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TX State Board of Education attempt to write minorities out of history

The Southern Education

Hispanic historical figures from public school textbooks a sad commentary on just how blatant "white majority," a.k.a. racism, is allowed to influence and dictate for the whole. Though the "r" word (racism) is seen by some as an excuse for one group of people to get their way, in this instance, there's no other term that accurately describes the comments, as expressed by some SBOE members and their textbook committee review appointees, such as: "there is an over-repre-

appointees, who adhere to the perspective that it is repugnant to teach children about the historical contributions of Latinos and African Americans show they are no better, and given recent quotes attributed to some who were involved in setting the Social Studies standards, are essentially rewriting U.S. history to conform to their distorted views of how they wish to see the United States. It's a big deal for the rest of the country what this "small" group of people decides on what goes in the Social Studies textbooks.

schools also have majority student bodies comprised of children of color.

The behavior and words of some of these SBOE board members and their like-minded appointees go beyond disturbing and evoke the term "extremists." Yet, what is most disturbing is the level of influence of this small group of people who, because of their personal biases, have the power to keep all children from learning just how essential were the roles of people of color in the development of not only the state of Texas but the nation as well.

There is nothing to be gained by such an American tactic other than to elevate the position of one particular group of people over another - We have come too far to revert to that way of thinking.

The United Farm Workers, understandably upset that the SBOE wants to eliminate mention of their founder,

Cesar Chavez, from these school textbooks, has launched a campaign to counter this gross injustice.

This is not an incident that impacts just an isolated area; this impacts beyond the Lone Star State and the perceptions of countless children - who will learn that it's better to be white than a person of color because white people accomplish more, according to history.

A New Diverse Majority
Insights of Color in the South's Public Schools

Foundation released a report last week, "A New Diverse Majority," that found, that for the first time in history, more than half of all the students attending public schools in the 15 Southern states (Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, West Virginia) are children of color - predominantly African American, Hispanic and Native American.

It's not a fluke, a misread of the data or even a one-time scenario. It's an early indication of what the U.S. Census has been forecasting - "By 2042, minorities, now roughly one-third of the U.S. population, are expected to become the majority."

Seeing that children of color are already the majority in these school districts, and others throughout the rest of the country, it makes what is happening with the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) members voting (tomorrow January 13, 2010) to eliminate Cesar Chavez and all



sentation of minorities" in the current social studies standards" and that there is "too much emphasis on multiculturalism". To the rational thinker, these viewpoints are akin to how we see the Taliban impose their religious ideals in Afghanistan where they have essentially hijacked their country to conform to their religious definition. These SBOE board members, along with other

Texas is the largest purchaser of the textbooks which means those same textbooks will be reprinted, sold and distributed to most of the nation's school districts.

In other words, it just won't be Texas school children whose quality of education will plummet if Social Studies textbooks don't include contributions of people of color but countless children in numerous states - states whose

from these school textbooks, has launched a campaign to counter this gross injustice.

This is not an incident that impacts just an isolated area; this impacts beyond the Lone Star State and the perceptions of countless children - who will learn that it's better to be white than a person of color because white people accomplish more, according to history.

Texas appoints first Latina to Texas Supreme Court

Eva Guzman made history by becoming the first Latina to be sworn in to the state's high court Monday. "For this day I have prayed, I have dreamed, and I have worked," Justice Guzman said. "Texas is a great state. America is a wonderful country. Anything is possible. Never give up, set your goals high, dream big."



"One of my goals has been to inspire young people to dream big, work hard, and choose well," Guzman said. That message finds eager ears at Latinas, an Austin nonprofit that empowers Hispanic girls. "Our girls are like Justice Guzman," co-founder Laura Donnelly Gonzalez said. "They are often first generation Latinas. They're going to be the first in their family

to attend college. They're often the English speaker in their household."

Guzman is known for her active role in continuing education programs, and hopes to encourage more young people to set their sights high.

"One of my goals is to inspire young people to dream big, work hard, and choose well," she said.

Guzman is a much-needed

role model. Donnelly Gonzalez said, because Guzman's success breaks the stereotype of Latinas being oversexualized or mis-educated. "They're going to see a whole other view of what it is to be a successful Latina."

Governor Rick Perry appointed Guzman to fill the seat vacated by Scott Brister. Perry calls Guzman "a strict constructionist."

"Her story encourages young people in particular across our state, to persevere in life, because here in Texas you can become a person of significance and influence if you work hard," Perry said.

Guzman said that's exactly what she hopes young Latinas will learn. And to do that, they have to remember one thing.

"Never ever let anyone tell you you can't do it," Guz-

¿QUE PASA?

Public Input Needed for Input-Parks & Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting four public meetings on January 19th, January 21st, January 26th and January 28th to assist with the establishment of goals and priorities for the 10 year Parks Master Plan. The purpose of these public hearing is to plan the process to establish new goals and objectives on citizen input, set priorities and develop the parks and recreation master plan.

Thursday, Jan 19 indoor recreation. Community & senior centers, computer labs, fitness equipment, gyms, recreation classes/programming and special events.

Thursday, Jan 21 outdoor recreation. Adult athletics, aquatic, pools, ball fields and complexes, tournaments, tennis court, volleyball, tennis and basketball courts.

Tuesday, Jan 26 Park maintenance and park development. Maintenance, irrigation, parks, playgrounds, shelters, walking tracks, pools, dog parks, recreation/senior centers, amenities

Thursday, Jan 28 general parks and recreation topics
Location for all the hearings will be at Monterey High School cafeteria which is located on 3211 47th street starting at 6:30 p.m.

Covenant Health System Free Seminar to Focus on Heart Disease

Covenant Health System will get to the heart of the matter in a free seminar focusing on heart disease and heart attack symptoms.

"Time is Muscle! Covenant's Chest Pain Center is on the Clock for You!" presentation will be from 9 - 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 22 at the Knippling Education Conference Center.

An education nurse specialist and chest pain center coordinator for Covenant Heart and Vascular Institute will also share more about the functions of Covenant's Chest Pain Center and how it can be utilized by the community. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's a statistic Covenant Health System hopes to change by keeping the local community informed. A continental breakfast will be served and free parking will be provided. Please call 1.866.4COVENANT (1.866.426.8362).

The Knippling Education Conference Center is located in the sixth floor of the west parking garage at the corner of 21st Street and Louisville Avenue.

Valentine's Day Printmaking

The Buddy Holly Center invites children ages 6 and up to participate in the Valentine's Day Printmaking Workshop!

Many of the great artists have created works through printmaking. Learn about the history behind this fun and distinctive art form and how to design relief prints in the method of the masters. You will also create unique Valentine's Day cards to give to friends and family! Class limited to 25, preference is given to those who pre-register by February 5, 2010. Children 6 & up welcome; younger children will need adult supervision.

Date: Saturday, February 13th, 2010; Time: 1pm - 3pm; Cost: Free; Ages: 6 & up; younger children will need parental supervision
Pre-registration is preferred, as class sizes are limited. For more information call 806-775-3567

Covenant Health System to Host Free Quit Smoking Clinic

You know how to smoke. Now learn how to quit by attending a free one-hour workshop hosted by Covenant Health System, on Saturday, Jan. 23 at 9 a.m. or noon. Attendees will hear from a tobacco treatment specialist and an ex-smoker who quit with the help of a treatment option and support.

