tax exemptions are granted for health care coverage only to the insured employee and married couples. Coverage for anyone else is considered taxable income.

U.S. Judge Stops Deportations

A federal judge in Miami has issued a court order preventing the deportation of thousands of Nicaraguans and other immigrants in three states, reports Reuters.

Judge James King's preliminary injunction affects immigrants in Florida, Georgia and Alabama. The order says no deportations of Nicaraguans can take place at least until a January 1998 trial on the matter.

The ruling effectively prevents the federal government from sending home Nicaraguans who have lived in legal limbo since coming to the United States during the 1980s civil war in their country.

Woman's Death Prompts Concern Over Workfare

A 50-year-old workfare participant with heart problems died on the job last week, prompting questions about the city's ability to determine whether some of its workfare laborers might be too sick to work, reports The New York Times.

The worker, Marsha Motipersad, whose heart disease had forced her to leave a job in 1994 as a secretary with the Children's Aid Society, HN7077@handsnet.org, after 17 years, died

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"El Respeto Al
Derecho Ajeno
Es La Paz"
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La Ensenanza Bilingue Se Convierte En El Proximo Campo De Batalla De Las Iniciativas De California

Por Louis Aguilar

Un empresario de programas para computadoras del Valle de Silicon, en el Norte de California, está financiando una campaña que podría permitir a los electores del estado poner fin definitivo al programa de enseñanza bilingue en las escuelas públicas.

Ron Unz, que infructuosamente trató de obtener la postulación republicana para ser gobernador estatal en 1994, está dirigiendo el ataque para llevar la Iniciativa de Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés para Niños Inmigrantes a una votación estatal en junio de 1998.

A no ser por cualquier demora de último minuto, Unz y sus partidarios esperan comenzar el 1x de julio a reunir las 433,000 firmas necesarias para llevar la medida a una votación estatal. El grupo tiene 150 días para reunir dichas firmas.

Las firmas se pueden obtener con una campana de unos \$500,000, dijo Unz a Hispanic Link, agregando que está "dispuesto a poner gran parte de mi dinero."

La medida sería una revocación completa del enfoque Californiano de enseñanza bilingue, principalmente constituido por inmigrantes latinos que acostumbran pasar de tres a cinco años en clases primordialmente enseñadas en Español. En total, 1.4 millones de estudiantes están matriculados en los programas de enseñanza bilingue.

"La legislatura del estado parece ser incapaz de tratar de corregir la situación. Una iniciativa parece el mejor enfoque," dijo Unz.

Unz quiere que todos los estudiantes de escuelas públicas sean inmediatamente puestos

en clases enseñadas en inglés. Padres de familia tendrán la opción de poner a su hijo(a) en clases enseñadas en otro idioma, pero Unz exige que regresen a clases enseñadas en inglés al año escolar siguiente. Si después de un año los padres todavía optan por instrucción que no sea en inglés, su hijo(a) será ubicado en un aula de clases que podría tener estudiantes de diversos grados.

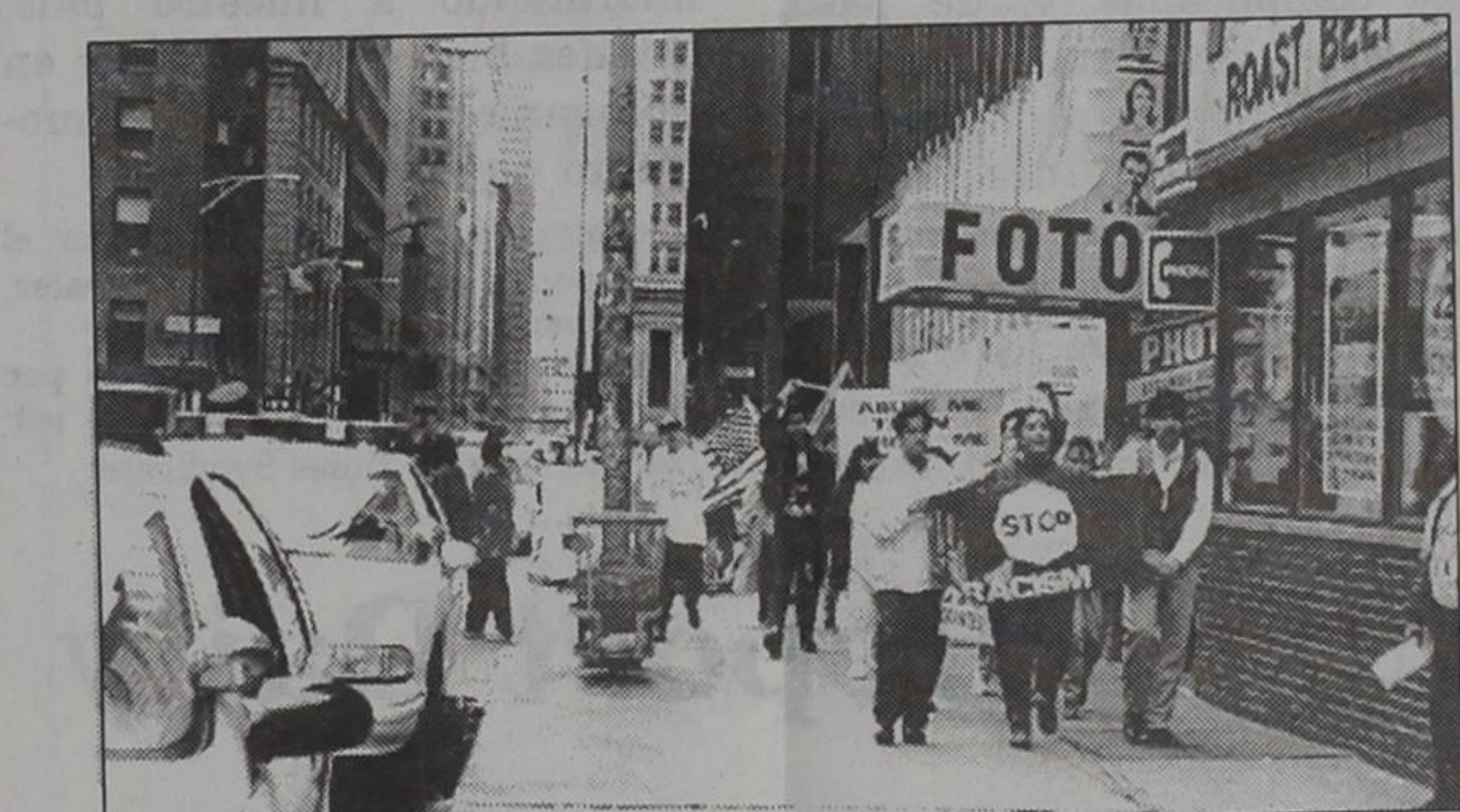
Unz dice basarse en el creciente opinión que la educación bilingue ha fracasado. "No creo que alguien pueda defender al programa actual de enseñanza bilingue", dice él. Tiene una tasa de fracasos del 95 por ciento, refiriéndose al hecho de que sólo el 5 por ciento de los estudiantes bilingues salen del programa en cada año para dirigirse a clases enseñadas en inglés.

Theresa Fay-Bustillos, vicepresidenta para programas legales del Fondo Méxicoamericano para la Defensa Legal, es una de muchas personas que acusan a Unz de estar distorcionando las estadísticas sobre la enseñanza bilingue.

"La tasa de fracaso del 95 por ciento me parece incorrecta a varios niveles. La abrumante mayoría de la investigación académica muestra que los programas de enseñanza bilingue que tienen más éxito son los que funcionan a largo plazo. El estudio nacional más reciente sugiere que el mantener a los estudiantes en las clases en su idioma nativo por lo menos durante cinco años, les da un mejor cimiento para un exitoso futuro académico.

"El caracterizar a un estudiante como un fracaso por no salir del programa después de un año es injusto."

Unz dijo que se interesó por el



tema después de leer un artículo en el Los Angeles Times, sobre un grupo de padres mexicanos inmigrantes de Los Angeles que trataron de convencer a la escuela primaria de sus hijos, Ninth Street School, que diera instrucción solamente en inglés. Tan sólo el 1 por ciento de los estudiantes de clases bilingues llegan tener suficiente dominio del inglés como para aprobar el examen de proficiencia en inglés cada año.

El también señala a una encuesta del Los Angeles Times que mostró que el 83 por ciento de los latinos del Condado Orange favorecen las clases en inglés para todos los niños tan pronto como ingresen a la escuela, y sólo el 17 por ciento apoya la instrucción en otro idioma. Recientemente, ese condado pidió permiso al estado para no seguir las directrices de enseñanza bilingue.

Una maestra latina del Condado Orange, Gloria Matta Tachman, ha aceptado ser la co-presidenta de la campaña por la iniciativa. Ella compara al programa actual de la enseñanza bilingue con viejas prácticas segregacionistas del Sur.

Los educadores bilingues de toda la nación y los políticos influyentes de California han hecho críticas hirientes a la iniciativa de Unz.

La Mentira Que Los Periodistas Informan Diariamente

Por Ray Suárez

(Este es una versión resumida del discurso principal de la conferencia anual de la Asociación de Periodistas Hispánicos (NAHJ en inglés) en Seattle pronunciada el 5 de Junio por Ray Suárez, moderador del programa "All Things Considered" -- "Considerando todas las cosas" -- de National Public Radio. Para obtener una copia de su presentación completa, comuníquese con Suárez en National Public Radio, 635 Massachusetts Ave. NW., Washington, DC. 20001; teléfono (202) 414-2346; FAX (202) 414-3025.)

