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Lifting Federal Debt Ceiling Key To Latino Prosperity

Latino families, like African-American and white families, eagerly await a recovery in the U.S. housing market. Their economic security desperately depends on such a recovery, yet the housing market could face another crisis if Republicans in Congress get their way and the federal debt ceiling—the amount that the federal government can borrow—is not raised or not raised in time to prevent the U.S. government from defaulting on its debt obligations. Why? Because interest rates, including those on mortgages, would rise sharply, thus reducing home sales, housing values, and construction jobs.

Housing plays a pivotal role in the economic lives of communities of color, particularly Latinos. Owning a home is a key component to gaining economic security, and the construction industry is a vital source of jobs for many Latino families. The Latino homeownership rate rose steadily through 2007 before the crisis hit. More than half (50.1 percent) of all Latino families back then owned their own house. And, the construction boom during the last business cycle, from 2001 to 2006, meant that Latinos saw stronger labor market gains than either African Americans or whites as the economy expanded.

The situation has drastically changed with the crisis. The Latino

homeownership rate, along with that of African-American and white families, dropped steadily, falling to 46.8 percent in March 2011—in its lowest value since 2003. And, those families who still own their home have seen its value quickly erode. The Federal Reserve reports that the typical non-white or Latino family, who owns their own home lost \$20,700 in housing value, a drop of 15.3 percent from 2007 to 2009, a much steeper decline than the 10.6 percent decrease in housing value for white families.

Lower home values forced potential homeowners to reconsider buying or building a new home. Construction subsequently lost more than two million jobs from their peak in the spring of 2006 to early 2011. This decline particularly affected Latino men, whose unemployment rate rose from 3.8 percent in May 2006, when the construction labor market started

to turn around, to 10.6 percent in May 2011.

A recovery in the housing market would start a return to growing economic security for millions of

to more foreclosures since more families will own more in mortgages than their homes are worth, and reduce the incentives to build new homes since there would be

already many unsold, foreclosed properties on the market. The loss of housing wealth and construction jobs will further erode the economic security of

the drop-dead deadline to raise the government debt ceiling—as surely it must given that currently a substantial share of the federal budget is financed with borrowed funds—the damage will be done and interest rates will remain higher than they otherwise would have for some

time. The higher treasury interest rates will translate into higher mortgage rates, by about 0.66 percentage points, according to

my estimates. This would bring mortgage rates to the highest level since the end of 2008.

The fallout from not raising the debt ceiling could be even worse for the housing market, as my colleague David Minopinto out in a recent column. Government services at the Federal Housing Authority, the Social Security Administration, and the Internal Revenue Services, which are critical to a functioning mortgage market right now, would be unavailable, so long as Congress does not raise the debt ceiling. The lack of key services could quickly exacerbate the downward spiral in the housing market set in motion by higher mortgage interest rates.

Families hoping for a much needed recovery in the housing market could quickly find themselves in the throes of another crisis. Millions of families in communities of color—families who have suffered for years from depressed wages, high foreclosure rates, and widespread joblessness—would pay the price in the form of less economic security for an irresponsible political gamble with the federal debt ceiling.



Latino families. There would be more job opportunities, the value of their homes would start to rise again, and more families would gain access to homeownership and build wealth.

Such a housing recovery, though, could be quickly derailed if mortgage interest rates rise. Higher mortgage rates make homes less affordable and thus reduce demand for new and existing homes. Less demand for homes further depresses already low house prices. Lower house prices will in turn destroy more housing wealth, contribute

many families in communities of color.

This dire downward economic spiral of economic insecurity in communities of color could quickly unfold if Republicans in Congress get their way and fail to raise the federal debt ceiling by August 2, the date that U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner says is

there's less consensus on whether there's an increase in people returning home to Mexico. Analysts say it's a challenge to get a snapshot of the number of migrants exiting the country. However, anecdotal information shows that both people who are in the country legally and illegally are returning to Mexico. Read about how more immigrants—legal and illegal—were returning to Mexico about two years ago. About 10 years ago it was unheard of for an entire Mexican immigrant family to move back home, said Gerardo Magaña, who works with youth in Santa Ana's primarily immigrant communities. Now, he said, he knows of at least 20 Mexican immigrant families seriously considering a move back home. Magaña, senior director for Lighthouse Community Centers in Santa Ana and Orange, said he knows of at least two families that have already gone back to Mexico. Most of the family members were in the country illegally, he explained.

It was about a year ago that he started seeing all the changes, he said. Magaña has worked with Santa Ana youth for about a decade. He also heads the centers, a ministry of Irvine-based Mariner Church.

"It was definitely a new phenomenon over the past year. It was actually shocking to me how many families are considering a move back," Magaña said. He said immigrants "talk about returning being right around the time various states, such as Arizona, considered anti-illegal immigration bills." "There was talk about it coming to California and spreading to other states," he said. "There's also financial hardships and they are just trying to pull it off. It makes it difficult to survive. The quality of life—what they're experiencing now in the U.S., it would be equal to what they went back home to in Mexico. So why be in a country where they are not wanted and have the same quality of living?"

In addition, Magaña said, the centers are seeing fewer youth who are recent arrivals compared to a decade ago. "While businesses that cater to a Latino clientele on Fourth Street in downtown Santa Ana are doing better than two years ago, they're still struggling," he said.

Guillermina Madrids, owner of Mina's Broidal, said she could barely pay her electricity bill two years ago because

there were fewer people on the streets and those who shopped were buying less. "While she caters to a diverse clientele, a good portion are Mexican immigrants who are legal and illegal." "We're making about \$100,000 a month in business. Then I wasn't even making \$100 a month," Madrids said. Still, the days of making \$600,000 a month are long gone. That was before the recession hit, when immigrants were buying.

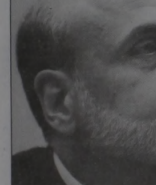
These days may never come back, said Donato, the sociology professor. "If the U.S. economy picks back up the way it was and grows, we may see a pickup up in sectors in decline," he said. "It will reanimate a flow but not all of it will come next and how it will affect such a tumultuous immigration debate." HOW WILL DECLINE AFFECT IMMIGRATION DEBATE? While some anti-illegal immigration scholars and activists agree with demographers that illegal immigration has dipped, there's a disagreement on what will come next and how it will affect such a tumultuous immigration debate. While Congress is deadlocked on immigration issues, state legislators across the nation are creating their own anti-illegal immigration laws.