The insights and tools provided are designed to change the way smokers think about quitting. Attendees will learn: Why it is so hard to quit. How this can be different; Types of treatment and support available. How to create a quit plan; Strategies for overcoming urges and slip-ups

To sign up for the workshop, go to www.frequencyclinic.com or call 1-888-866-084.

KTXU-TV Channel 5 Aairs "The Texas Debates: Race for Governor"

The Texas Debates: Race for Governor will be at 7 p.m. Thursday (Jan. 14). The live debate broadcast locally on KTXU-TV Channel 5, and to millions on television, radio and online throughout the state, will include two-term Texas Gov. Rick Perry, three-term U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and Texas businesswoman Debra Medina. The debate will repeat at 4 a.m. Jan. 15 (Friday) on KTXU-TV. The debate will be moderated by questions also will be posed by a panel of journalists including: Shelley Koffler, KERA-FM and KERA-TV; Maria Renée Barillas, KUVN Univision 23; Dave Montgomery, Star-Telegram.

CHRISTIAN UNITY WEEK

Christian Unity Week 2010 begins Monday, January 18 through January 25. The theme for this year is "You are Witnesses of These Things. (Luke 24:48) Begin in 1908, these days have been set aside each year so that Christians all over the world may share the prayer of Jesus: "... that all may be one... that the world may believe." (John 17:21).

January 18 San Ramon, 15706 Loopy 493, Lubbock @ 7:00 pm; January 19 Saint Isidore, 16713 N 127, Abilene @ 7:00 pm; January 20 Saint Theresa, 2202 Upland, Lubbock @ 6:30 pm; January 21 Our Lady of Guadalupe, 630 S 4th Street, Slaton @ 6:30 pm; January 22 Our Lady Queen of Apostles, Main Street (North End), New Deal @ 6:30 pm; January 23 Saint Philip Benizi, 106 & Avenue J, Shallowater @ 6:30 pm; January 24 Saint Joseph, Crosbyton, 115 West Fir, Crosbyton @ 11:00 am; January 25 Christ the King Cathedral, 4011 54th Street, Lubbock @ 7:00 pm.

CATHOLIC RENEWAL CENTER

Catholic Renewal Center is taking reservations for your 2010 and 2011 events. Call for availability for graduations, quinceañeras, wedding receptions, meetings, conferences, etc. 806-792-3943 x 231.

Immigrants' Opinions

How do you feel about your 2010 census?

By Gregory Teyfala

Among the issues on my mind these days is one trying to figure out what "race" I should consider to be a part when the Census Bureau gets around to sending me the form in a couple of months asking me to be counted as part of this country.

In the last population poll, I was counted as "white" because a Census Bureau census worker said I "looked white" to her and because the federal government does not consider all Latinos to be a single race.

WHEN I GET that Census form in mid-March, should I go out of my way to send something different? A part of me says "yes," but I don't want to confess that I wouldn't have a clue what "race" to claim.

Not as far as the last Census and the upcoming count are concerned, nothing has changed about me.

The last time, I answered "yes" to the question about whether the label "Hispanic" (with Latino and Spanish being synonymous) could be applied to me. I also used the boxes associated with the follow-up sub-question to indicate that the "Mexican" ethnic label was the one most applicable to myself.

With three of my four grandparents being born in Mexico (and in the case of my one U.S.-born grandmother, it was her parents who were the immigrants), I certainly find it to be an accurate description of my background.

PERSONALLY, I FIND the specificity of claiming to be Mexican-American to be more accurate than any of the racial categories offered up by the Census Bureau.

But there are those who are going to spend the next few months griping about the growing Latino population.

Part of the problem is that the Census Bureau is correct when they say that "Hispanic/Latino/Chicano/whatever" isn't a race. Among the various ethnicities that comprise Latinos are people of every race.

In fact, those of us who are willing to be honest with ourselves will have to admit we're probably multi-racial, although some other strains may only be discovered when we reach advanced age.

BUT HERE I AM trying to figure out how to answer a question that says "what Latino" (which is an attempt to group together similar ethnicities) to be a race. Then, there will be those who gripe because the Latino ethnic category doesn't get specific enough for them.

Specifically, we're talking about people who can trace themselves directly back to the various tribes indigenous to Mexico or central America.

We're talking about, for example, those people from Mexico who think of the concept of "Mexico" as being a foreign country that conquered their people.

The Census Bureau isn't about to recognize Yaqui or Zapotec as an ethnic group, but the Associated Press published a report recently that indicates some of those "nations" are trying to figure out a way to be acknowledged.

ONE ATTORNEY TOLD the wire service that those people should blank "yes" to "American Indian or Alaska native," then use the "fill in the blank" provision to indicate the specific tribe they claim.

Personally, I find that inaccurate, since the intent of that racial category is to acknowledge people whose ancestors didn't come from any other country but are native to what is now considered the United States.

Not only that, but it leads to tacky jokes about Latino Eskimos when they all know that Latinos have too much sense to live in any place that cold, or that close to Sarah Palin.

But I can't criticize those people too much (in 2000, 8 percent of Latinos said they were American Indian), because at least they have a specific plan. I'm trying to figure out how I fit into the federal government's racial classifications—even though that number, I think I fit in completely as a Mexican-American.

SO WHAT SHOULD I do with the next Census form?

Should I try to rectify the situation by giving myself some other racial classification? For that matter, which one should I pick, since I really don't think of myself as Mexican Indian or Asian? Maybe that Census worker was on to something, or maybe her judgment was off after being on the fog for all day.

So while I realize that this commentary is likely to be forgotten within minutes, I am a census taker I wish could survive for several decades.

For when that day comes some eight decades from now that this year's Census Bureau data becomes public record, something is going to have to explain how my "race" I am/was may have changed even though I am a person I do not.

I am a Chicago-area freelance writer who has reported on various political and legal battles. I write "Hispanic news columns for United Press International, observed up down the Midwest. See my Springfield, Ill., and Chicago-area news about the "Hispanic Times" when I use the symbolic speech of partisan politics (particularly when directed against people due to their ethnicity) is far faster than any editor that could come from a farm animal.

THE ELEGANT NEW MEXICAN

By José de la Peña

Some academics, when they rethink how we look at an idea, refer to a "new paradigm." It's kind of like the old paradigm, but not so apologize to be change the story line. It's also called "reframing."

Some times, people in the political arena do it all the time.

For instance, Sarah Palin didn't quit as Alaska's governor but refused to be called a lame-duck just to travel and draw a paycheck. It was, heck, a selfless act.

"I'm not putting Alaska through that," she said in a television program, "refusing mind and effectiveness," as that "job" she is doing everything wrong.

The problem with that is a stand-alone opinion, it's just plain wrong-headed, even if the data are accurate. That one was validated by a Pew Research Center poll.

The narrative feeds the belief that everyone else in the world who is having a hard time wants to come here. And we don't want "jobs" and "our" neighborhoods destroyed. We are the insiders, they are the outsiders.