Ultimamente he estado pensando mucho acerca del paisaje mental que elaboramos para la gente, nuestros lectores, radio-escuchas y televidentes. Hay una brecha de confianza en 1997. La investigación sobre la opinión pública hallan que, a pesar de las muchas buenas noticias referentes al estado de la nación, los estadounidenses son lentos en manifestar su optimismo, y están convencidos de que el país es, en general, un peor lugar de lo que realmente es.

¿Cuál es el relato que damos sobre la vida diaria de este país, qué ideas le damos al público?

Salimos, examinamos lo malo y lo bueno, investigamos cosas, hacemos preguntas y entonces destilamos lo que hemos aprendido en un relato de 700 palabras.

Hasta aquí está bien, ¿no es así?

Creo que el problema ocurre en nuestro siguiente movimiento, al decidir qué es lo que se va a mostrar en la transmisión de noticias, en la revista o en el periódico. La noticia es aquello que sucedió hoy y que significó algo para muchas personas, o que afectó a un asunto de interés común, o que fue lo suficientemente inusitado como para ser digno de observarse.

¿Ponemos espejos delante de las caras de las personas y sencillamente reproducimos todos sus juicios acerca del mundo y del modo que éste funciona, o bien situamos una ventana frente sus ojos, a través de la cual ellos puedan mirar al resto del mundo, más allá del fin de su calle, más allá de las puntas de sus narices?

El número de crímenes violentos en el país cae como una

pedra, especialmente en las grandes zonas metropolitanas. ¿Sabían ustedes que Nueva York tiene ahora una de las tasas más bajas de delincuencia que cualquier ciudad grande del país? Al mismo tiempo, la proporción del espacio local de noticias dedicado a la delincuencia ha crecido en un 30 por ciento. Las personas que se enfrentan con la tarea de elaborar un cuadro exacto de la realidad a partir de las cosas que ven en televisión o impresas, son cada vez más incapaces de hacer eso.

¿Qué ha creado nuestro descenso a la trivialidad? ¿Qué se desprende de esta crisis de verosimilitud?

Una encuesta reciente efectuada por el Centro Pew para el Público y la Prensa preguntaba si el país se encaminaba en la dirección correcta en la lucha contra la delincuencia. La gran mayoría de los entrevistados fueron personas de raza blanca, y de clase media, que viven en sectores suburbanos de las zonas metropolitanas, unos de los lugares más seguros del país. Sus probabilidades de llegar a ser víctimas de un crimen violento han disminuido considerablemente si es les ha sucedido algo; no obstante, siete de cada 10 personas dijeron que el país va en la dirección equivocada en la lucha contra el crimen.

Aunque la mayor proporción de los asesinatos son cometidos por gente conocida por la víctima, en nuestra cobertura nos concentramos en la delincuencia por parte de los extraños. Hacemos la norma de lo excepcional. Comúnmente decimos que las víctimas jóvenes de los asesinatos estaban en el lugar equivocado en el momento equivocado.

Ese pedazo trillado de insensatez encubre la verdadera amenaza de los tiroteos callejeros, de las pandillas de narcotraficantes y de la vida en las vecindades más peligrosas de la nación. Universalizamos un problema que tiene lugares muy específicos. Nunca cuestionamos nuestro insípido cliché.

Si un chico mexicano de 17 años de edad de Chicago resulta muerto frente a la escuela, ¿Cuál es el lugar equivocado donde se encontraba en momento equivocado? ¿En la escuela? ¿En su vecindad? ¿En Chicago?

Mala noticia, "ése," deber-

ías haberte quedado en Durango.

A medida que las personas se acurrucan en los suburbios y escuchan los atropellos más recientes en las noticias del día, les enviamos este mensaje: "Eh, ustedes también podrían estar en el lugar equivocado en el momento equivocado. La delincuencia es fortuita, afecta a todos; nadie está seguro. De modo que no conduzcan hacia la el centro de la ciudad; no usen las escuelas públicas; no usen los parques públicos." Es una mentira que nuestra industria dice todos los días. Y es una mentira que tiene graves repercusiones en nuestra sociedad, porque la historia verdadera de quién resulta muerto -- y de qué modo -- nos obligaría a reaccionar.

Ese modo de elaborar las noticias no es mucho mejor que mentir y es inseparable del hecho de que nuestra profesión, junto con la política y la ley, está alimentando el mismo cada vez mayor con el que el público considera sus instituciones básicas. Deberíamos ser considerados como vitales por el público, porque nuestras vidas están envueltas en investigar y contar la historia completa.

Sin embargo, una cantidad cada vez mayor de personas de todo el país me dicen que dependienden menos de la corriente convencional de noticias de radio, televisión o periódicos.

En economía hay una ley llamada la "Ley de Gresham." Es sencilla: Cuando hay dos clases de moneda en manos del público, el dinero malo desplaza al bueno. En el mercado de los Estados Unidos, tenemos una Ley de Gresham en la edad de la información, ya que la información mala continúa desplazando a la buena.

En la brecha de credibilidad, viertan locutores que antes hacían comerciales, locutores con bocas que derraman insensateces y bazos que bombean bilis, locutores que están listos a odiar lo que ustedes odien; listos a aceptar sus simples respuestas a preguntas complicadas y, de paso, ganarse un dólar mientras tanto.

Como un reto desafiante a nuestra industria, los programas de de noticias radiofónicas cierran el vacío entre el cuarto de redacción y la sala de estar, al crear un mundo

donde las creencias absurdas son más atractivas que los hechos inequívocos.

¿Cuál es la verdad que llega de esta fuente popular de noticias?

¿Que el gobierno está creciendo? No es así.

¿Que los inmigrantes no aprenden inglés? Sí lo aprenden.

¿Que los impuestos estan a su nivel más alto en la historia? No lo están. ¿Que la ayuda al exterior está haciendo aumentar al déficit presupuestario? No es así.

¿Que los hombres blancos de gran habilidad y talento están siendo desplazados de todos los empleos decentes para favorecer a negros y latinos?

Toda clase imaginable de insensatez da la vuelta al país y al mundo por cortesía del Internet, mientras nos adentramos en una nueva edad de desinformación. Pistas de aterrizaje para embarques de cocaína en Arkansas administradas por Bill Clinton; 13,000 muertos en la Guerra del Golfo Pérsico ocultadas por el Departamento de la Defensa; el gobierno como autor intelectual del explosion en Oklahoma City.

Este nuevo instrumento maravilloso ha abierto todo un mundo nuevo de falsedades emocionantes, a medida que la brecha de la credibilidad se llena de basura.

Los periódicos y las estaciones de televisión están tratando de arreglárselas con menos reporteros, trabajando arduamente para vender una y otra vez la misma carne picoteada. Aunque el negocio está ampliándose, curiosamente se está encogiendo al mismo tiempo, de modo que no es claro si deberíamos seguir la corriente o dedicarnos con seriedad a un examen de coincidencia.

Después de todo, muchos de los lugares en que crecimos son los que están recibiendo la peor información, la más distorsionada y la más destructiva.

Hoy, voy a romper mi propia regla, al sugerir que si ustedes creen que todo anda bien con el modo de que estamos informando a nuestro país, ustedes bien podrían estar en el lugar equivocado en el momento equivocado.

(Este resumen fue editado por el corresponsal Edgar Ortega Barrales, de Hispanic Link News Service.)
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Sittin' Here Thinkin' Talking The Talk by Ira Cutler

No one who regularly reads this column will be surprised that I am underwhelmed by what I read of President Clinton's new campaign on race. Some weeks ago I promised myself, and others, that I would write no more Bill Clinton columns, but here I go again. I cannot help it -- it just keeps getting worse and worse and I feel compelled to say so.

If you missed it, the long awaited race initiative amounted to a speech, a year long public discussion, a seven-member advisory panel and a whole lot of psycho-babble about a national group therapy process in which we will "break down the barriers in our lives, our minds, our hearts." The President will do televised town meetings, a la Phil Donahue, give a monthly race speech and will spend the next year figuring out what he actually wants to do. Meanwhile, no money will be spent, no laws passed, no regulations promulgated nothing that the government is supposed to do, in fact, will be involved at all in this first year. Instead, it will be all show.

The New York Times reported that, "To prepare for Mr. Clinton's focus on race, the White House consulted with as many as 100 people in the past few months. Mr. Clinton examined survey data on racial attitudes assembled by his pollsters. This week, he consulted at the White House with an array of scholars and civil rights leaders he and his speech writers went through draft after draft of his address... and he was still polishing (it) past midnight."

Ironically, Mr. Clinton tied his current race campaign to the 1958 forced integration of the Little Rock schools, when President Eisenhower used U.S. troops to physically clear the way and to support the constitutional right of black students to attend previously all-white public schools. No two acts decisively using armed troops and calling for a national chat could be farther apart in style or substance, yet in the President's mind they are somehow linked, perhaps even equivalent. Eisenhower, a very different sort of man in a very different time, simply did what he needed to do and did not talk about it very much.

The reaction to the President's speech was, I thought, remarkably restrained. Many pointed out, politely, that there are quite a number of concrete things that the President might be doing while we are all talking. He might instruct the Attorney General, for example, to focus on rooting out continued discrimination in housing and employment. Or put the Education Department and the Civil Rights Division to work addressing the tremendous disparity between the public education offered in poor, primarily minority schools and those of the more affluent. Perhaps the Labor Department could do a better job addressing the massive disparity in wealth and unemployment that accompanies race and ethnicity. And perhaps the President could even propose spending money on a decent standard of living for all poor children, or additional public housing or a decent welfare standard in this, the richest country in the world.

But the President proposed no such things and very few criticized him harshly. For reasons that I cannot grasp, the entire left-liberal wing of America, if there still is one, has decided to give Bill Clinton a free pass on whatever he does or does not do, for as long as he remains around.