However, few of these politicians and activists are talking about the decline and how illegal immigration from Mexico has changed in the last two decades. The policy debate has been changed because politicians and mainstream America still have in mind the old, prototypical illegal immigrant and have failed to take into consideration what's happening in the country of origin, she explained.

"The old viewpoint has informed the policy debate," Donato said. "We're still consumed in the debate of the migration story of the past." Steven Camarota, an immigration demographer at Center for Immigration Studies, says the findings will not change the conversation about illegal immigration in Washington, D.C. The center is a think tank that believes in restricting immigration.

"For people who thought one way or the other on the policy debate, the situation is not going to change anything," he said. "It's still make the same exact argument and part of the reason they can do that is because we still have about 11 million illegal immigrants in this country."

Bernanke: La Fed aportará más estímulos de ser necesario



El presidente de la Reserva Federal Ben Bernanke anunció el miércoles que el banco central estadounidense está dispuesto a proporcionar más estímulos monetarios si persiste la tónica de la economía nacional.

En su informe semestral ante el Congreso, Bernanke describió tres alternativas que consideraría la Fed.

La Fed podría iniciar otra ronda de recompra de bonos del Tesoro, la tercera desde 2009, y reducir el interés pagado a los bancos por las reservas que mantienen depositadas en la Fed para animarlas a que presten más.

La Fed podría además ser más explícita al explicar cuánto tiempo más mantendrá bajas las tasas de interés, lo que daría confianza a los mercados.

pronóstico, la fed está dispuesta a intervenir, agregó. "Cuánta la posibilidad de que la reciente debilidad económica quizá sea más persistente de lo esperado y que repunte el peligro de la inflación, lo que implicaría la necesidad de un apoyo monetario adicional", dijo Bernanke ante la Comisión de Servicios Financieros de la cámara baja en el primero de dos días de declaraciones en el Capitolio.

Bernanke agregó que es posible que el repunte de la inflación, debido al encarecimiento de la energía y los alimentos, sea más persistente que lo anticipado por el banco. Agregó que la entidad elevará las tasas de interés más rápido que lo planeado si no bajan los precios.

Algunos gobernadores regionales del banco crítico la recompra de los bonos de la Tesorería emitida por el banco central por creer que fomentará la inflación. La Fed ha mantenido su tasa clave de interés casi en cero desde diciembre del 2008. La mayor parte de los economistas privados creen que la mantendrá hasta mediados del próximo año y otros creen que lo hará en 2013. La Fed acordó además concluir su recompra de la deuda pública por 600,000 millones de dólares que había iniciado con el fin de impulsar la economía.

Study: Illegal Mexican migration to U.S. in decline

Nearly three decades ago, Celso Muñoz Reyes crossed illegally into the U.S. with relative ease.

He paid a smuggler \$300 to take him across the San Ysidro border and the then-16-year-old arrived safely in a land filled with countless well-paying jobs ready for the taking. Not once was Reyes confronted by immigration officials, he said, and years later, the Guerrero, Mexico native gained legal residency, settled into Santa Ana and ultimately became a U.S. citizen.

His is the tale of the quintessential illegal immigrant. It's an out-of-date story, however. Today's illegal Mexican immigrant pays up to \$6,000 for a smuggler and contends with a dangerous journey, dominated by rattlesnakes, a reinforced border and menacing desert. For those who make it, there's no guarantee of a job and there is a higher risk of detection and deportation than ever before.

These are some of the reasons why fewer Mexicans are choosing to cross illegally into the United States, immigration demographers and experts said. At the height of Mexican illegal immigration from 2000 to 2004, about 500,000 Mexicans were thought to be coming into the country illegally or overstaying their visas annually, according to the Pew Hispanic Center's analysis of census data.

Last year, that number had shrunk to about 100,000 Mexicans annually crossing the border illegally or overstaying their visas to remain in the United States. The decline is due to a variety of reasons, according to demographers and immigration experts at Princeton University.

Many will point to the slowdown in the U.S. economy, illegal immigration crackdowns in various U.S. states, and a spike in drug cartel activity along the border, said Katherine Donato, a sociology professor at Wakefield University. Donato also serves on the advisory board for the Mexican Migration Project, an extensive, long-term study that surveys people in Mexican "sending" regions—those states from which most migrants come to the U.S.

to stay home. "What people fail to recognize is that Mexico is not a country where everyone is poor. It's not a country with no educated people," Donato said. "There are fewer kids to feed, more schools and the economy is growing and very strong. You're seeing jobs you didn't see before..." This is the new context for Mexico-U.S. migration."

For instance, the Mexican family has become a lot smaller. Fertility rates used to average a little more than seven children per woman but now it's a bit over two, Donato said in 1970s when the Mexican government launched birth control programs, which can now find even in smallest rural Mexican towns. Fewer people means less of an economic drain on the family, allowing them to forgo a decent life in Mexico and not have to consider a move north, Donato said.

In addition, Mexico has devoted a large amount of money to education since the 1970s, which has helped launch a multitude of technical schools, universities and colleges accessible to youth far north from their hometowns. On the northern side of the border, it's become increasingly difficult to avoid deportation, Muñoz Reyes said. He's heard several stories from his family and colleagues. The Santa Ana resident and former president of Guerrero state's hometown association said some of the people he knows to be in the country illegally are having a harder time staying.

"When I first came here 28 years ago it was easy to find work. Now there are fewer jobs," Reyes said. He now owns his own finishing business in Santa Ana.

"Also I'm hearing stories about people getting pulled over for one reason or another and ending up deported because of an infraction, such as not having a license." The Obama administration is deporting record numbers of people who are in the country illegally, according to federal data. Also, fewer people are migrating to the U.S., Celso said, because of the increased violence along the border, making it more expensive and dangerous—a high risk especially without the guarantee of finding a job.