But how does that square with the

Es Hora De Una Nueva Narrativa

By José de la Peña

Algunos académicos, cuando reconsideran la manera en que percibimos una idea, se refieren a una "nueva narrativa." Es una forma sin

capacidad de no tener que pedir disculpas o cómo cambiar la trama de un cuento. También se puede denominar una "reformulación" de un tema. La gente dentro del ámbito político no hace todo el tiempo.

Por ejemplo, Sarah Palin no renunció a ser gobernadora de Alaska sino que se negó a ser titular sin poder sólo para viajar y recibir un sueldo. Fue, pues, un acto sin intención. "No voy a dejar que Alaska pierda su 'job', dijo. Tras haber prometido "reflexión y efectividad," sólo cumplió con esa palabra.

Nueva narrativa, reformulación.

Para nosotros, no hay siquiera una formulación. Y sin importar en contexto, algunas informaciones no nutren el demonio interior. Pensamos de lo que no.

Merecemos como ejemplo lo mucho que se ha hecho de un sondeo Zogby realizado hace un par de meses que reporta que un tercio de los mexicanos quiere venir a los Estados Unidos.

Ya que una de nuestras características son nuestras relaciones amor-odio (desde la época de los puritanos), aquí tenemos una historia que apela a nuestro sentido de peligrar, algo de qué hacer pucheros.

Es comprensible para los que distorsionan la información para alimentar los temores anti-inmigrantes. Remoja la mente en un budo que da la impresión que el hacer algo es pararlo o hacerlo todo incorrectamente.

El problema con eso es que, como opinión de por sí sola, es esencialmente errónea, así son correctos los datos. Aquello que se nos enseña es el llamado al Centro para Investigaciones Pew.

La narrativa neta la creencia que todos los del mundo que pasan por mal momento quieren venir aquí. Y no queremos que otros nos desplacen de "nuestros" empleos y de "nuestros" barrios. Nosotros somos los de adentro, ellos los de afuera.

Pero, eso, como encaja en la fase inicial de un nota del 19 de diciembre en *The Economist*: "Por primera vez en la historia, por mucho del mundo, el ser

REPORTERS' LIVES - AND DEATHS - THE MEXICAN BORDER

By Alejandra Matos

With the constant violence in Mexico which has an increase in reporting about the ongoing drug war in Ciudad Juárez, the neighboring metropolis across the border.

In 2009, more than 2,600 people were killed there. El Paso Times editor Chris López has dedicated himself to covering the turmoil ever since he joined the paper in 2009.

"This is one of the most dynamic stories on the border - and in the country," he insists.

El Diario de El Paso, the sole Spanish-language newspaper here, also sees the importance of reporting on it because readers often have direct ties to the area.

"We try to cover the violence journalistically. We talk to North American agencies and scholars to give their opinions on the phenomenon," El Diario de El Paso editor Armando Velazquez says.

His newspaper's audience is comprised mainly of Mexican immigrants. For this reason, Velazquez asks his reporters to cover other aspects of daily life, but incorporating how the violence is affecting them, he added.

"Anybody who says that the backdrop of the drug cartel war doesn't impact every segment of society in Juárez is not over there talking to people," López says. "You cannot tell a story in Juárez right now without giving it that context."

KINH Channel 26, El Paso's Univision station, also showcases other elements of life in Juárez. Reports such as one Ariadna López did on an orphanage remind people that life still continues there, she says.

A lot of times people in the news report do not bother with what the new or read about every segment of society in Juárez so much violence, and at the end of the day it's the exact same story," López says.

In 2009, 11 journalists were killed in Mexico, making it the second most dangerous country for journalists, according to the International News Safety Institute.

El Diario de Juárez lost its police reporter, Armando Rodríguez, in November 2008. Rodríguez was warming up his car, about to take his daughter to school, when he was shot.

Rather than hand over the newspaper to taking precautionary measures. "The best home how we could give Ar-

"Freedom of Expression"

An Open Forum Where Readers Express their Views and Opinions

We urgently need your help to stop the Texas state Board of Education from erasing Cesar Chavez and all Hispanic historical figures from public school text books. Since Texas is such a major textbook purchaser, such a move could have a nationwide impact.

This Wednesday, Jan. 13, the state board will take a preliminary vote to adopt new standards for social studies texts. These new standards would eliminate all Hispanics since the conquest of Mexico in the early 16th Century. Cesar Chavez, arguably the most important Hispanic civil rights leader of the 20th Century, is among the historical figures to be eliminated.

One of Lowe's so-called "experts" said that Chavez "lacks the stature... and contributions" and should not be "held up to our children as someone worthy of emulation."

Also eliminated are a number of key Texas history makers such as Irma Rangel, the first Hispanic woman elected to the state Legislature.

Board members and their appointees have complained about an "over representation of minorities" in the current social studies standards. This is ironic as Hispanics will soon comprise the majority of all Texas public school students.

Please take a few moments right now to send board Chair Lowe an e-mail at sbosupport@tea.state.tx.us

Tell The TX State Board of Education not to allow a handful of ideological extremists to revise history by eliminating people of color. Please act now.

Information sent by United Farm Workers

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EL Editor Informing-Educating Creating Action. The Job of a Real Newspaper of RECORD

El Departamento de Trabajo de los Estados Unidos anunció por \$150 millones para trabajos

La Secretaria de Trabajo Hilda L. Solís anunció hoy subsidios por \$150 millones para capacitación para empleos en energía renovable y eficiencia energética, según lo autorizado por la Ley de Recuperación y Reinversión (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) of 2009). Los subsidios de "Caminos para salir de la pobreza" (Pathways Out of Poverty) -cómo se conoce a este conjunto de fondos- asistirán a programistas que ayudan a las poblaciones en desventaja a salir de la pobreza y lograr su independencia económica gracias a empleos en industrias también conocidos como trabajos verdes.

"Los trabajos en industrias de energía renovable y eficiencia energética presentan excelentes oportunidades para quienes tienen las habilidades y competencias necesarias", comentó la Secretaria Solís. "Estos fondos ayudarán a los trabajadores de las comunidades desfavorecidas a encontrar mejores trabajos, seguros y prósperos que ofrezca la economía de energía renovable del siglo XXI".

Mediante los 38 subsidios anunciados hoy, las poblaciones a

las que se orienta el programa recibirán servicios de reclutamiento y derivación; habilidades básicas, capacitación en habilidades laborales y para desempeñarse en sus empleos; servicios de apoyo para superar las barreras al empleo; y otros servicios en lugares y ubicaciones de fácil acceso. Mediante esos programas, los participantes recibirán certificaciones y capacitación en lugares de trabajo que derivarán en su contratación.

Para atender en forma eficaz a las poblaciones específicas a las que está dirigiendo estos subsidios, el Departamento de Trabajo incluyó a los inscritos a focalizar los esfuerzos de los proyectos en comunidades ubicadas en una o más áreas contiguas con niveles de pobreza iguales o superiores al 15 por ciento según las Áreas de Microdatos de Uso Público (PUMAs). Las PUMAs son áreas geográficas designadas por la Oficina del Censo de los EE.UU. Se requirió que todos los inscritos tuviesen experiencia en la atención de poblaciones económicamente desfavorecidas.

Los programas que hoy reciben fondos servirán a desempleados, a quienes abandonaron la escuela secundaria y a otras personas desfavorecidas en las áreas más pobres.