The President seems unwilling to consider any courses of action that cost money, raise controversy or might create confrontation. Unlike Eisenhower who sent in troops or Lyndon Johnson who knowingly lost the South for the Democratic Party on issues of civil rights, Bill Clinton seems to think that he can finesse the race issue in America and still make change. No such luck.

One notable exception to the lack of critical response was Mary Frances Berry, the Chair of the US Civil Rights Commission, who compared the new race initiative to the President's Summit on Volunteerism which, she said, "had a half-life of 30 seconds." I was glad someone else said that -- it made me feel less alone.

Part of my frustration with all this is that President Clinton is a two-term President who has nothing to lose -- he can go for broke, he can be radical and creative -- and yet he is being so cautious. In addition, students of the Presidency will tell you that, most often, second terms are not especially productive because the occupant of the White House very quickly becomes a "lame duck." He cannot run again, so his coat-tails are meaningless. He will be gone soon and his ability to reward and punish becomes severely eroded. By the time Clinton is done thinking it all over about race, he will be entering the third year of his second term and no one, except perhaps Al Gore, will need him or care what he thinks.

Most of all, I am worried that this style of Presidency may be imitated by others and be the dominant style for the rest of my life. After all, Bill Clinton is a wildly successful politician the only Democrat elected to two terms since Roosevelt and he is riding high in the polls. Other politicians, looking for the secret to success, may also adopt the politics of emptiness and compromise as a ticket to the White House. Maybe this is what people want a speech here, a photo op there, no substance, no controversy, no fuss. If that is what we want, then surely we will keep on getting it.

Ira Cutler, says he's seeking a semi-legitimate outlet for thoughts and ideas too irrelevant, too iconoclastic, or just too nasty for polite, serious, self-important company. He promises us a Monday column most weeks. More recently Ira has become involved in communicating in another way, through speeches which he calls Standin' Here Talkin'.

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Léalo Primero En El Editor

The Lie That Journalists Report Daily

By Ray Suárez

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about the mental landscape that we build for people, our readers, listeners and viewers. There is a confidence gap in 1997. Public opinion research finds that in the face of lots of good news concerning the state of the nation, Americans are still slow to express optimism, and convinced that the country is in many ways a worse place than it really is.

What is the story we tell of daily life in this country that gives people these ideas?

We go out, look at the bad, at the good, find things out, ask questions and then distill what we've learned into a 700-word story.

So far, so good, right?

I think the problem enters in our next move, in deciding what it is that goes in the newscast, the magazine, the newspaper. News is what happened today that meant something to a lot of people, or affected a matter of common concern, or was unusual enough to be worthy of remark.

Do we hold up a mirror to peoples' faces and simply play back to them all their judgments about the world and the way it works, or do we hold a window up to their world through which they can look out on the rest of the world beyond the end of their street, beyond the end of their noses?

Violent crime in the country overall is dropping like a rock, particularly in big metropolitan areas. Did you know that New York now has one of the lowest crime rates of any big city in the country? At the same time, the portion of the local news hole filled by crime has grown 30 percent. People faced with building an accurate picture of reality from the things they see on television and in print are increasingly unable to do so.

What has our descent to triviality created? What is the run-off from this credibility crisis?

A recent survey conducted by the Pew Center for the People and the Press asked if the country was headed in the right direction when it comes to crime. The great majority of those surveyed were white, middle-class people who live in suburban sections of metropolitan areas, some of the safest places in the country. Their chances of becoming victims of a violent crime have, if anything, significantly dropped; yet seven out of 10 respondents said the country was headed in the wrong direction when it comes to dealing with crime.

While the largest single chunk of murders are committed by people's associates, we concentrate our coverage on crimes by strangers. We

make the exceptional the norm. We keep saying of young murder victims that they were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

That trite piece of nonsense covers up the real threat of drive-bys and drug gangs and life in the nation's most dangerous neighborhoods. It universalizes a problem that has very specific places. We never question our own bland cliché.

If a 17-year-old Mexican kid in Chicago is killed outside school, where is the wrong place he happened to be at the wrong time? School? His neighborhood? Chicago?

Bad move, *ése*, you should have stayed in Durango. As people hunker down in the suburbs and listen for the latest outrages in today's news, we send them the message, "Hey, you could be in the wrong place at the wrong time, too. Crime is random. It can get everybody, nobody's safe. So don't drive downtown, don't use public schools, don't use public parks." It's a lie our business tells every day. And it's a lie with serious repercussions in our society, because the true story of who really gets killed in the country -- and how -- would force us to respond.

That way of doing the news is no better than lying and cannot be separated from the

fact that our profession currently is up there with politics and the law in fueling the growing cynicism with which people regard their basic institutions. We should be thought vital by the public because our lives are wrapped up with finding out, and telling, the rest of the story.

Nonetheless, more and more people around the country tell me that they are depending less on the conventional news-delivery stream of radio, television and newspapers.

In economics, there's something called Gresham's Law. It's simple: When there are two kinds of currency in people's hands, bad money drives out good. In the U.S. marketplace, we've got an information-age Gresham's Law at work, as the bad information continues to drive out the good.

Into the credibility gap pour former announcers, voice-over men and disc jockeys with spleens pumping bile and mouths spewing nonsense, who are ready to hate what you hate, ready to agree with your easy answers to complicated questions and make a buck while they're at it.

As a defiant snub to our business, talk radio closes the chasm between the newsroom

El Referendo Contra La Enseñanza Bilingue

BILINGUE Pregunta: ¿Qué llevó a su involucración con la promoción de un referendo prácticamente eliminaría la enseñanza bilingue en California?

Respuesta: He estado muy interesado políticamente en las cosas que tengan que ver con la raza, la etnicidad, la política social, la inmigración, la enseñanza bilingue y la asimilación. He estado interesado en la enseñanza bilingue por lo menos probablemente hace 10 ó 15 años.

Siempre pensé que no parecía ser una buena idea. Lef varios artículos, libros y otras cosas durante los años. Pero lo que sucedió para provocar mi interés directamente es el caso de Los Angeles el año pasado en la Escuela Elemental de la Calle Novena. Un grupo de padres inmigrantes y trabajadores del vestido realmente empezó un boicot público de su escuela elemental local. La escuela se negaba a enseñar inglés a sus hijos.

Pregunta: ¿Encontró usted a muchas escuelas del estado negándose a enseñar inglés?

Respuesta: Según la ley actual de enseñanza bilingue de California, un padre o una madre pueden solicitar una dispensa en teoría. En otras palabras, un padre o una madre puede ir a la escuela y decir que quieren que su niño(a) sea trasladado(a) a un programa orientado hacia el idioma inglés. Los padres hallan básicamente muchos obstáculos ante ellos, especialmente los inmigrantes pobres. No hablan el idioma muy bien ellos mismos. Están muy atareados trabajando largas horas en un empleo y están atemorizados en términos de luchar con las autoridades.

Pregunta: ¿Ha mirado usted a cualesquiera programas, o ha hablado con cualesquiera grupos que estén involucrados en la enseñanza bilingue, o que la apoyen?

Respuesta: Decidí, antes de hacer cualquier cosa, que debería comunicarme con las personas del otro lado y obtener su impresión sobre el asunto. Una pregunta que hice a todas estas personas era muy fundamental: ¿Es la meta de estos programas el hacer que los niños adquieran dominio del inglés?

Si se habla de adolescentes de 14 ó 15 años que vienen a los Estados Unidos sin hablar inglés, eso es difícil. A esa edad no es fácil aprender otro idioma. Ahí podría tener algún sentido. Pero si se habla de un(a) niño(a) de cinco años de edad, todas las personas a quienes conozco dicen que sólo se necesita de unos pocos meses para aprender otro idioma cuando se tiene esa edad.

Lo que hay ahora mismo es un sistema en el que, si se clasifica a los niños como que no saben inglés, la escuela obtiene más dinero. La escuela tiene un interés creado para que se clasifique a esos niños como que no hablan inglés.

Pregunta: ¿Cree usted realmente que el dinero es la motivación de la escuela?

Respuesta: Creo que la mayoría de los maestros involucrados son maestros sinceros. Pero esa es la clase de asunto en que, si alguien es un administrador escolar y tiene limitaciones en su presupuesto y no es el que trata con los niños, no se siente culpable. Puede decirse: "Bueno, quizá deberíamos estar haciéndolo de otro modo. Pero por otra parte, es tan agradable el tener este dinero adicional y podríamos usarlo para tantos fines buenos. Podríamos ayudar a los niños con este dinero."

Pregunta: Algunos educadores bilingues creen que a los niños que no hablan inglés no debería enseñárseles inglés antes de entrar a la escuela, porque perderán la capacidad de comunicarse con sus padres. ¿Está usted preo-

cupado por eso?

Respuesta: Estoy escéptico acerca de eso. No puedo ver cómo un(a) niño(a) puede realmente perder, digamos, su dominio del español si la mayoría de los miembros de su familia hablan español.

Pregunta: Usted mencionó que se reunió con algunos grupos latinos. ¿Cómo resultó eso?

Respuesta: Traté de reunir a propósito con los grupos que vienen desde una perspectiva muy distinta. Me reuní con la dirigencia de La Raza en Washington. Me reuní con Antonia Hernández, de MALDEF (Fondo Méxicoamericano para la Defensa Legal y la Enseñanza). La reacción de la mayor parte de estas personas es obviamente que están muy comprometidos con la enseñanza bilingue. Ellos no creen que la enseñanza bilingue, como teoría, tiene la culpa. Ellos creen que no se está obteniendo suficiente financiamiento, que está siendo implantada erróneamente o que no tiene los maestros adecuados. Pero estos problemas han venido sucediendo durante 20 a 25 años. Sólo me parece que en el futuro previsible no van a comenzar a funcionar milagrosamente.