MORE RETURNING TO MEXICO? While most demographers agree that fewer Mexican people are making the trek to illegally enter the United States,

there's less consensus on whether there's an increase in people returning home to Mexico. Analysts say it's a challenge to get a snapshot of the number of migrants exiting the country. However, anecdotal information shows that both people who are in the country legally and illegally are returning to Mexico. Read about how more immigrants—legal and illegal—were returning to Mexico about two years ago.

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Opiniones

Letters to the Editor

Send Mail to: editor@sbcblog.net



By José de la Hita Hispanic Link News Service

MEXICO CITY — Mexico's presidential election, coming up a year from now, could be a huge cover-up for the U.S. gun policy, known as "Fast and Furious," at the center of public debate.

Revelations about how the policy was implemented and its consequences are still being debated but the bulk of new disclosures tends to show it was crazy from the start.

"Fast and Furious," as it now seems, was one phase of a larger managed out of Phoenix involving arms purchases destined to Mexican drug cartel members. The boys were known to U.S. government officials who were attempting to identify high-ups in those organizations. More than 2,000 guns were sent, including those linked to the ambush killings of U.S. Border Patrol agent Brian Terry and ICE agent James Zapata.

ABC News reported in early July that FBI and Customs furnished were used in several crimes committed in Arizona.

But the "high-ups," who authorities were attempting to identify through the operation, were already known to other investigative

agencies and may even have been paid informants. Kenneth Melton, the federal agency Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives acting director, said the others included the FBI and Drug Enforcement Agency, which kept his agency in the dark and he would not be the fall guy nor that disclosures show what a deadly fiasco they are all engaged in. Had he known, Melton claimed, the ATF would have had a fundamental impact on the Fast and Furious investigation as far back as 1987 or early 2010.

Approximately 1,800 arms were allowed to slip by ATF agents into presumed organized crime hands. One disgruntled agent was said to have reported that only 20 arms traffickers were detected during 14 months of the operation and no cartel was dismantled because of it.

On July 3, Mexican authorities captured Jesús Enrique Rojas Aguilar, known as 27, the original 14 principal leaders of the extremely violent Zetas drug cartel. He disclosed his belief that the U.S. government was involved in facilitating arms to a rival criminal gang, the Gulf cartel. According Mexico City's daily El Financiero, the ATF would have had a fundamental impact on the Fast and Furious investigation as far back as 1987 or early 2010.

transport of them and seemed to be some kind of agreement with the authorities.

Fast and Furious may not have been an isolated matter.

According to Excoel, Mike Vanderboegh, who facilitated putting ATF informants before a House panel investigating the matter, about 3,000 arms reached criminals' hands. One killed and fifteen of the arms confiscated from cartel members were found to have originated from Texas.

The lawyer for gun dealers in Houston, Dick Degarner, told Excoel that his clients reported suspicious purchases of assault rifles, pump revolvers, and .47s. One dealer store was told by ATF to continue providing them with information about suspicious sales and to continue selling arms to Hispanic purchasers of high-powered weapons who plan to flow to landlocked areas of Mexico, but his client never heard from the agency. The Houston operation may have been called "Gunwalk" or "Castaway." It apparently let arms flow to landlocked areas of Mexico, according to Excoel.

Novelist Larry Correia blogged, "It was time

to write a thriller in which a federal law enforcement agency knowingly allowed and even encouraged thousands of American guns to cross the border into Mexico."

U.S. policy insanity is already severely criticized in Mexican civic society. Some Mexican senators have called for the extradition of responsible agency to answer for arms trafficking that does not sound so crazy anymore.

Not silly. Deadly, deliberately crazy. U.S. policy insanity is already severely criticized in Mexican civic society. Some Mexican senators have called for the extradition of responsible agency to answer for arms trafficking that does not sound so crazy anymore.

ESPECIAL DE LA POLÍTICA LAS ARMAS EN EE.UU.

por José de la Hita Hispanic Link News Service CIUDAD DE MEXICO, D.F. — Los ex-comisarios presidenciales en México, de aquí a un año, sin mucho esfuerzo podrán como en el debate público, la política de armas en los Estados Unidos, conocido en inglés como "Fast and Furious" (Rápido y Furioso).

Desde el plan de desarrollo las revelaciones que explican cómo se implementó esta operación política y cuáles han sido sus repercusiones, pero el análisis de las nuevas revelaciones tiende a manifestar que desde un comienzo era una política insensata.

"Fast and Furious," tal como parece ahora, desde un punto de vista de la historia generada desde Phoenix que involucraba compras de armas destinadas a miembros de los narcos en México. Tienen conocimiento de estas adquisiciones así como oficiales de gobierno estadounidenses, quienes pretendían identificar a los capos de los cárteles. Se vendieron más de 2,000 armas, incluyendo las que están vinculadas con el asesinato del subcomandante del agente de la patrulla fronteriza de ELLI, Brian Terry, y agente de ICE, James Zapata.

Reportó a inicio de julio la agencia de noticias ABC que las armas provenientes de Fast and Furious fueron usadas en varios delitos cometidos en Arizona.

No son "los capos," a quienes las autoridades intertaban identificar mediante la operación, ya

los conocían otros agencias de investigación, e incluso podían haber servido de informantes pagados. Kenneth Melton, director interno de la agencia federal de Alcohol, Tabaco y Armas y Explosivos (ATF por sus siglas en inglés), dijo que las otras agencias mencionadas incluyen el FBI y el DEA, a las cuales se ocultaron esta información a su agencia, y que a la vez se eligen quienes pagó el alto para que las revelaciones incluyan la seriedad del fiscal inormal en el, doctores y miembros. De haberlo sabido, el mismo Melton, el ATF habría podido surtir un impacto material sobre la investigación que pretendía Fast and Furious, remontando desde finales del 2009 o comienzos del 2010.

Se permitió, sin informar a agentes de la ATF, el flujo de unos 1,800 armas en presunta organización criminal. Se reveló que un agente insubordinado reportó que detectaron a solo 20 traficantes de armas durante los 14 meses de la operación, y que por ello no se desmanteló a ningún cartel.