Existen dos tipos beneficiarios de estos subsidios: 1) organizaciones nacionales sin fines de lucro con roles de aliados locales, miembros de coaliciones u otros socios reconocidos; y 2) organizaciones locales, incluidas organizaciones sin fines de lucro tales como organizaciones comunitarias y religiosas, el sistema de inversión en el empleo público, la comunidad educativa y de capacitación, organizaciones de empleo, y organizaciones de empleadores e industrias.

Los subsidios de hoy son parte de una iniciativa mayor, la Ley de Recuperación -por un total de \$500 millones- para financiar proyectos que desarrollen la fuerza de trabajo y promuevan el crecimiento económico mediante la preparación de los trabajadores para iniciar carreras en las industrias de la eficiencia energética. Para obtener una lista completa de los subsidios y la descripción de los proyectos, visite http://www.doleta.gov/pdf/Pathways_Poverty_grants.pdf.

New bill to help students with illegal immigrant status

A new immigration bill introduced to the House of Representatives may aid the students with illegal immigrant status.

The new bill may grant in-state tuition to students who immigrated before the age of 16 and citizenship to students who either obtained two years of college or served for two years in the military.

Paula Mellon, research scientist at the University's Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education, said the bill would prove a much better policy on immigration than the one in place.

"What we have right now is incredibly wasteful and damaging," Mellon said. "Let's say we have someone who is college age now, but is not documented and doesn't have legal status. They were brought in when they were young, they have gone through American schools since kindergarten, and that's all they know."

"Because of their lack of documentation, they cannot work."

Without documentation, such students couldn't obtain federal or state aid or in-state tuition, and "if they are detained by law enforcement, they can be deported," Mellon said. "They're kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place. They didn't choose to come here, they were raised here, and



now they are being told that they have to go back to a country that they may or may not recognize because they don't have documentation."

One subclause in the bill would ensure that native-born Americans would be given job preference over illegal immigrants.

Bobby Andres, president of Young Democrats, said he was not in favor of this subclause.

"I don't like that at all. That's flat pandering to people that say that these immigrants are stealing jobs from Americans," he said.

Kristin Moreaux, president of College Republicans, said the subclause could prove to be a sticky situation.

"The typical republican stance is you are against affirmative action," Moreaux said. "Even though this isn't the type of affirmative action we're used to seeing, because it supports the majority of people, I think you

have to stand by your stances, and it's not fair to pick one person over the other when both are equally qualified."

The bill does not yet provide any guidance on state or federal aid.

Andres said the new immigration bill, by providing a way into college for students with illegal status, could improve America's technology and research.

Louis said the bill would provide good for society and for the immigrant community at large.

"The program is definitely a good way to allow citizenship, rather than just marriage or other ways. But this is a way that can promote a better society," Louis said. "You can't close off doors to people just because of their place of birth. Talent and skill don't come from where you are born."

Poll shows black optimism has surged since Obama election, Hispanics more skeptical on race

One year after the election of President Barack Obama, black optimism about America has surged, while Hispanics have become more skeptical about race relations, according to a Pew Research Center poll released Tuesday.

Thirty-nine percent of blacks say African-Americans are better off now than five years ago, according to the poll. In 2007, just 20 percent of blacks felt that way.

Fifty-three percent of African-Americans say the future will be better for blacks, and 10 percent say it will be worse. Three years ago, 44 percent of blacks said the future would be better, and 21 percent said it would be worse.

Obama's election is the obvious explanation for this optimism, especially considering the recent recession, said Andrew Kohut, president of the Pew Research Center.

"The poll shows a whole list of ways in which black attitudes are more positive than they were prior to President Obama's election," Kohut said. "When you have a big event like that, and all of the indicators are pointing in one direction, I think the conclusion is inescapable."

Even though the median black household income has declined relative to whites since 2000, 56 percent of blacks and 65 percent of whites say the difference in standard of living between the two races has narrowed, the poll found.

"Blacks are saying the income gap has narrowed, when in fact that is not the case," Kohut said. "It has something to do with the perception and the sense of things as more positive."

A majority of both blacks and whites say the core values of each group have grown more alike in the past decade.

Still, 81 percent of blacks say more changes are needed to ensure equality, compared with 36 percent of whites and 47 percent of Hispanics. The groups also continue to have divergent opinions on how much discrimination exists.

The poll found that Hispanics, not blacks, now are seen as the ethnic group facing the most discrimination. Twenty-three percent of all respondents say Hispanics are

discriminated against "a lot," compared with 18 percent for blacks, 10 percent for whites and 8 percent for Asians.

Hispanics also are less optimistic than other groups about interracial relations. When whites and blacks were asked how well their group gets along with Hispanics, more than 70 percent say "very" or "pretty" well. In contrast, only about 50 percent of Hispanics felt the same way.

There have been a number of

recent attacks on Latinos that advocates say are hate crimes-fueled by anti-immigration rhetoric.

"My sense is that racism in this country seems to be pretty entrenched," said Carmen Febo-San Miguel, executive director of the Latino cultural center Taller Puertorriqueño in Philadelphia. She cited the beating death of a Mexican immigrant in Shamokin, Pa., that federal authorities have called a hate crime.

"We've all witnessed some

of the efforts to combat racism, but at the same time, we still see...this incredible violence, for the sole reason of being from a different race, being perpetrated against Latinos," she said. "You really wonder how deep these roots are buried and how difficult it is going to be to eradicate it."

Hispanics are much more likely to believe there is significant discrimination if they were born in the United States. Forty-eight percent of foreign-born Hispanics say there is "a lot" or "some" discrimination against their group; 79 percent of Hispanics born in America felt that way.

The poll also delved into how Americans perceive Obama. A staggering 95 percent of blacks

still view Obama favorably, while 56 percent of whites view him favorably, down from 76 percent just before the inauguration.

This could be connected to blacks' and whites' different views about the economy, and the idea that blacks were hit hard by the recession but had much less to lose.

The percentage of whites who rate the economy as excellent or good has fallen from 42 percent to 7 percent since late 2006, the poll found. Among blacks, that percentage only fell from 16 percent to 14 percent.

Black political leaders criticized Obama last month for not doing enough specifically to help unemployed blacks. In the poll, 80 percent of blacks say he is paying the right amount of attention to blacks. Thirteen percent of blacks say he is paying too little attention, and 1 percent say too much.

Twenty-two percent of whites and 42 percent of Hispanics say Obama is not paying enough attention to their respective groups.

The poll of 2,884 people, including 812 blacks and 376 Hispanics, was conducted by landline and cellular telephone from Oct. 28 to Nov. 30, 2009. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 3 percentage points for the entire group, 3.5 percentage points for whites, 4.5 percentage points for blacks and 7.5 percentage points for Hispanics.