La enseñanza bilingue es un asunto singular que puede ser enfocado por una iniciativa. Si esta iniciativa es aprobada, me imagino que en el espacio de un año habrá muy poca enseñanza bilingue en California. Algunos padres y madres la quieren, pero la inmensa mayoría querrá que se enseñe inglés desde el principio.

Pregunta: ¿Cómo cree usted que los hispanos votarán en el referendo?

Respuesta: Creo que eso va a ser muy interesante. Voy a situar la mayor parte de la gestión sobre el voto de los inmigrantes hispanos. Si la iniciativa es aprobada debido a los votos de los anglo-americanos solamente, casi no tendrá la clase de efecto ni en términos de ser puesta en práctica ni en términos del mensaje que realmente diría, como si es aprobada abrumadoramente con votos de hispanos y de inmigrantes en general. Espero que podamos hacer que el 70% de la población hispana vote a favor de ella.

Pregunta: Algunos alegan que su interés por iniciar el referendo es político -- el de ganar reconocimiento para su nombre en un asunto semejante a la Proposición 187 (que prohibió a los niños de los padres indocumentados el asistir a las escuelas públicas) porque usted tiene aspiraciones de postularse para un cargo estatal.

Respuesta: Eso (correr como candidato para gobernador) sería un proyecto serio, mayor. No he puesto en sitio nada semejante. Desde el senado, tenemos un grupo grande de republicanos postulándose ya. Veré qué pasa. Ahora mismo, deshacerse de la educación bilingue en California no es una tarea fácil.

Pregunta: ¿Teme usted que su iniciativa vaya a contribuir a una división étnica mayor?

Respuesta: Ese es un peligro muy grave, y voy a hacer absolutamente todo lo que pueda para evitarlo. Cuando hablé con Antonia Hernández, estuvimos de acuerdo en que es un riesgo verdadero y ambos acordamos hacer todo lo que pudiéramos por ambas partes, asumiendo que su organización termine oponiéndose a la iniciativa. Una cosa que ya hice clara es que nadie que esté identificado de cualquier modo con la Proposición 187, o con cualquiera de los movimientos en contra de los inmigrantes, llegará a estar ni a una milla de esta iniciativa.

Propiedad literaria registrada por Hispanic Link News Service en 1997. Distribuido por The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Why Unz Is Promoting Anti-Bilingual Education

(Editor's Note: This interview with California businessman Ron Unz, author and chief financial backer of a referendum calling for virtual elimination of the state's bilingual education programs, was conducted by Hispanic Link News Service publisher Charles Ericksen and reporter Joseph Torres. Unz was a candidate for governor in the GOP primary in 1994. His answers have been edited for length.)

Q: What led to your involvement in promoting a referendum that practically eliminates bilingual education in California?

A: I have been very interested politically in things having to do with race, ethnicity, social policy, immigration, bilingual education and assimilation. I probably have been interested in bilingual education for at least 10 to 15 years.

I always thought that it didn't seem like a good idea. I read various articles, books and things over the years. But what happened to spark my interest directly is the case in Los Angeles last year at Ninth Street Elementary School. A bunch of immigrant parents and garment workers actually started a public boycott of their local elementary school. The school refused to teach their children English.

Q: Did you find that many schools in the state were refusing to teach English?

A: Under California's current bilingual education law, in theory, a parent can request a waiver. In other words, a parent can go down to the school and say that they want their child transferred to an English-oriented language program. Parents basically find so many roadblocks in front of them, particularly poor immigrants. They don't speak the language very well themselves. They are very busy, working long hours on a job and are frightened in terms of fighting with the authorities.

Q: Have you looked at any programs or talked to any groups that are involved in or

support bilingual education?

A: I decided before I did anything that I should contact people on the other side and get their side of the story. One question I asked all of these people was very basic: Is the goal in these programs to make these children fluent in English?

If you're talking about 14- or 15-year-olds who come to the United States not speaking any English, that's difficult. At that age, it is not so easy to learn another language. There it might make sense. But if you talking about a 5-year-old child, everybody I know says it only takes a few months to learn another language when you are that age.

What you have right now is a system where if the children are classified as not knowing English, the school gets more money. The school has a tremendous vested interest in having the child classified as non-English-speaking.

Q: Do you really feel that money is the motivation of the school?

A: I think most of the teachers involved are sincere teachers. But it's the sort of thing where if you are a school administrator and have budget constraints and are not the one dealing with children, you don't feel guilty. You can say, "Well, maybe we should be doing it differently. But on the other hand, it is so nice to have this extra money, and we could use it for such good purposes. We could help the children with this money."

Q: Some bilingual educators believe that non-English-speaking children shouldn't be taught English before entering school because they will lose their ability to communicate with their parents. Does that concern you?

A: I am skeptical of that. I can't see how a child can really lose, let's say, Spanish, if most of the members of their family speak Spanish.

Q: You have mentioned that you met with some Latino groups. How did that go?

A: I deliberately tried to meet with groups that come from a very different perspective. I

met with the leadership of La Raza in Washington. I met with Antonia Hernandez of MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund). The reaction by most of these people is obviously that they are very committed to bilingual education. They don't think it's the fault of bilingual education as a theory. (They) think it's not getting enough funding or being badly implemented or not having the right teachers. But these problems have been around for 20 to 25 years. It just seems to me that in the foreseeable future they are not going to miraculously start working.

Bilingual education is a single issue that can be addressed by an initiative. If this initiative passes, my guess is that in about a year's time, there will be very little bilingual education in California. Some parents will want it, but the vast majority will want English taught from the beginning.

Q: How do you think Hispanics will vote on the referendum?

A: That I think is going to be very interesting. I am going to place most of the effort on the Hispanic immigrant vote. If the initiative passes only because of Anglo votes, it won't have nearly the sort of impact in terms of being carried out and in terms of what it really says if it passes overwhelmingly with Hispanic votes and immigrant votes in general. I would hope we can get 70 percent of the Hispanic population in California to vote for it.

Q: Some claim your interest

in initiating this referendum is political -- to gain name recognition on a Proposition 187-type issue (which barred children of undocumented parents from attending public schools) because you have aspirations to run for statewide office.

A: That (running for governor) would be a very major undertaking. I haven't put anything in place for something like that. On the Senate side, you have a whole bunch of Republicans already running. I'll see what happens. Right now, getting rid of bilingual is no simple task. Q: Are you fearful your initiative is going to contribute to further ethnic division?

A: That is a very serious danger I am going to do absolutely everything I can to avoid. When I talked to Antonia Hernandez, we both agreed that it is a real risk, and we both agreed to do anything we can on each side, assuming that her organization ends up opposing it.

One thing I made very clear is that nobody who in any way is identified with Proposition 187 or any of the anti-immigrant movements will get within a mile of this initiative.

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Tyson Has Few Memories

By TIM DAHLBERG

LAS VEGAS - Mike Tyson has only a few hazy memories of his first fight with Evander Holyfield, a fight he thought he had won until his handlers told him in the dressing room that he was knocked out in the 11th round.

From the middle rounds on, when the two fighters clashed heads, Tyson says he doesn't remember a thing about the upset loss that cost him his WBA heavyweight title.

"I was whacked out," Tyson said. "Basically, I didn't know what was going on in there."

That might have been why Tyson was somewhat less than analytical at Wednesday's final prefight press conference when someone wanted to know what mistakes he made in the first fight and what he would do to correct them in Saturday night's rematch.

"I lost the first fight, that's the biggest mistake there is," Tyson said. "We'll correct it by winning this time."

Whether Tyson can correct it, of course, won't be known until the two fighters meet in a scheduled 12-round heavyweight title fight that will be boxing's richest ever.

A bigger question might be whether the 34-year-old Holyfield can put together back-to-back big fights after a lengthy career that has seen him take his share of punishment in the ring.

"I look to bring even more to the table this time," Holyfield said. "They (Tyson's camp) have found a way to beat that guy they fought Nov. 9. There will be a different guy, a better guy, in there June 28."

The two fighters met for the final time Wednesday for yet another lengthy press conference presided over by Don King. Subjects ranged the gamut from untimely deaths of the relatives of famous people to whether Pete Rose should get in baseball's Hall of Fame.

If little was revealed during the 90-minute King talkathon, it did manage to put both boxers on a dais together to promote pay-per-view sales that could hit record levels.

"I don't know about this being the greatest fight ever, but I know it's been built up as the greatest fight ever," Tyson said. The numbers for the rematch,

at least in terms of dollars, are staggering.

Holyfield will get some \$35 million - the biggest one-night purse for an entertainer or athlete of any kind - while Tyson is said to be making \$30 million for his night's work.

King will certainly get his cut too, as will cable television operators across the country who pocket a good percentage of each pay-per-view sale at a suggested price of \$49.95, or \$10 more if ordered the night of the fight.

"If you believe the projections I've read, this fight will gross \$130 million," said Jay Larkin, the man behind boxing on Showtime and its pay-per-view arm, SET. "It's one of the biggest sporting events ever."

The first fight between the two men grossed some \$100 million, with pay-per-view revenue of close to \$80 million from 1.6 million buys, Larkin said. This time, he predicted 1.8 million buys.

Add in \$15 million or so in foreign television rights and another \$14 million from the live gate at the MGM Grand Hotel, and the numbers finally compute.

After selling out the 16,331-seat MGM Grand Garden at prices ranging from \$200 to \$1,500 a seat, the hotel put on sale 3,500 closed-circuit television seats at a price of \$75.

If Tyson doesn't win, it could be some time again before he sees the huge purses he has come to expect since being released from prison two years ago. Part of the appeal of the rematch is that the career of the feared puncher is at a crossroads at the age of 30.

Tyson didn't appear terribly worried about it at the press conference, where he feigned boredom, but also laughed occasionally and seemed quite relaxed.