El 1 de julio, las autoridades mexicanas dieron captura a Jesús Enrique Rojas Aguilar, conocido como 27, uno de los 14 primeros dirigentes principales del exterritorializado violento narcotráfico, los Zetas. Rojas Aguilar es el jefe de la banda que se oculta en el desierto de Sonora, en el estado de Coahuila, y que opera en el distrito de Amatlán, el cartel del Golfo. Según el diario de El Financiero, le declaró a la policía federal que durante un

tiempo, los compradores del cartel dían dinero que hasta el gobierno estadounidense está vendiendo armas, facilitando su transporte y que parecía haber algún tipo de pacto con los autoridades.

La operación Fast and Furious puede que no haya sido tema aislado.

Según Excoel, Mike Vanderboegh, quien facilitó el presentar ante un panel de investigación de la Cámara de Representantes, los informantes de la ATF, unos 3 mil armas llegaron a los cárteles de los Estados Unidos. Ciento cuarenta de las armas acusadas de miembros de cárteles se halló que originaron en Texas.

Dick Degarner, el abogado que representa a los vendedores de armas en Houston, le dijo a Excoel que sus clientes reportaron sospechosas de rifles de asalto, revólveres de 9mm, AK-47. ATF le dijo a una tienda de armas que continuara dándole información sobre las ventas sospechosas, que continuara vendiendo armas a hispanos que compraban armas de alto calibre, y quienes pagaban al efectivo. ATF se llevó la información, dijo Degarner, pero su cliente no supo más de la agencia. La operación de Houston más ha puesto de llamas "Gunwalk" (tráfico a paso lento de armas).

Correia, escritor, en Tampa, Florida, se llama "Castaway" (Náufrago). Al parecer, permitía que las armas fluyeran hacia Honduras,

las que luego aparecieron en escenas de delitos en México, según Excoel.

Escritor de la novela "Luz de la Noche", Larry Correia, "Si yo fuera a escribir un thriller en el que una agencia federal policia a suholders permitiera a armas exterritorializado al otro lado de la frontera con el fin de armar a los cárteles mexicanos, en un esfuerzo por mejorar sus estadísticas para presionar por leyes de control de armas, así narriarían en el proceso ciudadanos mexicanos inocentes y un agente de la patrulla fronteriza estadounidense, y que después hubiese tremenda explosión que llegara hasta el Presidente... algunos críticos dirían que mi trama es una tontería."

Que tontería. Mito, deliberadamente loco, desquiciado.

El día de junio referido a esta política estadounidense ya está siendo criticado severamente dentro de la sociedad civil mexicana. Algunos senadores mexicanos han pedido la extradición de los oficiales responsables de supervisar el tráfico de armas.

Eso ya no suena tan desquiciado.

Los de la Hita, columnista de distribución nacional con los servicios de noticias Hispanic Link y Scripps Howard, ha sido reconocido durante dos años consecutivos por News America Media. El libro "The Gunwalk" (Tráfico a paso lento de armas) "Fast and Furious" (Rápido y Furioso) y "The Rise of Hispanic Political Power" (2011) disponibles en josedelaHita.com ©2011

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Escritor de la novela "Luz de la Noche", Larry Correia, "Si yo fuera a escribir un thriller en el que una agencia federal policia a suholders permitiera a armas exterritorializado al otro lado de la frontera con el fin de armar a los cárteles mexicanos, en un esfuerzo por mejorar sus estadísticas para presionar por leyes de control de armas, así narriarían en el proceso ciudadanos mexicanos inocentes y un agente de la patrulla fronteriza estadounidense, y que después hubiese tremenda explosión que llegara hasta el Presidente... algunos críticos dirían que mi trama es una tontería."

Que tontería. Mito, deliberadamente loco, desquiciado.

El día de junio referido a esta política estadounidense ya está siendo criticado severamente dentro de la sociedad civil mexicana. Algunos senadores mexicanos han pedido la extradición de los oficiales responsables de supervisar el tráfico de armas.

Eso ya no suena tan desquiciado.

Los de la Hita, columnista de distribución nacional con los servicios de noticias Hispanic Link y Scripps Howard, ha sido reconocido durante dos años consecutivos por News America Media. El libro "The Gunwalk" (Tráfico a paso lento de armas) "Fast and Furious" (Rápido y Furioso) y "The Rise of Hispanic Political Power" (2011) disponibles en josedelaHita.com ©2011

CALIFORNIA REDISTRICTING: AN EARTHQUAKE SURE TO SHAKE THE NATION'S POLITICS

By Michelle Romero

California has embarked on a political experiment that is shaking up the state's politics. We better pay attention. In fact, that experiment may go nationwide.

It has, for the first time, 14 more or less ordinary citizens re-drawing political boundaries for state legislative and congressional districts. Traditionally, state legislators drew their own districts, allowing most a chance to choose their constituents and strengthen their chances of re-election.

The experiment started a critical stage on June 10 as the new Citizens Redistricting Commission released its first-draft maps. Some incumbents are now drawn into districts with one or more other incumbents, leading them to reconsider the issues they take up given their demographic mix of their changing districts, while others promptly announced bids for other seats.

It's not just the politicians who are trying to determine what these new lines will mean.

There are concerns, for example, that the large increase in California's Latino population isn't adequately reflected in the new Latino-majority congressional districts in the draft plan.

The stakes inherent in these new lines are considerable. They will determine whether Californians will have fair, functional representation for the next ten years.

When was the last time you felt that you could really influence your representative at all on the issues that matter most to you? Did he or she understand your community's needs and wants? Why would your representative bother to listen to you if gerrymandering had already locked in the status quo?

The authors of the state initiative that reformed the redistricting process understood the value of truly representative government.

When the district lines were drawn by the politicians themselves, election day was often little more than a predetermined contest. The winners didn't have to be accountable to voters. Today, redistricting could finally bring needed change in at least one state.

While California isn't the first state to allow citizens to draw political boundaries, it is one of only two where a citizen body fully competes independently of the legislature. In most other states, politicians still draw their own boundaries.

Even if you don't live in California, this affects you. With 53 seats, the state has the nation's largest congressional delegation, and any changes will surely impact the nation's policy through its state delegates. And California has a history of starting political trends that roll through other states.

One thing this experiment has proven is that people want to play a role in government. The difficulty has been navigating their way there.

There has already been more public participation in this year's redistricting process than in California ever before, with hundreds showing up at public hearings, across the state, to offer their ideas and ways to engage themselves. Too often, we have been shut out of processes like this, leaving only an elite group to handle the important decisions affecting our state and our nation.