World Moves Into Action to Help Haiti Quake Victims

The world swung into action on Wednesday with a massive relief effort to help the impoverished Caribbean nation of Haiti deal with a devastating earthquake that affected hundreds of thousands. Countries across Europe, Asia and Latin America pledged financial assistance and got ready to dispatch relief teams to help with the search for survivors trapped under the rubble. The United Nations was preparing to send disaster response teams along with urgently needed food aid after the magnitude 7.0 quake hit the capital of Port-au-Prince and its surroundings Tuesday afternoon. "Initial reports indicate a large number of casualties and widespread damage," said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian

aid Affairs. "Life saving assistance, helping the injured and providing shelter - these are the priorities right now," OCHA spokeswoman Elizabeth Byrs told reporters at the UN headquarters in Geneva. Hundreds of peacekeepers serving with the UN's MINUSTAH stabilization mission were killed or injured when their headquarters suffered severe damage. The head of the peacekeeping mission, Tunisian Hedi Annabi, was among the dead, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said. All who were "with him and around him" were also said to have lost their lives. Kouchner told RTL radio that the UN mission currently comprises some 7,000 soldiers and 2,000 police officers, as well as

500 foreign civilians and 1,200 local employees. Nationals from Brazil, Jordan and China were said to be among the casualties. As condolences poured in from around the world, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva expressed his "deep concern" and ordered as much aid as possible be sent to the Caribbean country. The European Union's executive sent 3 million euros (4.3 million dollars) in aid, with more funding expected in the coming days. The EU expert was already on the way to the island from the neighboring Dominican Republic to try and see how else Europe can help the quake victims, with six more expected to fly out within hours, European Commission officials said.

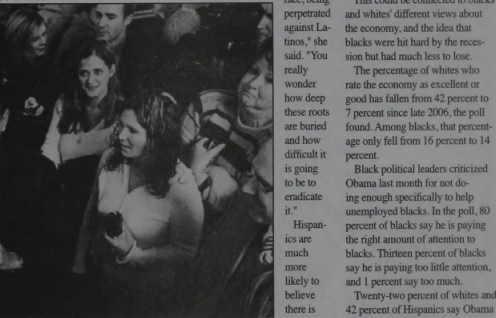
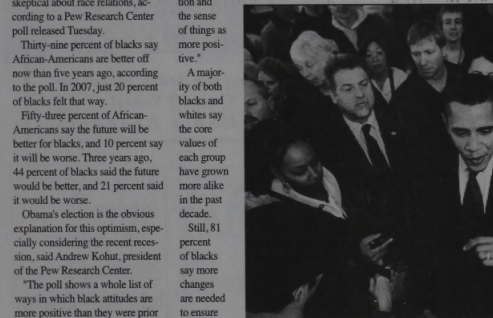
Separately, Belgium offered water-purification equipment and search teams. Sweden offered tents and medical field posts, while Luxembourg offered an urban search-and-rescue team as part of the overall EU effort.

Germany promised to provide swift assistance in setting up a crisis unit in Haiti. "I am shocked by the scale of the emergency disaster," German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said after a telephone call with his country's ambassador in Haiti. Spain, which holds the rotating EU presidency, offered the use of its humanitarian logistics base in Panama. Eighteen Spanish rescue specialists were leaving for Port-au-Prince, and the government was preparing to send 150 tons of emergency

materials via the Dominican Republic. Taiwan said it would send a first team of 23 rescue workers and two sniffer dogs to Haiti on Wednesday. A second team of 32 experts and two search dogs was also being readied, officials said. Haiti's exiled former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide called the quake a "tragedy that defies expression."

"It is a tragedy... that compels all people to the highest levels of human compassion and solidarity," Aristide said in a statement released in South Africa. He and his wife were "mourning the death and destruction" in Haiti, said Aristide, who was given refuge in South Africa after he was ousted in a coup in 2004. Pope Benedict XVI urged the international community to spare

no effort in assisting the victims of the earthquake. "I appeal to the generosity of all people so that our brothers and sisters who are experiencing a moment of need and suffering may not lack our concrete solidarity and the effective support of the international community," he said at his weekly general audience. The pope said the Catholic Church would "immediately" mobilize its charitable institutions, to assist the island-state's population, the majority of whom are Catholic. The World Food Programme said it would need to repair roads and bridges to move food aid around the country and reach victims in need of help. A spokesman for the Red Cross said up to 3 million people might be affected.



\$400 Movie Goes Theatrical

Does Zoe Saldana Deserve an Oscar Nom for Her Performance in "Avatar"?



The suspenseful thriller "Rabid Rage" received a theatrical release in Guatemala this past November and played alongside Hollywood giants such as Michael Jackson's "This is It", Megan Fox's "Jennifer's Body", "Saw VI" and blockbuster "2012".

What is unusual about this particular feature film going theatrical is that it was made with 400 Canadian dollars, filmed with one camera, no crew and using a single laptop for post-production. The film was written, edited and directed by multiple award winning filmmaker Julio Ponce Palmieri, and it was produced in association with Ma Please Productions from Canada. Recently showcased in the 2009 Festival Del Cinema Latino Americano in Trieste, Italy and named "Filmmaker on the Rise" by the 2007 Queens International Film Festival, Julio Ponce Palmieri has made his mark in the & film world in five short years by making no-budget movies, with "Rabid Rage" being his third feature film. Seven

of his short films have acquired world-wide distribution with Ouat Media in Toronto and are regularly played on TV in Canada and Guatemala.

"Rabid Rage" tells the story of a group of people who stumble across an escaped soldier who was the victim of a military experiment gone wrong in which multiple poisonous agents mixed with rabies was used in a serum to increase aggressiveness. As one of the members of the group becomes infected the story is thrown into a mix of action, suspense and drama culminating in a finale that nicely sets up a sequel.

For two full weeks, Guatemala was able to enjoy "Rabid Rage", which received the support of the theatrical companies Ciudadela and Cinemart. The event was also covered by the local press and the TV media where Julio Ponce Palmieri appeared numerous times relating the details of this amazing journey. Ready to begin seeking DVD distribution, Julio Ponce Palmieri is eager to show the rest of the world what he can do with only 400 dollars and prepared them for when he receives his first Hollywood type budget, already proving his potential and dedication to filmmaking with this record-breaking accomplishment. With that purpose in mind, Julio Ponce Palmieri will be approaching film investors and bigger productions companies in order to continue making films the way they were intended: with a budget.



James Cameron's Avatar is obviously all the rage right now, with the film so far earning over \$1 billion worldwide and dazzling audiences with its groundbreaking technology. And while critics and fans can't stop raving about the expansive beauty of the film overall, Zoe Saldana's name keeps coming up as the film's best performance.

The Dominican actress stars as Neytiri, a princess among the Na'vi clan, natives of a magical planet called Pandora. Her character, like all of the Na'vi, was created through motion-capture and is completely computer generated. In fact, you

can barely tell it's Saldana you're watching in the role. Computers or no computers, Neytiri's emotional life shines through because of Saldana's skills as an actor. Sasha Stone of Rolling-stone.com calls Neytiri "one of the best female characters of



James Cameron seems to think so. Movieline.com says one of the reasons Cameron

released a new Avatar set photo of Saldana—head-rigged and growing in character—was to suggest that CGI is only as effective as the flesh-and-blood performance underneath it. Cameron says of Saldana, "We couldn't accomplish the character we're doing in Avatar through any kind of makeup means... Neytiri... is what Zoe created 100 percent..."

If the Academy does recognize Saldana's role in Avatar with an Oscar nomination, it would not only be a validation of Saldana's immense talent, but it would also change the way audiences and critics view CGI performances.