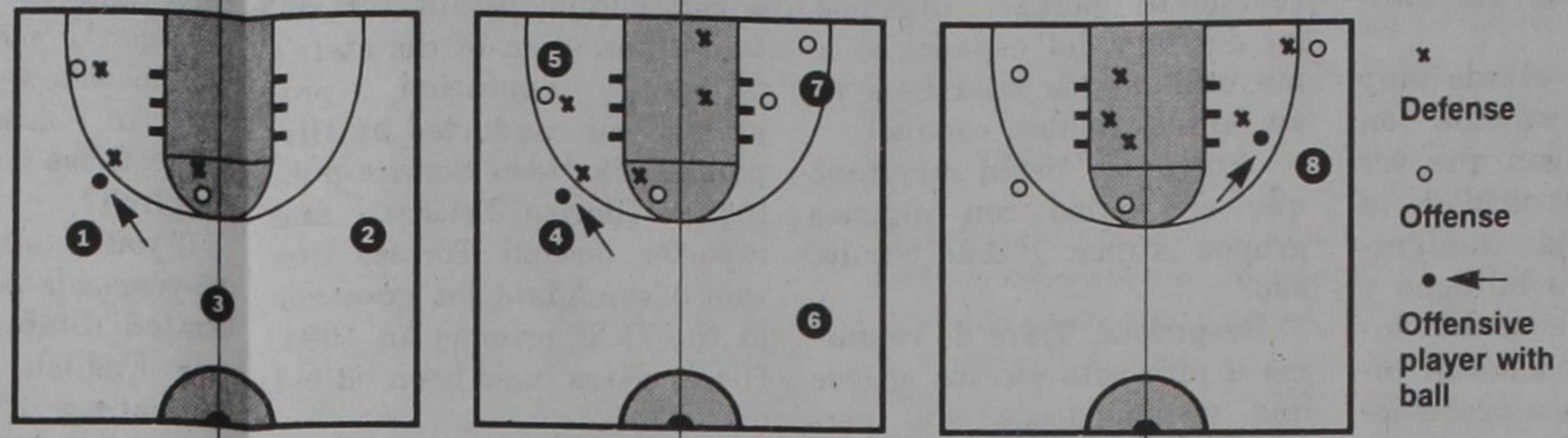
"I'm going to do pretty good Saturday night," Tyson said.

Holyfield was also relaxed, smiling from the minute he entered the room and patiently answering questions he had heard hundreds of times before.

"It's not like I'm still gloating on what I did Nov. 9," Holyfield said. "I will have a great victory and I'll win again."

Defense wins and loses

DEFENSE GRAPHIC



1. Ball side
2. Zone side
3. Division line across the court
4. The defense applies man-to-man pressure where the ball is.
5. The rival team is guarded man-to-man and prevented from passing the

ball.
6. Zone defense
7. Members from the rival team are positioned away from the ball and are challenged by a zone defense. They keep their eyes on the ball and, their primary task is helping out their

teammates.
8. When the ball crosses over the imaginary line and changes sections, the defense switches according to the basketball's position. Those playing zone defense switch to man-to-man and vice-versa.

By ALEJANDRO YANUN

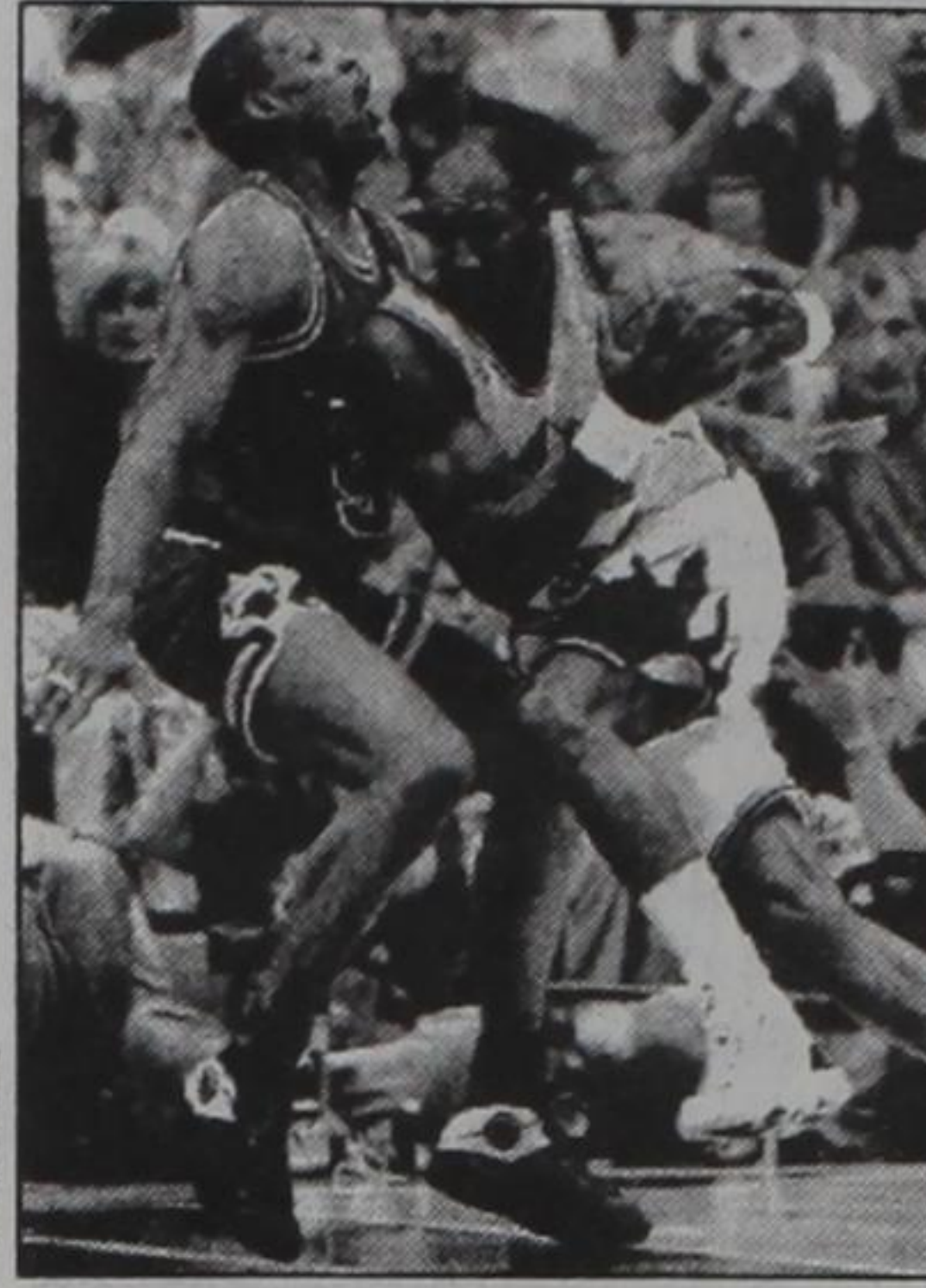
"Defense is what wins championships," said Michael Jordan last week, after the Bulls' first victory in the NBA finals against the Utah Jazz.

If one of the most amazing offensive basketball players ever says this, believe him.

The statement carries even more weight during these playoffs, filled with offensive ups and downs for the Bulls. When the Bulls' offense didn't do its job, the defense took over and won the games. The best example is the first game against Miami (75-69), the lowest scoring game in playoff history.

And, when the defense was bad, the Bulls were very, very bad; like in the third game of the championship series when the Jazz were able to break 100 points...and won easily.

The key to a good defense means putting pressure on the ball and reducing the offense's playing space near the basket. The Bulls



The pressure of man-to-man defense is used by Dennis Rodman against Karl Malone during the playoffs against the Utah Jazz.

use a combination of man-to-man and zone-defense which borders on being illegal, since NBA rules require teams to play man-to-man defense.

But, when it works, it is almost impossible for opponents to get a

clean shot at the basket.

The defense has two simple goals. To provide pressure on the ball and to provide support for the ball-side defenders from teammates defending away from the ball.

If an imaginary longitudinal line were to run through the basketball court, two sectors are clearly seen: the half where the ball is (ball-side) and maximum pressure is applied to every offensive man in it and the half away from the ball.

On the "ball-side" you have Bulls players applying great pressure in their man-to-man defense. The ball is denied by tightly positioning in the passing lanes to the ball.

On the side away from the ball, players are actually playing a zone defense, although they try to disguise it. These players guard their man but position close to the imaginary line dividing the court and with their eyes always on the ball. They are always in position and ready to support the players guarding the ball-side, in case they

get beaten by their overplay of the passing lanes.

This creates a problem. Sometimes, those playing the zone defense forget they are required by the NBA rules to play man-to-man defense and they let their opponent stray, unguarded. The zone defense players end up alone, making it easy for the referee to spot the violation and call an illegal defense.

The low post player is always fronted, that is the defender will try to play between him and the ball, so as to deny the pass into the post. The lob pass is not a huge problem, since there is always expected help from the help-side players.

The master teachers of this defense was Pete Newell, the former University of California at Berkeley coach and the University of Indiana's Bobby Knight.

The idea was perfected by the Bulls, after hundreds of practice sessions at Berto Center. Tex Winter, an assistant to Jackson and mentor of Chicago's triangle offense also used a similar defense in college.

Chi Chi Rodríguez sigue siendo un personaje

A los 61 años, con una trayectoria que él mismo admite no poder recordar con exactitud, el puertorriqueño Chi Chi Rodríguez sigue dando vueltas por el mundo con sus palos de golf, firmando autógrafos y sonriendo como en las décadas de los 60 y 70, cuando conquistó ocho torneos del circuito profesional y se ubicó entre los grandes de su especialidad.