Redistricting reform is the beginning of the people's realization of the role we have to play in our democracy. Sure, we elect representatives to represent us, but government cannot simply be something that happens far away. We must take our officials accountable.

California just may be leading the way.

(Michelle Romero is a redistricting fellow at The Greenlining Institute, www.greenlining.org) ©2011

NEUVAS FRONTERAS ELECTORALES EN CALIFORNIA: UN TERREMOTO QUE SACUDIRÁ LA POLÍTICA NACIONAL

por Michelle Romero

California ha emprendido un experimento político que está sacudiendo la política en el estado. Más vale que prestemos atención, ya que con el tiempo el experimento podrá extenderse a nivel nacional.

Por primera vez, catorce ciudadanos de a pie se dedican a trazar los límites políticos de los distritos electorales de la legislatura estatal y el Congreso nacional. La nueva tradición que los legisladores estatales trazan sus propios distritos, lo cual permitía que la mayoría seleccionara a sus constituyentes y así fortaleciera sus posibilidades de reelección.

El experimento llegó a una etapa crítica el 10 de junio, cuando la nueva comisión ciudadana -Citizens Redistricting Commission- presentó la primera reducción de los mapas trazados. Algunos titulares ahora se encuentran dentro de distritos con otro titular o más de uno, lo cual les lleva a reconsiderar los temas a los que atienden según la composición demográfica de sus distritos cambiantes, mientras que otros se anunciaron a anunciar que se lanzarían como candidatos para otros escaños.

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Preocupa a CIDH leyes antiinmigrantes en EEUU

La Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos (CIDH) manifestó su preocupación por la nueva ley de inmigración aprobada en Alabama y pidió a EE.UU. que modifique ésta y otras leyes como la SB1070 de Arizona, para que se ajusten a estándares internacionales de derechos humanos.

La ley HB56 de Alabama autoriza a los agentes del orden locales y estatales verificar el estatus migratorio de los detenidos con "sospecha razonable" de ser indocumentados.

La CIDH advierte en un comunicado que esta ley no define "sospecha razonable", lo que puede conllevar a la utilización de "perfiles raciales" por parte de los agentes de seguridad y tal y como manifestó el pasado año cuando se aprobó la Ley SB1070 de Arizona, "existe un alto riesgo de discriminación".

La ley, que fue promulgada por el gobernador de Alabama el pasado 9 de junio, obliga a los

centros públicos de enseñanza primaria y secundaria a aclarar el estatus migratorio de los estudiantes extranjeros e hijos de extranjero.

Además, la HB56 penaliza actividades relacionadas con inmigrantes indocumentados tales como transportarlos, darles alojamiento o alquilarles vivienda, lo que "podría obstaculizar de forma indebida las labores de asistencia y protección de los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes".

La Comisión Interamericana considera "preocupantes" las leyes HB56 de Alabama y SB1070 de Arizona, así como otras leyes similares que han sido promulgadas en los estados de Utah, Indiana y Georgia.

Por ello, comina a las autoridades de Estados Unidos a utilizar los mecanismos legales que tenga a su alcance para modificar estas leyes y ajustarlas a los estándares internacionales de derechos

humanos para la protección de los inmigrantes.

Otro aspecto "inquietante" para la CIDH es la "criminalización" de la presencia de inmigrantes irregulares o indocumentados, ya que "la detención de inmigrantes debe ser utilizada como un mecanismo excepcional, y los Estados deben establecer leyes y políticas de inmigración que se basen en la presunción de libertad".

La Comisión subraya que el derecho internacional reconoce que los países pueden establecer mecanismos para controlar el ingreso y la salida de extranjeros de su territorio pero deben realizarse dentro del "pleno respeto" a los derechos de las personas afectadas.

Así como el respeto por los principios fundamentales como la no discriminación y los derechos a la libertad e integridad personal que "no pueden subordinarse a la implementación de los objetivos de las políticas públicas".

¿Que Pasa?

KICKBALL IS HERE!

Registration for Session III Adult Kickball League play is going on now through July 15, 2011. The cost per team is \$200, and play begins August 22. League play is available for men, women, and mixed teams. Players must be 16 years old or older to participate, and team rosters must have a minimum of eight players with a maximum of twenty players. The ten-game season lasts approximately 8-10 weeks. Individuals without a team can register as a free agent and their information will be passed along to teams needing players. Leagues will be guided by Texas Amateur Athletic Federation's rules. This is the final adult kickball league offered this year by Parks and Recreation. To register your team, come by the Parks and Recreation Office at 1010 9th Street between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call 775-2672 or 775-2691.

SESSION III SOFTBALL LEAGUE REGISTRATION

Parks and Recreation is now registering teams for Session III Adult Softball League play today through July 15, 2011. Play begins August 22. The ten-game season lasts approximately 8-10 weeks, and the cost is \$330 per team. League play is available for men, women, church and mixed teams. Players must be 16 years old or older to participate. This is the final adult slow-pitch softball league offered this year by Parks and Recreation.

To register, come by the Parks and Recreation Office at 1010 9th Street between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, call 775-2672 or 775-2691.

BEAT THE HEAT AT THE CITY OF LUBBOCK SENIOR CENTERS

Seniors can beat the summer heat at Parks and Recreation's five senior centers! Seniors of all ages can enjoy fun and fellowship in air-conditioned comfort as they participate in our daily recreation activities, fitness programs and even enjoy a nutritious lunch. For older Lubbock seniors (age 60 and over), we provide transportation to and from their homes to one of our centers! With the temperatures this summer already heating up, these are great services for those seniors that do not have adequate cooling in their homes.

Each senior center offers many free or low fee activities geared for Lubbock's active adults ages 50 and above including arts and crafts, sewing, games, ceramics, yoga, seated yoga, cooking, computer classes, day trips for shopping or to visit area attractions, dance socials, and much more.

The transportation service and hot lunch program are offered Monday through Friday at the senior centers listed below for anyone age 60 and over. There are suggested donations for each program, but no one is turned away for inability to pay. Suggested donations are \$1 per one-way trip and \$2 for lunch. The lunch program allows anyone age 59 and under to purchase a meal for \$5. Lunch is served weekdays at noon. To register for the transportation program, call the Lubbock Senior Center at 767-2710.