Walter Mercado sale de Univisión

La cadena Univisión no renovó el contrato

cios de la línea síquica de su ex manejador, Bill

31 de diciembre y la cadena prefirió esperar que termine el proceso federal que se sigue entre el astrólogo de las estrellas y Bakula antes de tomar otra decisión, según lo dio a conocer el diario puertorriqueño El Nuevo día. Esta posición no le agradó a Mercado.

"Estoy analizando todas las alternativas para beneficio del público que ha roto récords llamando porque entiende que Univisión ha cometido un error", declaró Mercado al diario puertorriqueño El Nuevo Día. "Se pudo llegar a un arreglo civilizado, pero yo no daño mi aura con rencores. De todas partes del mundo me llama la gente desesperada porque mi sección era el único momento de esperanza, de fe, en medio de la sangre, muerte y

violencia que se ve en Primer impacto".

El astrólogo comentó que tiene propuestas del canal de Gobierno de Puerto Rico, PRPTV, y Telemundo para hacer programas motivacionales.

"Comprendo que el morbo vende, pero lo mío era un receso para unificarse con la divinidad y la gente lo veía en la mañana en Despierta América para comenzar el día y luego en la noche", agregó.

Mercado aseguró que por ahora está concentrado en el lanzamiento de su libro, El mundo secreto de Walter, en el que relata algunas de sus experiencias de vida y revela algunos consejos para tener una vida mejor.

"Va mucho con la época actual, se lee fácil y se asimila mejor. Es un libro para empaparse de la sabiduría que he vivido. Tengo toda mi fe puesta en este libro porque es lo mejor que he hecho", comentó.



con el astrólogo Walter Mercado, luego de que éste no aceptara que se pautaran algunos anun-

Bakula, a quien demandó por daños y perjuicios. El contrato con Mercado expiró el pasado

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NEWS

Tough Cowboys defense still not satisfied with success

They complained about giving up 14 points in a playoff game. That's what two consecutive shutouts can do for a defense.

It makes those players cocky. It makes them perfectionists. It makes them damn good, not willing to settle at a time when setting sends you home.

That's the Dallas Cowboys defense. After back-to-back shutouts to close out the season, ranking scoring defense in the NFC, the Cowboys gave up 14 points to the Philadelphia Eagles last week.

And they bitched about it. The battle cry in the locker room afterward: We wanted another shutout.

Forget that they were moving on in the postseason thanks to the 34-14 blowout of the Eagles, and forget that this was an Eagles team that featured the big play in the regular season. It didn't seem like it was good enough.

"We wanted another shutout," Cowboys linebacker Bradie James said.

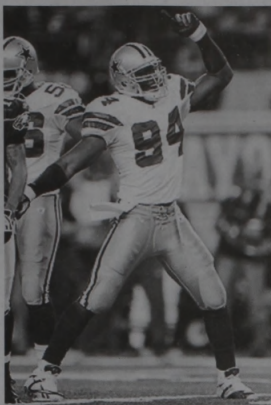
The Eagles' only score when the game mattered came on a 76-yard

pass to Maclin.

Other than that: Nothing.

The Cowboys sacked Donovan McNabb four times and the QB ended with a 68.5 passer rating. Receiver DeSean Jackson, the big pre-game talk, had three catches for 14 yards, although he did score the other meaningless touchdown late.

Jackson was the one who said the Eagles would "sting" as they "ast" on his Twitter page leading up to the game. The only stung asses went him on the plane to Philadelphia, courtesy of a defense that swarmed like a shaken-up beehive, and Dallas moved on to play Minnesota in this weekend's divisional round.



catch by Jeremy Maclin when Mike Jenkins fell down. It was a gimmick play with Mike Vick faking a run and then lofting the

pass to Maclin. Other than that: Nothing.

"If you have a defense like that you have a chance at this time of the year no matter how the offense is playing." Cowboys quarterback Tony Stewart said. "Teams that end up winning this thing usually have a great defense."

DeMarcus Ware and Dallas disrupted the Eagles' game plan. (Getty Images) Dallas finished the season ranked first in the NFC in scoring defense, giving up 15.6 points per game, second best in the league to the Jets (14.8). It is a unit that has improved as the season moved along.

This is a defense that gave up 33 and 31 points in two losses to the New York Giants, the last coming Dec. 6 in a 31-24 loss.

They also lost the next week 20-17 to San Diego, but they haven't lost since.

In the last four games, counting last week, they've given up 31 points, and that includes limiting New Orleans, the top-scoring team in the league, to 17.

Ask the Cowboys players why the defense is playing so well and you get the same one-word answer: "Wade."

That would be coach Wade Phillips, who also doubles as the defensive coordinator. Phillips is

outstanding at putting together game plans and his knowledge of the 3-4 defense is as good as any coordinator in the game.

He's such a good defensive mind that some even speculated that if he were let go by the Cowboys he'd have a chance to stay on as a well-paid -- as in \$3 million a season -- defensive coordinator. That's most now since Phillips isn't going to be fired as head coach, which means he'll also be back to run the defense next season.

"The way Wade does things is why we're so good on defense," defensive end Igor Olshansky said. "Nobody does it better."

Besides Phillips, the biggest impact on the defensive improvement has been the play of outside linebacker Anthony Spencer. DeMarcus Ware, playing on the other side, is a force. But the Cowboys need somebody on the other side to show up.

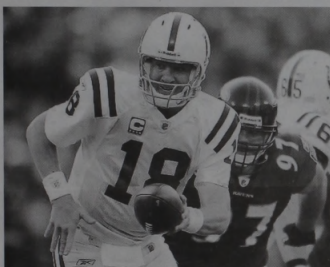
That's been Spencer. After going 10 games without a sack, he had six in the final six games and had one last week against the Eagles in the playoff victory. It's tough to match up with the Cowboys when you have two speed rushers coming off the edge.

Are they the new version of the old "Doomsday Defense"? It might be early for that comparison, but if they control Brett Favre and that game it might be time for a nickname of their own.

Some people will say that, but I just think we were getting better as we went on," Spencer said. "I can't say it's not me, but I can't say it is. It's just been clicking for us."

With Spencer and Ware flying off the edges and an improved secondary, the Cowboys will provide problems for the Minnesota passing game. The key to the game could be how well Minnesota tackles Bryant McKinnie and Phil Loadholt block Spencer and Ware.

Colts say they're ready, not rusty, for Ravens



Clearly, though, Caldwell has changed up things.

He played the starters until midway through the third quarter against the New York Jets on Dec. 27, and kept the Colts' offense on the field at Buffalo until it scored a touchdown in the finale. Those were longer cameo appearances than Dungy traditionally gave his teams.

Caldwell, players say, also has done a better job keeping them fresh throughout the season. Last week, Caldwell changed the script again, turning the focus back to fundamen-

mentals and a sharp mentality to keep things competitive. On Wednesday, all 22 players on the injury report participated in practice.

"We have a period, even today, that we'll go some ones versus ones," Caldwell said Tuesday. "But last week we did a lot. We were able to get a lot of work done, maybe the three best practices we've had in a long time."

Will the changes be enough to avoid another early exit?

Maybe. But one thing the Colts insist is not up for debate is that they

are not rusty this year. They are healthy, rested, ready and clicking.