El mejor golfista en la historia de Puerto Rico participa actualmente en el tour de veteranos (este año está oscilando entre los primeros 30, en ubicaciones y premios). Y el pasado fin de semana estuvo en el torneo Ameritech de Chicago, jugado en los campos del Kemper Golf Club de Long Grove, donde terminó con 220 golpes, 15 sobre el par, y se ubicó a 10 golpes del ganador, Gil Morgan (210 golpes).



Chi Chi Rodríguez

Rodríguez no ganó ningún torneo en 1997, pero sigue siendo uno de los primeros en popularidad. Por sus frases y sus actitudes. "Siempre estoy viajando, haciendo caridad para los niños, trabajando para corporaciones. Así me gana la vida".

En realidad, se gana la vida bastante mejor que cualquier otro señor de su edad. Desde que entró en el tour de veteranos, acumuló 6.7 millones de dólares en premios. En 1987, cuando se ubicó primero en el ranking, ganó 500,000 dólares. Y esas cifras le alcanzan para disfrutar de un agradable pasar. "Resido en Naples, Florida, y en Dorado, Puerto Rico, a pesar de que yo nací en Río Piedras. También resido en Hawái".

Pero a pesar de que sólo pasa "seis semanas al año" en su lugar de origen, Rodríguez siente algo especial por su

isla. "Yo soy puertorriqueño, esos son mis genes. Mi padre era de Tenerife, España, y mi madre de Puerto Rico. Y yo quiero a mi país más que a cualquier otro sitio". También quiere muy especialmente a dos personas. "Tengo una hija (Donnette) y una sola esposa (Iwalani)".

Del golf actual, sólo se le ocurren elogios con respecto a Tiger Woods. "Es tan bueno como dicen, creo que el cielo es el límite de ese muchacho. Hasta ahora, su récord es mejor que el de Jack Nicklaus, y eso que él está jugando con una competencia más fuerte. Además, cuando gana él, gana el golf. Y eso nos pone más dinero en los bolsillos a nosotros, los golfistas".

Sobre el tan promocionado ascenso de Woods a la cima del golf, está "muy orgulloso, porque es un gran ejemplo para los niños". Y no se fija demasiado en el color de su piel,

algo tan comentado (Woods tiene raíces asiáticas, negras y americanas indígena, una mezcla poco común para un deporte casi exclusivamente "blanco"). "Yo nunca veo a las personas por su color. Cuando me preguntan a mí de qué color soy, digo que soy un hombre. Tenemos que cuidarnos unos a otros porque el mundo se va a acabar si no se empieza a llevar bien o a tener compasión por los otros, como la madre Teresa".

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Tyson Protests

LAS VEGAS - Nevada boxing officials planned to meet today to consider a protest by Mike Tyson's camp of Mitch Halpern as the referee for Saturday's WBA heavyweight title fight with champion Evander Holyfield.

The Nevada Athletic Commission scheduled an emergency meeting after Tyson's co-manager John Horne objected to Halpern as the referee.

Halpern was praised by commission executive director Marc Ratner for his handling of the first fight, which was won in the 11th round Nov. 9 by Holyfield.

He was selected last week to referee the rematch, and there were no objections until Horne lodged his protest. Horne told the commission he was upset over Halpern's handling of the head butts in the first fight.

The meeting was to be held after the weigh-in for the fight at the MGM Grand Hotel.

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News Briefs

From Page One

of a heart attack on June 17 while on a lunch break from her city workfare assignment at a Parks Department comfort station in Coney Island.

Ms. Motipersad, who had first been categorized as "not employable" by the Human Resources Administration because of her health problems, had recently been recharacterized as employable and ordered into the city's Work Experience Program, or WEP.

It was not known Monday whether Ms. Motipersad's workfare assignment had contributed to her death.

Henry Stern, the city parks commissioner, said that Ms. Motipersad had been assigned to "light duty" and had worked as a timekeeper in the office, but that he had ordered an investigation into what work she had actually been doing. Others, including the woman's son and other WEP workers, said Ms. Motipersad had talked of having to occasionally pick up garbage on the beach and boardwalk and that she feared for her health.

On the day she died, though, a co-worker said Ms. Motipersad had been working in the office.

"I told her not to do it, that I would help pick up the slack with money," said her son Ian Motipersad, 25. "She said she did it to pay the rent, that she did not want to be put out."

Evelyn Selby, a neighbor and WEP worker with Ms. Motipersad in Coney Island, said she rose at 4:30 each morning with Ms. Motipersad. "We used to have to take three buses to get to our assignment," she said. "I would have to wait for her as she climbed the steps and such. She was always behind."

Officials with HRA said Ms. Motipersad had within the last several months been re-evaluated by a doctor with Health Services Systems, the private medical center that is under contract with the city to assess welfare recipients involved in work assignments. The officials said Ms. Motipersad had been denied federal disability benefits, known as Supplemental Security Income, because she was not deemed disabled.

"She had some health problems, but was deemed stable," said Renelda Higgins, a spokeswoman for the HRA. "Life and health issues are not static. Individuals are re-evaluated. She was on medication, and she was taking her medication."

But others, including her family, lawyers representing workfare participants and Acorn, a nonprofit group that is working to unionize workfare laborers, called into question both the adequacy of the health evaluations done by the city's private contractor, as well as the wisdom of forcing Ms. Motipersad to work for her benefits.

Ms. Motipersad, according to Stern, worked 22 hours a week for her cash and food stamps, a set of benefits that typically totals \$250 a month.

"The central purposes of the city's WEP program are to instill a work ethic in people who haven't worked or to give people skills so they can move to long-term employment," said Phil Coltoff, the executive director of the Children's Aid Society, and Ms. Motipersad's former employer. "Neither of those things apply to this woman. She had a work ethic. She left her job because she couldn't work. She had two heart attacks. It doesn't make any sense."

Recipients in workfare have from its inception complained that the city and its hired doctors did not seriously investigate real and formidable health problems. People with asthma have told of being put to work in office basements; people with arthritis say they have been sent to sweep streets, and others talk of three-minute examinations with no acknowledgment of their own doctor's evaluations.

Cardenas would win Mexico City today, PRI concedes

Cuahtemoc Cardenas' probability of becoming the first ever elected mayor of the Mexico City federal district "are about 88 percent if the election were held today," a high official of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) told La Raza, during a visit to Chicago last week.

"Even if that happens, however," said David Penchyna-Grub, subsecretary of the party's leadership group, "losing the capital, will not mean we lost the election." Until the upcoming elections, the mayor of the world's largest city was appointed by Mexico's president.

Penchyna-Grub, along with Alfredo Phillips-Olmedo, PRI's General Coordinator for International Affairs, conceded that Cardenas's leftist Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) leads in the polls for scheduled July 6 elections following a debate last week with their party's candidate, Alfredo del Mazo.

PRI officials, they said, consider the party's performance in other races, particularly for the Mexican congress' lower chamber, and its House of Deputies, a more important objective.

"There are 1127 elective posts in dispute. We can not evaluate the

election by the results that come out of the election in the Federal District only," said Phillips-Olmedo.

"Politically it is much more important that we win the Congress" than the mayoral race, he said.

The party's top spokesman on foreign relations said the PRD had concentrated all of its efforts on electing Cardenas because of the visibility given the mayoral election outside Mexico.

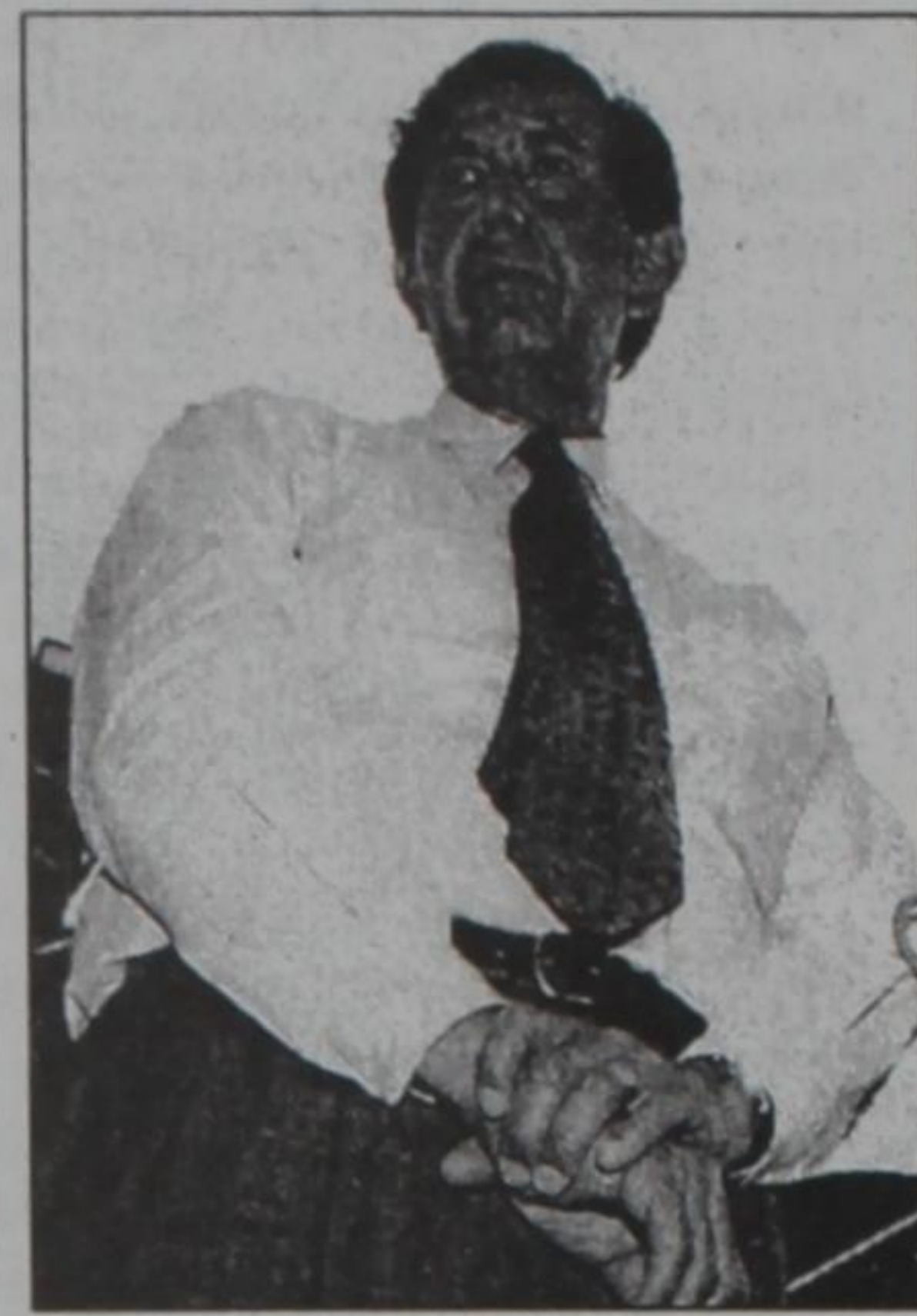
He added that even a loss at the capital's polls would be a victory of sorts for his party.