- Lubbock Senior Center, 2001 19th Street, 767-2710 Open MWTHF F 8 am-5 pm, Tuesday 8 am-8 pm, Saturdays 9 am - 1 pm.
- Mac Simmons Senior Center, East 23rd and Oak Avenue, 767-2708 Open M-F 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Maggie Trejo Supercenter, 3200 Amberst, 767-2705 Open M-F 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Copper Rawlings Community and Senior Center, 213 40th Street, 767-2704 Open M-F 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Homestead Senior Program, 5401 56th Street, 687-7898 Open M-F 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

2ND ANNUAL MOTHER/DAUGHTER SLEEPOVER

Hodges Community Center will be hosting their 2nd Annual Mother/Daughter Sleepover on July 15-16, 2011 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Mothers and daughters will check in on Friday evening for a fun-filled night and will finish up with breakfast early Saturday morning. Activities include makeovers, games, crafts, contests and more! The cost is \$20 per couple and \$10 each additional person and includes dinner, a midnight snack, and breakfast. A list of things to bring will be provided to all participants. Pre-register now so that you and your daughter can enjoy a great night of fun that you'll never forget! Hodges Community Center is located at 41st Street and University Avenue. They are open Monday-Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

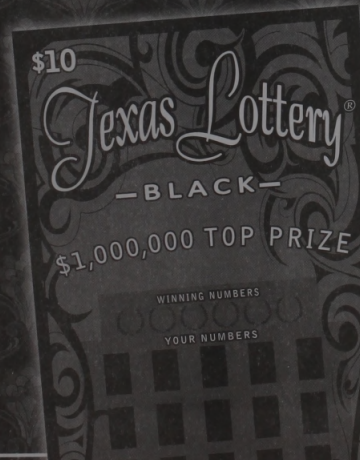
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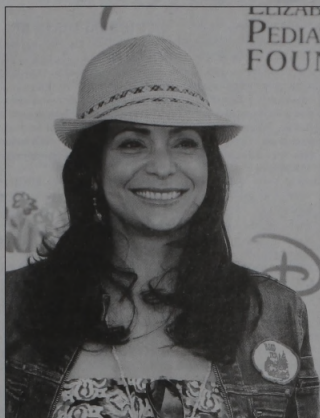
Constance Marie Returns To TV In New Dramatic Role

It's hard to believe it's been four years since The George Lopez Show went off the air. In that time, several of the stars have moved on to high-profile projects. Valente Rodriguez is now getting laughs on TV Land, George Lopez has reached talk-show superstardom, and Constance Marie is flexing her dramatic chops on the ABC Family show Switched At Birth. Constance, in particular, seems very excited about her new role.

On Switched, Marie plays Regina Vasquez, a tough single mom struggling to raise her hearing-impaired daughter. As evidenced by the show's title, the true twist happens when she discovers her biological child was accidentally switched in the hospital as an infant.

Obviously the subject matter is a lot heavier than what we're used to seeing Constance do on Lopez. For this role, she actually had to learn sign language. And as she confessed to Zap2it, picking up the technique was no easy task.

"Sign language is 90 percent one arm, so I just practiced and practiced like a dancer would," Constance



explained. "Of course, I was a dancer 20 years ago. My arms and tendons and muscles are a little bit older now. I lost feeling in my last two fingers. I was sitting there with heat packs on my arm and ice packs on my arm."

But her hard work does seem to be paying off. Switched At Birth happened to be the highest-rated series debut ever on ABC Family, which means Marie will continue to be a TV presence for a long time to come.

Lila Downs, sí al cambio

La cantante mexicana Lila Downs cree que la educación puede ser "una solución" frente a la violencia y el machismo que sufren las

dades indígenas", subrayó. Cada vez que le hacen una entrevista fuera de México, le preguntan por la solución a la violencia y el machismo

sacará adelante", relató Lila Downs, quien ha compuesto esa canción precisamente porque siempre la preguntan por la violencia

en México y ha querido cantar a esos símbolos que "dan fuerza".

De madre mixteca y padre estadounidense de origen escocés, la búsqueda de la identidad ha sido "muy importante" a lo largo de su carrera porque a los mexicanos



mujeres más humildes en su país, mujeres que siguen inspirando las canciones de una artista que vuelve a reivindicar el "orgullo indígena" en su último disco. Pecados y milagros es el título del nuevo trabajo de Lila Downs,

que saldrá en otoño pero que ya está desgranando, junto a su banda, en su gira por España, un país que para ella representa "la afinidad y también el dolor".

La próxima parada es Santander, donde actuará hoy. Allí habo ayer a los periodistas sobre las canciones que acaba de componer, sobre su "pelea" por la identidad indígena y sobre su labor en Oaxaca para que las mujeres indígenas se eduquen y se conviertan en líderes capaces de transformar sus propias comunidades locales.

Lila Downs, que desde hace una década colabora con el proyecto que, con ese objetivo, desarrolla la Casa de la Mujer, ha contribuido a que 72 niñas que habían dejado sus estudios acaben su formación de bachiller o incluso, vayan a la universidad. "Es muy impresionante ver el cambio en esas mujeres que vienen de comuni-

en su país. Y, ese proyecto, elicitó, es "una de las cosas más positivas" en las que puede pensar.

"La educación nos libera, hace que la mujer pueda tener una manera de decidir, especialmente cuando viene de una situación muy humilde y de una situación social, como yo misma he vivido, en la que el varón no te respeta por ser mujer. Así, que yo las defiendo y peleo por ellas", afirmó.

En sus últimas canciones habla sobre el mezcal, el "elixir" que los mexicanos "ofrendan a los dioses", y también de las mujeres indígenas que muelen el maíz para hacer las tortillas, un proceso que describió como "mágico".

"Vas viendo cómo se cuece el maíz y cómo vamos llorando las lágrimas de nuestra angustia. Y les beso las manos porque siento que su espíritu nos

se les "ha negado el orgullo indígena durante muchos años, cientos de años".