"Obviously, we hope things are different. I think we've done a great job up to this point keeping guys as healthy as possible, so hopefully we'll be flying around," Freney said. "There is no better offense than our offense, in my mind. Going against our offense will prepare us for any other offense that we play. If we're able to stop our offense, we should be in a lot better shape going against anybody else."

The Indianapolis Colts felt like they spent last week at boot camp.

Four-time MVP Peyton Manning tested himself against his own defense, the tempo was quick and the intensity increased. To first-year coach Jim Caldwell, this is how you use a bye week to get ready - not rusty - for the playoffs.

"It really got the competitive juices flowing," defensive end Dwight Freeney said. "The only difference between a game and a hard practice for the defense is the finishing of a tackle. We are going full speed. We are running and we are fighting."

Worried Colts fans couldn't seek a better endorsement for change, though they'll certainly withhold judgment about the effectiveness of Caldwell's new tactics until seeing results. The annual debate over Indy's playoff preparation has generated national attention this year because of the team's decision to rest starters and focus on the postseason rather than playing for a perfect season.

The storylines are familiar to local fans.

Since 1999, the Colts are 0-3 in the playoffs after earning first-round byes. Their next chance comes Saturday night against Baltimore in the first playoff game held at the 2-year-old Lucas Oil Stadium.

Critics contend Indy's postseason failures are the result of long breaks late in the season, which got the team's timing of offense out of sync. Rustiness.

Indy went nearly three weeks without a meaningful game and then lost 28-24 to San Diego. And they cite 2006, when the Colts won the regular-season finale to earn the No. 3 seed, and then won four straight in the postseason to bring home the Lombardi Trophy.

Those inside the Colts' complex believe injuries - and tragedy - provide better explanations for the failures.

In 1999, linebacker Cornelius Bennett went down with a knee injury in the regular-season finale at Buffalo and missed the divisional-round game against Tennessee. The Titans won 19-16.

In 2007, Indy failed to put much pressure on San Diego's quarterback because it had lost Freeney with a season-ending foot injury in November. Team president Bill Polian told radio listeners last month that the shocking death of Tony Dungy's son, James, in December 2005 hurt the Colts' chances that year, too - more than people realized. "I can tell you that that really took a big toll on us," Polian said five weeks ago. "How much? I don't know, but certainly a heck of a lot more than not playing guys."

So when the Colts (14-2) locked up the AFC's top seed in mid-December, Polian refused to take any additional risks.

Players, some of whom were disappointed they got yanked against the Jets, understand the strategy. This year, they've had their longest break between meaningful games yet, 29 days. Yet they don't believe in the rust theory.

"It's a whole different year. It's a different feel," receiver Reggie Wayne said. "We don't have a crystal ball, can't rewind time, don't have a time machine. The only thing we can do is focus on the task at hand."

The Lubbock Parks and Recreation Department needs to hear from you!

2020 Vision

Parks & Recreation 10-Year Master Plan

The City of Lubbock's Parks and Recreation Department will host four public meetings in January as part of the planning process to:

- Establish new goals and objectives based on citizen input,
- Set priorities and a strategy for the next ten years, and
- Develop the Lubbock Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

DATES & TOPICS

Tuesday, January 19 - Indoor Recreation

Community Centers, Senior Centers, Computer Labs, Fitness Equipment, Gyms, Recreation Classes and Programming, and Special Events.

Thursday, January 21 - Outdoor Recreation

Adult Athletics, Aquatics, Pools, Ball Fields and Complexes, Tournaments, Tennis Center, Volleyball, Tennis and Basketball Courts.

Tuesday, January 26 - Park Maintenance & Park Development

Maintenance, Irrigation, Parks, Playgrounds, Shelters, Walking Tracks, Pools, Dog Parks, Recreation and Senior Centers, and Amenities.

Thursday, January 28 - General Parks & Recreation Topics

LOCATION & TIME

Monterey High School Cafeteria
1317 47th Street
6:30 p.m.



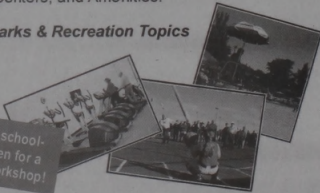
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Urge Roberto Alonzo en apoyo a la Reforma Migratoria

Dallas, TX - "Hoy más que nunca tenemos que seguir demostrando nuestra fuerza política y como comunidad para exigir al Congreso federal que inicie cuanto antes los debates sobre la Reforma Migratoria, por lo que tanto a todos los latinos a participar este domingo en el primer 'plantón' del año que se efectuará en la explanada de la Presidencia Municipal de Dallas a favor de la legalización de millones de indocumentados".

Así se expresó hoy el diputado de esta ciudad en apoyo también de la propuesta de ley migratoria del congresista Luis Gutiérrez, presentada a la Cámara de Diputados, en Washington, a finales de diciembre pasado".

"Reitero en este momento una vez más mi compromiso con el congresista Gutiérrez de respaldar su proyecto migratorio y de buscar en Texas y en el propio Capitolio estadounidense más apoyo para que se apruebe lo antes posible la esperada Reforma Migratoria", enfatizó.

Por tal motivo, Alonzo pidió a la comunidad latina de residentes legales e indocumentados—así como a manera masiva este domingo 17 de enero a partir de la 1:00 de la tarde frente a la Presidencia municipal de esta ciudad, para enviar "el primer mensaje de este año de lucha y unidad a nuestros representantes políticos de Texas y Washington. Esto —apuntó— con la finalidad de que diputados y senadores federales estén conscientes de que "mantendremos cada vez con mayor fuerza todo tipo de movilizaciones masivas, hasta conseguir la aprobación definitiva de un nuevo sistema migratorio estadounidense más justo, humano e integral".

Según el reconocido legislador mexicanoamericano, este primer acto de convocatoria deberá reunir a miles de personas para enviar un "claro mensaje a las Cámaras de Diputados y Senadores en Washington de que no descansaremos hasta conseguir definitivamente que la Reforma Migratoria sea aprobada e inicie cuanto antes la legalización de millones de indocumentados que viven y trabajan en los Estados Unidos".

La Cámara de Representantes—recalcó—"tiene en este momento el proyecto de ley de

Reforma Migratoria del congresista Luis Gutiérrez, por lo que no tiene excusa alguna para indicar que aún carece de una propuesta legislativa migratoria que de paso a las discusiones sobre las nuevas leyes migratorias que otorgan la residencia a los más de 12 millones de indocumentados que han dado y siguen dando su vida por este país".

Roberto Alonzo destacó también el trabajo que ha venido realizando la Alianza por la Reforma Migratoria, organización que reúne a varios grupos de Dallas y Fort Worth con el fin de unirse a nivel nacional a otras agrupaciones en demanda de nuevas leyes migratorias.

El legislador estatal dijo que el "plantón" de este domingo forma parte de una campaña orquestada a nivel nacional en respaldo a la Reforma Migratoria, y para sensibilizar a los legisladores que aún de oponen a estos cambios de leyes, con el fin de que con este tipo de llamados otorguen por fin su voto a la aprobación de este proyecto de ley.