"It was the PRI which led the call to change the laws to have an elected mayor in the Federal District, the PRI which has changed the election laws to insure honest elections and taken Mexico to the vanguard of democracy," said Phillips-Olmedo.

Nevertheless, the two officials conceded the party had to accept the consequences of past mistakes.

"We have committed errors," said Penchyna-Grub. "We are in the process of renovating the party...as we are renovating Mexico."

Penchyna Grub and Phillips-Olmedo said the party had "understood" the loss of support that was the result of the perception of corruption following the presidency



Cuahtemoc Cardenas

of Carlos Salina de Gortari and the collapse of the Mexican economy.

Both said they too were surprised by the accusations, particularly after that government's auspicious beginnings.

"The first two years were extraordinary. Nevertheless we were witnesses to the difference between triumph and defeat in terms of outcomes," said Phillips-Olmedo.

"I accept there was corruption," he added, but he said he rejected that it

was the cause of the collapse of the economy and the Mexican peso.

"Mexico's economy did not collapse because they took the money with them," he said, "it collapsed because short term investors made their money and cashed in. That's what caused the crisis."

Penchyna-Grub pointed at the increased rate of saving—to 26 percent following its low point of 15 percent in the midst of the crisis—as evidence that the Mexican economy was in full recovery, an accomplishment he said was the product of President Ernesto Zedillo's policies of "revitalization."

The two officials from the governing party concluded by saying that they had little doubt they would win the national elections in 2000.

"Our party's structure reaches all levels, all over the country, even in the smallest towns," explained Penchyna-Grub.

"We are not only a party for the capital," he concluded, referring to the politics of the opposition PRD and National Action Party (PAN).

"Those are the politics of defeat," he said.

By Jorge Oclander

Léalo Primero En El Editor

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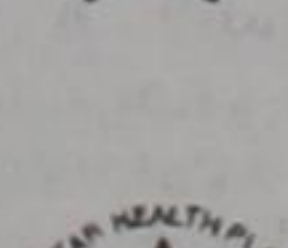
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Puerto Rican Anniversary

BY LANCE OLIVER

GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico -- The Clinton administration is on record: Puerto Ricans should not be required to speak English for the island to be admitted as a state.

That statement, made by Jeffrey Farrow, the administration's point man on insular affairs, has brought the White House down on the opposite side of the issue from members of Congress such as Rep. Gerald Solomon, R-N.Y. Last year Solomon scuttled a bill on Puerto Rico's political status by pushing an amendment that would have required Puerto Ricans to give up Spanish for English to earn statehood.

A new version of that bill, sponsored by House Resources Committee Chairman Don Young, R-Alaska, is back. Testifying before the committee March 19, Farrow described as divisive and unnecessary a line in Young's bill that says English must be the "common language of mutual understanding" in Puerto Rico under statehood.

Farrow's testimony was the most concrete statement yet from the Clinton administration on the sensitive issue of language.

The administration's opinion was just the most newsworthy development on a day in which Puerto Rico got more attention in Washington than it usually enjoys in months. While the House heard more than five hours of testimony on Young's bill, a bipartisan array of co-sponsors introduced a similar bill in the Senate.

Both bills would hold a congressionally sanctioned plebiscite in Puerto Rico on the status issue next year, 100 years after the island passed from Spanish to U.S. rule during the Spanish-American War.

Farrow's comments provided a boost to statehooders. The language issue is a key barrier to statehood. Nearly half of Puerto Ricans support statehood, but that support dwindles

dramatically if a condition of statehood is that they must use English in dealing with the government and their children must be taught in English in the public schools.

The wording in Young's bill may not go that far, but the amendment proposed last year by Solomon would -- and the New York Republican, whose district is not far from Quebec, has supporters for his position that a common language is essential for the United States to remain cohesive. Solomon said he plans to push for the same amendment this year.

In the most oratorical and forceful statement among the hours of testimony, Puerto Rican Independence Party President Ruben Berrios Martinez also raised the issue of language, culture and nationality.

"Puerto Rico is a mature, fully developed, Spanish-speaking, Latin American-Caribbean nation," Berrios said. "To argue that Puerto Rico is not a nation is as absurd as to argue that blacks in the United States were not humans before abolition of slavery."

"Is Congress willing to face a Caribbean Quebec if a majority for statehood becomes a minority for statehood in the next generation?" he asked.

The one thing the pro-independence and pro-statehood factions agree on is that Puerto Rico's current status is colonial.

"The main issue here is civil rights, whether we can keep 3.8 million people from having their civil rights," said Gov. Pedro Rossello of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party.

The pro-commonwealth faction, trying to salvage a status arrangement that preserves U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans but does not submerge the island into the United States culturally and politically, offered a new definition of the commonwealth status. But the odds are stacked against the status quo.

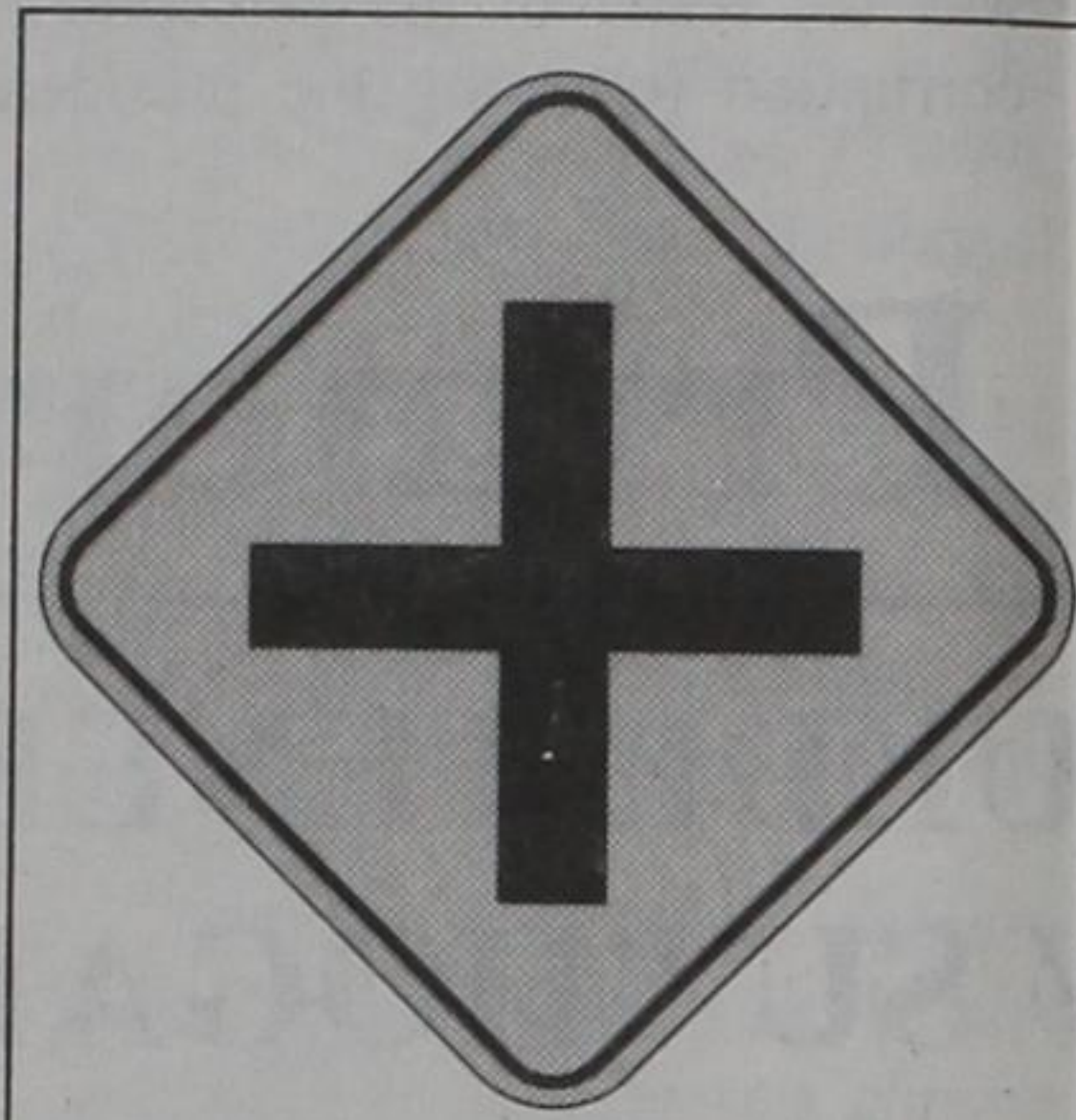
For his part, Young is determined to resolve the status issue. Under his bill, plebiscites would be held every four years, approximately, until a majority of Puerto Ricans choose either statehood or independence, the two options Young -- and nearly everyone else in Congress -- consider as permanent, non-colonial statuses.