Su "pelea en la música", dijo, ha sido esa pero también la inmigración, a la que ha dedicado muchas canciones, "al ser también una niña yanqui", que hablan de esa "doble cara" de un Estados Unidos que necesita mano de obra económica, mientras "las vidas de los inmigrantes no son tenidas en cuenta, como si fueran animales", afirmó.

En su concierto de hoy, para el que están agotadas las entradas desde hace semanas, volverá a probar si "funcionan" las canciones de su nuevo disco. "Somos músicos tradicionales, a la manera del circo, was probando tu material con el público, con los distintos seres humanos con los que compartes este camino del arte", terminó la cantante.

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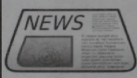
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Wambach sends U.S. into first World Cup final since '99 title

The United States is in the World Cup final for the first time since it last won the title in 1999, and once again, it will Abby Wambach coming up big

the all-time World Cup scoring list. Alex Morgan added an insurance goal in the 82nd, the first for the World Cup rookie. Then

to be even bigger back home. A thrilling win over Brazil in the quarterfinals captivated fans back home, with Hollywood celebs, other pro athletes and



in a 3-1 victory over France. Wambach broke a tense tie in the 79th minute Wednesday with a monstrous header -- what else? -- off of a Lauren Cheney corner kick. Cheney delivered the ball perfectly to the far post, and the 5-foot-11 forward soared over the scrum and pushed the ball past French goalkeeper Berangere Sapowicz. Wambach let out a scream and did a sliding sprint into the corner, where she was mobbed by her teammates.

It was Wambach's third goal of the tournament and 12th of her career, tying fellow American Michelle Akers for third on

the final whistle sounded, the Americans rushed onto the field. Wambach found U.S. coach Pia Sundhage and gave her a bear-hug as the pro-American crowd of 25,676 serenaded the team with chants of "U-S-A! U-S-A!" "Abby, she's just the best." Sundhage said, "I'm very happy to have her in our team. Great."

Despite the loss, the World Cup was a resounding success for the French, who made their first appearance in the semifinals and qualified for next summer's London Olympics. The French didn't stick around to watch the Americans celebrate -- and the party is sure

folks who had never watched a soccer game before jumping on the U.S. bandwagon. Ellen DeGeneres wished the team good luck on Twitter before the game, dozens in the Phoenix airport were glued to TVs and Super Bowl MVP Aaron Rodgers tagged one of his tweets with "worldcupfinalherewelcome."

Though the Americans are two-time World Cup champions, they haven't made the final since Mia Hamm, Julie Foudy and Brandi Chastain won it all in 1999. This American team will now play either Japan or Sweden in Sunday's final in Frankfurt.

However it happens, NFL, players must apologize to fans

This is how I envision the apology to the fans will go. Cue the tight shot.

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell and NFLPA head DeMaurice Smith appear on the screen. Goodell is wearing eye black and Smith is holding a football.

"We know you've been disappointed in us," Goodell says while looking into the camera. "But we're back and we have a message for you. On behalf of the owners, we're sorry."

The camera goes to Smith. "From all the players, we apologize for the disruption to the great game America loves."

The camera pans to a wider shot and Drew Brees appears. "We're sorry," he says. Then Peyton Manning appears: "We're sorry. Then Tom Brady: "We're sorry. Then Michael Vick, holding a puppy: "We're sorry. (That last one's a joke.)"

Then the camera goes wide and a group of about 50 NFL players, a mix of stars and grunts, all in uniform, as well as a few coaches and owners, say in unison: "On behalf of the NFL, we're sorry, and let's play football."

Fade to black. Along with the commercial that would play during every preseason game, there would be apologies on ev-

ery sports website, on radio and in newspapers. It would be an Apology Tour.

If the NFL had any soul, any conscience at all, when the lockout ends, the owners and players would apologize profusely to the fans. They would get on their hands and knees and beg for forgiveness.

It's the only decent thing to do.

When the lockout ends, the league needs to go on an Apology Tour. It needs to be done with the flair and aggression of a Lady Gaga tour, minus the piano and winged leotards. It needs to be loud, intense and sincere.

It would go a long way toward rebuilding the trust of the fans the NFL has lost in large amounts over the past few months. What can't happen is the NFL opening for business and acting like nothing happened. Lock-out? What lockout? Just buy your tickets, spend on that merchandise, watch football and shut the hell up.

That can't be the attitude. One high-ranking player source within the NFLPA told me he would like to do some sort of acknowledgment to the fans, with or without the league's cooperation. His ideal gesture would be players wearing a patch on their uniforms

dedicated to their fans. Or, the player said, the owners and players would combine to give 1,000 fans free tickets for each game, or give a small number of season-ticket holders refunds for one game. No, that will never happen, but hell, what a gesture that would be.

I've also spoken to several team and league officials who also believe some type of apologetic gesture to the fans should be made.

The problem, as one executive said, is the league fears such a gesture might leave the NFL vulnerable to some type of lawsuit. Not sure how in the hell that would happen but since people now sue over McDonald's coffee being too hot, I guess it's possible.

But as we've seen during the lockout, the NFL has plenty of lawyers. Lawyers on top of lawyers on top of lawyers. They can handle any legal issues just fine.

Something is needed because the fans, rightfully so, feel like the players and owners abandoned them. That the NFL collectively didn't give a damn about the fans and any fan who felt that way was right. Is right.

So you make it better by saying I'm sorry. Don't let pride and egos get in the way. Just do it.

El Editor
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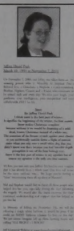
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Covenant Health System Pediatrician Discusses Proper Medication for Children with Asthma

One in six children with asthma is prescribed roughly one million unnecessary antibiotics in the U.S. Antibiotics should not be used as part of chronic asthma therapy or for acute attacks or flare-ups according to the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program. However, there is an exemption for patients with bacterial infections such as pneumonia.

Dr. Vanessa Dalton, a pediatrician for Covenant Medical Group, believes children with asthma are more often than not over-prescribed antibiotics. She expresses her views toward asthma over-medication below:

- The goals of asthma treatments are to minimize symptoms and allow children to participate in normal physical activities.
- Overall, children are twice

as likely to receive an antibiotic if they are also receiving asthma treatment.