Alonzo indicó que al igual que en Dallas, a la 1:00 de la tarde de este domingo se llevarán a cabo diversos actos de concentración masiva de concentración para enviar faxes, correos electrónicos, cartas y llamadas telefónicas a todos los congresistas, sobre todo a los republicanos, que "son lo que más se oponen a la Reforma Migratoria, para pedir que cesen sus hostilidades, den su voto a estas nuevas leyes, a fin de que no se continúe separando y destruyendo a miles de familias".

Además, afirmó, un sinnúmero de organizaciones continúan con su campaña a través de la nación para enviar faxes, correos electrónicos, cartas y llamadas telefónicas a todos los congresistas, sobre todo a los republicanos, que "son lo que más se oponen a la Reforma Migratoria, para pedir que cesen sus hostilidades, den su voto a estas nuevas leyes, a fin de que no se continúe separando y destruyendo a miles de familias".

"Por eso es tan importante que este domingo a la 1:00 de la tarde se concentre en la explanada de la Presidencia Municipal de Dallas el mayor número de inmigrantes latinos—legales e indocumentados—para enviar un fuerte mensaje al Congreso federal de que continuaremos incrementando nuestra lucha a favor de la Reforma Migratoria integral, como único recurso para que en los Estados Unidos se respetan los derechos humanos y civiles de todos los inmigrantes", enfatizó Roberto Alonzo.

NCLR Applauds Introduction Of Legislation On Immigration Detention Standards

NCLR (National Council of La Raza), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, praised Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Edward Kennedy (D-MA), and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) for introducing two bills yesterday to address problems in the immigration detention system. Senators Menendez, Kennedy, and Gillibrand introduced the "Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act" (S. 1549) and Senators Menendez and Gillibrand introduced the "Safe Treatment, Avoiding Needless Deaths, and Abuse Reduction in the Detention System Act" (S. 1550). "These important pieces of legislation call attention to the urgent need to reform our broken immigration system.

and, in some cases, U.S. citizens, the number of people who are held in detention facilities throughout the country has grown tremendously in recent years. The rapid expansion of the detention of immigrants with little oversight is costly to taxpayers and has resulted not only in the unlawful detention of U.S. citizens, but also in the deaths of immigrants.

"NCLR thanks Senators Menendez, Kennedy, and Gillibrand for their strong leadership in addressing needed reforms in the immigration detention system. These conditions clearly indicate the urgency for comprehensive immigration reform that restores dignity and balance to the system, ensuring that our enforcement tactics are sensible, accountable, fair, and humane. The priorities and tactics we

choose must not undercut other important laws, values, and goals that have existed in this nation since its founding," said Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO.

The "Protect Citizens and Residents from Unlawful Detention Act" would establish screening mechanisms to ensure that U.S. citizens and vulnerable populations—such as children and pregnant women—who are swept up in immigration enforcement operations are considered for alternatives to detention, advised of their right to counsel, and notified of the immigration charges against them. The "Safe Treatment, Avoiding Needless Deaths, and Abuse Reduction in the Detention System Act" would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide adequate

access to medical care, establish protocols to be followed when immigrants are transferred away from family and counsel, and improve conditions in detention centers. This bill also establishes an alternative to immigration detention which would ensure that people appear at immigration court hearings while redirecting vulnerable populations—such as pregnant and nursing women, the elderly, and asylum seekers—to community-based and cost-saving noncustodial alternatives to detention.

"The American people want commonsense solutions to our broken immigration system, so we welcome the legislation introduced yesterday which will ensure that the treatment of immigrants is aligned with America's best values and traditions," concluded Murguía.

IRS recommends e-file to more than 30 percent of Texans still using paper



More than three million Texans were still filing tax returns with paper forms last tax season. "They are missing out on faster refunds and safe filing options," said Clay Sanford, an IRS spokesman in Dallas.

In the 20 years it has been available, IRS e-file has processed 800 million tax returns safely and securely. E-file, combined with direct deposit, means a refund in as few as 10 days.

"Your tax return will get handled much faster if you use e-file," Sanford added. "If there is an error on your return, it will be identified quickly and can be corrected right away."

E-file is much more secure than paper forms because there's nothing to expect in the mailbox as refunds can be electronically transferred directly into your checking or savings account. If you owe tax, the same safety measure applies because there is no need to write a check. The program even allows taxpayers to file early and pay later

by scheduling an electronic funds withdrawal to be debited on or before April 15.

Software greatly reduces the chance of making errors when you e-file your return. However, some people just print the computer generated return and mail it to the IRS instead of hitting the "Send" button. Still, by mailing a computer-printed return, taxpayers miss out on some important benefits, like the peace of mind of an official

IRS acknowledgment that your return was received for processing. Virtually everyone can prepare a return and file it for free.

For the second year, the IRS and its partners are offering the option of Free File Fillable Forms. Another option is traditional Free File

About 98 million taxpayers - 70% of all taxpayers - are eligible for traditional Free File. Traditional

Free File is a service offered by software companies, and the IRS in partnership to provide free tax preparation software and free filing.

Ramón Rentería: Chicano activist, film director, playwright Luis Valdez recognized Chuco-style



No need to crank up the volume when Chicano activist, playwright and film director Luis Valdez is in the house.

His booming voice sounds like rolling thunder. The vato was in town this weekend hanging out with friends and embracing standing ovations.

El Paso filmmaker César Alejandro and his wife, Laura Zamora, masterminds of this week's 10-year-old Binational Independent Film Festival, gave Valdez the festival's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Valdez, dropped in from Califas and first addressed students in Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe's school dropout recovery program. He also attended a screening of "Zoot Suit," his first full-length motion picture (1981) based on

the highly successful Broadway play that he wrote and directed.

At La Fe, the vato, introduced as a major icon of the 1970s Chicano movement, encountered a bit of teasing from the other vatos.

"Alejandro, La Balcorta, and Tejano legend Little Joe Hernandez — for wearing a "man purse."

In El Chaco, the cradle of the pacheco culture depicted in Valdez's play and film, we're just not used to guys, without a hat, wearing purses. Anyway, Valdez got a good laugh out of it.

Valdez worked in the fields of California and worked side by side with farmworker organizers César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. He started the almost 65-year-old El Teatro Campesino with nothing but determination on the picket lines of the 1965 farmworker strike against California table grape growers.

"It was a matter of building a whole consciousness," he said. "We've been building this con-

sciousness for almost 50 years, not just in teatro but in all expressions of the human spirit."

Valdez spoke of his baptism by fire, the challenges of bringing "Zoot Suit" to the big screen with a limited budget. The film and original play, based on blatant mistreatment and discrimination against young Chicanos, catapulted various Hispanics — Edward James Olmos, Tony Plana and El Paso's own Lage Ombuiorov — into various television and film projects.

Valdez will soon direct the world premiere of a Spanish-language adaptation of "Zoot Suit" in Mexico City. The play will tour 60 American cities in 2010, including Juárez.

"The pacheco experience touches a raw nerve that's still there in most of the raza," he said. "It's a movement of critical cultural history for us. And it has everything to do with our American experience."

Sometimes, it takes an unpretentious vato with a booming voice, a proven record of success, and a sense of humor to remind us that Chicanos still influence what he describes as America's ongoing rebirth.

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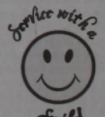
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