If Young succeeds, the bills now in the Congress could turn out to be the biggest thing to happen to the island since U.S. troops landed at Guanica in 1898 and soon thereafter put an end to four centuries of Spanish rule.

It's also possible the bills could get bogged down in the many issues yet to be resolved. If that happens, Puerto Rico -- "the world's oldest colony," as Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero Barcelo calls it -- will begin its sixth century as something less than a full equal among the nations of the world or among the states of the union.

(Lance Oliver of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, is a regular contributing columnist with Hispanic Link News Service.)

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Every imaginable kind of nonsense whips around the country and around the world, courtesy of the Internet as we enter a new misinformation age. Cocaine airstrips in Arkansas run by Bill Clinton, 13,000 Gulf War dead hidden by the Department of Defense, the shooting down of TWA 800, the government masterminding the whole Oklahoma City bombing. This wonderful new tool has opened up a whole new world of exciting falsehood, as that credibility chasm fills up with junk.

Newspapers and TV stations are trying to get by with fewer reporters, working hard to figure out how to sell the same chopped meat over and over again. Although the business is expanding, it's oddly shrinking at the same time, making it unclear whether we should just go along or really get serious about self-examination.

After all, it's many of the places we grew up in that are getting the worst, most distorted and most destructive coverage.

I'm going to break my own rule today and suggest that if you think everything is just swell with the way we're covering our country, you just might be in the wrong place, at the wrong time.

(This summary was edited by Hispanic Link News Service correspondent Edgar Ortega Barrales.)

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EL EDITOR

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Health Insurance Report Released

By Laura Meckler

WASHINGTON - Children's advocates renewed their call for extending health insurance to all children, seizing on new government figures showing that one in seven children lacked coverage in 1995.

The Census Bureau's estimate that 9.8 million children, or 13.8 percent, were uninsured matched previous estimates but added new fuel to the efforts of advocacy groups lobbying to extend coverage.

"If this country provides every 66-year-old with health insurance (through Medicare), why not every 6-year-old or every 16-year-old?" asked Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund.

The Census statistics show the number of uninsured children dropped slightly from 1994, when 14.2 percent, or just over 10 million children, were uninsured at some time during the year. Statistically, the number of uninsured children has remained at about the same level since 1993, said Robert Bennefield, an analyst for the Census Bureau.

Over a 28-month period between 1992 and 1994, the government said, 30 percent of children lacked health insurance for at least one month. But just 4 percent were uninsured for the entire period.

The Census also reported that in 1995:

-Poor children made up just one-third of the uninsured children. Most poor people have health insurance through Medicaid, the federal-state health program for the poor.

Most of the uninsured children's parents work part-time, for small businesses or for other employers who do not provide insurance.

-Hispanic children were the least likely to have health insurance, with 26.8 percent uninsured in 1995. For blacks, it was 15.3 percent; whites, 13.4 percent.

-Medicaid covered 45.4 percent of all black children, 37.4 percent of Hispanic children and 18.3 percent of white children.

-Two-thirds of children were covered by private insurance at some time during 1995, up slightly from 1994. Until 1995, the percentage had been dropping steadily since 1989, when 73.6 percent of children were covered by private insurance.

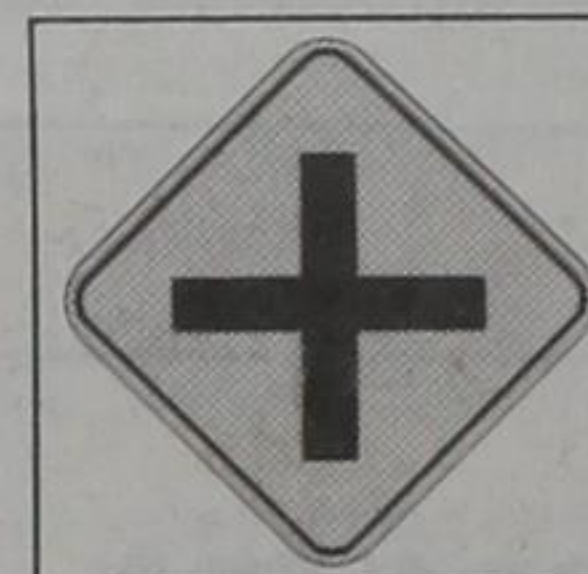
-Medicaid covered 23.2 percent of children. That has grown steadily since 1989, when 19.2 percent of children were in the program.

There are several Democratic proposals to cover children this year, from Senate and House leaders and from President Clinton. Republican Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas said he will propose his own legislation.

"Every 48 seconds a child is born without health insurance," Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., said Wednesday. "We're here to announce that there is no better time than now to reverse these trends."

Daschle's legislation gives families tax credits to help them buy insurance for their children, and Massachusetts Sens. Edward Kennedy and John Kerrey, both Democrats, have proposed a voucher system. Both plans seek to cover all 10 million uninsured children.

Clinton wants \$18 billion over five years to cover 5 million children. He wants to reach out to almost 3 million children who qualify for Medicaid but are not enrolled and would give states grants to develop their own plans to cover the rest.



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Breve Declaración Explicativa
De La
ENMIENDA CONSTITUCIONAL
PROPUESTA
ELECCION ESPECIAL
9 DE AGOSTO DE 1997

PROPUESTA NUM. 1 PARA LA BOLETA DE VOTACION

La Resolución Numero 4 de la Cámara de Diputados propone una enmienda constitucional que aumentaría de \$5,000 a \$15,000 el importe de la exención concedida a residencias familiares del impuesto escolar sobre la propiedad. Dicha enmienda también autorizaría a la Legislatura para limitar la exención íntegra o parcial a subdivisiones políticas que sean proveedoras principales de educación primaria y secundaria dentro de sus confines.

Además de lo anterior, la enmienda autorizaría a la Legislatura para permitir la transferencia a otra residencia familiar, del importe íntegro o parcial de la congelación de impuestos concedida a personas de 65 o más años de edad. Concretamente, la Legislatura tendría autorización para disponer que se pueda transferir la restricción actual al aumento del impuesto escolar sobre la propiedad con respecto a residencias familiares de personas de 65 o más años de edad, o de sus cónyuges sobrevivientes con derecho a dicha exención, cuando el interesado establezca una residencia familiar distinta.

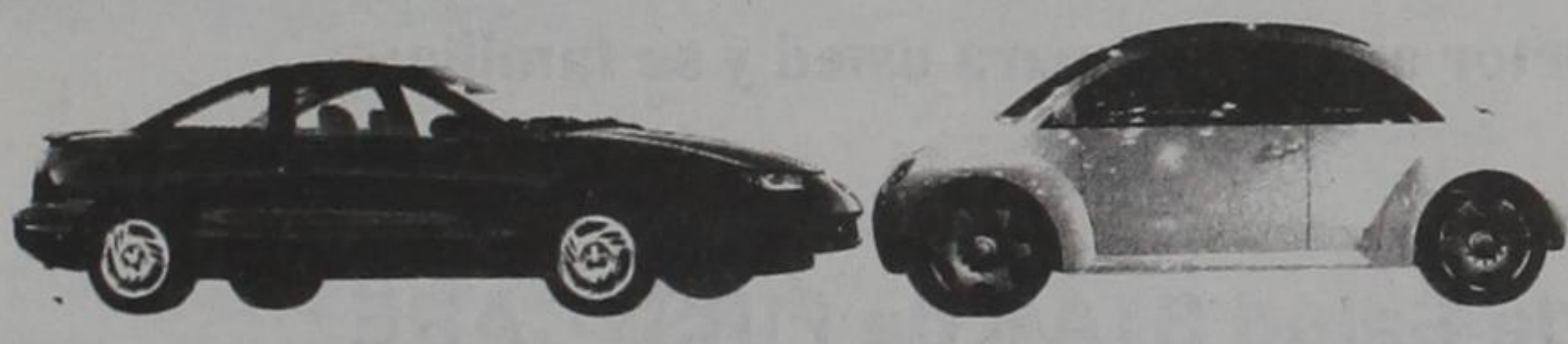
La enmienda también permitiría la aplicación de la cantidad adicional de \$10,000 para la exención

regular, a la reducción de la tasa tributaria de quienes se beneficiarían actualmente con la congelación de impuestos concedida a personas de 65 o más años de edad. Concretamente, con respecto a residencias familiares afectadas por esta limitación en 1996 o en algún ejercicio fiscal anterior, la Legislatura deberá disponer que se reduzca el impuesto escolar sobre la propiedad durante el ejercicio fiscal de 1997 y en ejercicios fiscales subsiguientes, por una suma igual a \$10,000 multiplicados por la tasa del impuesto escolar sobre la propiedad correspondiente a 1997.

La enmienda que se propone aparecerá en la boleta de votación en los siguientes términos:

"Enmienda constitucional que dispone desgravación con respecto al impuesto escolar sobre la propiedad mediante el aumento de \$10,000 con respecto a residencias familiares, disponiéndose también la transferencia de la limitación tributaria concedida a personas de 65 o más años de edad a otra residencia familiar calificada, así como una reducción de impuestos sujeta a dicha limitación."

Publicado por Tony Garza
Secretario de Estado de Tejas



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