- In 2010, there were more than 45 million prescriptions made for children with asthma.
- On average, my asthma patients take three different medications.
- Macrolide and ketolide are two commonly prescribed antibiotics for asthma patients.
- Physicians sometimes over-diagnose pneumonia in a child who may only be experiencing an asthma attack, resulting in the use of regular antibiotics.
- Asthma costs the United States more than \$30 billion each year to treat.
- Antibiotic overuse is harmful both to the patient and to society. Most cases can be managed with

aggressive therapy targeted at bronchospasms, a temporary narrowing of the airways to the lungs caused by a tightening of the lung muscles due to inflammation.

Treatments

- Regarding treatment for asthma, preventive steroid inhalers are the most effective for children.
- Regardless of age, children and adults should not be treated differently for their asthma.
- Parents should consider a natural remedy such as a diet change, yoga (for different breathing techniques), herbs or acupuncture for their children to decrease certain asthma triggers. However, asthma is not a condition that should be self-treated. Doctor supervision is required.

Many Obese Moms and Kids Underestimate Their Weight

Overweight and obese people often think they weigh less than they do, and many mothers of chubby kids view their children's bulk as normal, new research finds.

The study of women and children conducted at Columbia University Medical Center in New York City found that faulty body image was far more prevalent among the heaviest participants than people of normal weight.

"The implications of this is the overwhelming impact of obesity on children who are growing up in communities where obesity and overweight is the norm rather than the exception," said lead author Dr. Nicole Dumas, a medical resident at Columbia.

Alice H. Lichtenstein, professor of nutrition science and policy at Tufts University in Boston.

Noting that our society as a whole is hefting more fat, she said living in a culture where obesity is common "is going to affect our perception of ourselves and our children."

Excess weight is a risk factor for health problems including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Widespread misperceptions about body size may represent another challenge in the war against obesity, the study authors say.

The study, to be presented Wednesday at the American Heart Association's scientific sessions in Atlanta, found that 82 percent of obese mothers and 43 percent of overweight mothers underestimated their weight.

86 percent of overweight or obese children underestimated their weight, while only 15 percent of normal-sized kids did.

48 percent of mothers of obese or overweight children thought their children's weight was normal.

13 percent of normal-weight mothers underestimated their weight.

Nearly 80 percent of the participants were Hispanic; about 10 percent were black, 6 percent were white, and 2 percent were Asian, with the remainder identifying themselves as "other."

About 66 percent of the moms were obese or overweight, which is reflective of the general U.S. population, Dumas said.

But the study children's rate of overweight or obesity, at 39 percent, was higher than for

American children in general, at 33 percent, she noted.

The study data show the need for health-care providers to educate patients about the dangers of excess body weight, said Lichtenstein, who also is the director and senior scientist of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts.

Schools should teach home economics "with a 21st century approach," she said, so children learn how "to choose and provide foods that are going to result in a healthy body weight."

The Columbia research echoed the findings of a September 2010 Harris Interactive/HealthDay survey that found that 30 percent of overweight people thought their weight was normal, while 70 percent of those who were obese thought they were merely overweight. Most thought that lack of exercise, rather than poor eating habits, was the cause, the survey found.

The obesity epidemic isn't confined to the United States. "It's a global issue around the world," said Dr. Robert Eckel, professor of medicine at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and former American Heart Association president.

Its impact on children is serious, Eckel said.

"An obese child is going to become an obese adult," said Eckel. "Individuals, schools, health-care providers, churches and the government all have a role" to play in addressing this public health issue, he said.

Experts note that information presented at scientific meetings has not been scrutinized as thoroughly as studies published in medical journals.

Medicina al día: Combata las alergias

El polen es una de las sustancias que más alergias produce. Sus minúsculas partículas flotan en el aire desencadenando estornudos, goteo nasal y enrojecimiento de los ojos en miles de personas que sufren de alergia.

Un estudio reciente del Departamento de Agricultura de Estados Unidos muestra que debido a los cambios climáticos, muchas plantas como la ambrosía (o ragweed), inician su temporada (y comienzan la polinización) desde el mes de julio, mucho antes de lo acostumbrado, y se prolonga mucho más de lo habitual especialmente en áreas del norte del país.

Para combatir mejor los efectos del polen de cualquier tipo de planta, tome su medicamento contra la alergia, o un antihistamínico, antes de irse a

dormir. De esta forma, su organismo estará mejor protegido a la mañana siguiente, momento del día en que el conteo del polen es mayor.

EL FRÍO Y LOS NUTRIENTES

Refrigerar las frutas y verduras parece ser la solución perfecta para conservar los productos frescos y sin que pierdan sus nutrientes.

En el verano, especialmente, hay una abundancia de vegetales y frutas en cosecha, y si usted va al mercado va a querer llevarlos porque piensa que en la nevera van a estar bien conservados.

Sin embargo, muchos de estos alimentos pierden su valor nutritivo rápidamente cuando se refrigeran por varios días.

Esto se debe en parte a que estas frutas y vegetales han estado viajando por días antes

de aparecer en las góndolas de los supermercados donde usted las compra y en ese proceso pueden perder hasta el 50% de su vitamina C y otros nutrientes.

La solución es buscar frutas y vegetales que hayan sido cultivados localmente, porque de esa manera, viajan menos hasta llegar al supermercado.

Otro consejo: no compre frutas o vegetales para más de una semana. Y por último, y aunque parezcan menos frescos y se vean menos atractivos, elija los productos congelados, pues es mucho más probable que conserven la mayoría de sus nutrientes, puesto que fueron recogidos y de una vez, congelados.

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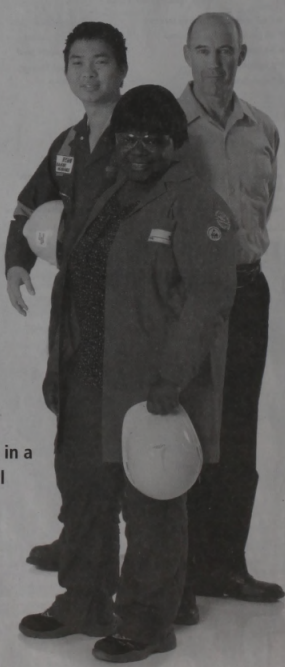
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