

Hispanic Link weekly report

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Your News Source for 26 Years

MAKING THE NEWS THIS WEEK

Barack Obama reveals the 16 winners of the 2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom who will be honored at the White House Aug 12. Among those receiving the nation's highest civilian honor will be Miami physician **Pedro José Greer Jr.** and Puerto Rico entertainer **Chita Rivera** ...Cuba native **Dr. Nils Díaz**, past chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is named MOSI National Hispanic Scientist of the Year...**Lamar Alexander**, no.3 ranked Republican in the U.S. Senate, com-

mits to vote for **Sonia Sotomayor's** confirmation ...The Mexican drug cartel **La Familia** tortures and murders 12 of that country's federal agents stationed in Michoacán state in retaliation for the capture of **Arnold Rueda Medina**, the cartel's No. 2 leader... After 6 years, Cuba and the United States reopen talks on travel and migration...**David Ortiz** and **Manny Ramírez**, Boston Red Sox stars who led their team to the World Series in 2004 and 2007, are reported in The New York Times as having used steroids in 2003.

FULL SENATE VOTE ON SOTOMAYOR IMMINENT, CONFIRMATION EXPECTED

By Natalie Conrad

The nomination of federal Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court has moved forward to the full Senate. Its confirming vote is expected as early as next week, prior to the body's four-week summer recess scheduled to begin Aug. 6. Only a simple majority is required.

With Democrats occupying 60 of the Senate's 100 seats and five Republican Senators already committed to Sotomayor's appointment, her confirmation appears certain.



SOTOMAYOR

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 13-6 on July 28 in support of President Obama's nominee.

National President Rosa Rosales of the League of United Latin American Citizens hailed it as "a great day in the history of the United States," promising, "She will have a tremendous impact on Latinas and women across the nation. In America, all things are possible."



ROSALES

The committee's vote was party-line
(continued on page 2)

Seattle University Law Center, Avila to Watch Over Reapportionment

By Roxana Hernández

Joaquín Avila has been named to direct the nation's first comprehensive voting rights initiative by a law school that will address disparities in political redistricting.

A national leader in the field, Avila will oversee development of the unique, newly created National Voting Rights Advocacy Initiative, to be housed within Seattle University's School of Law.

The distinctive center is being inaugurated in anticipation of 2011, when congressional and other political district lines will be redrawn following the decennial census.

It is being designed to provide Hispanics and other historically disenfranchised population groups with litigious, legislative and advocacy support in time for the 2012 national election, giving Avila a command center to accomplish the work he has championed for decades.

The proactive concept, which Avila helped design, embodies "his visionary civil rights leadership," Nancy Ramírez, Western regional counsel with the Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund, told Weekly Report.

Avila served as MALDEF's president and general counsel from 1982-1985. He will work with civil rights organizations and voting rights attorneys throughout the United States to provide a base of research for devising appropriate court strategies.



AVILA

JOAQUIN AVILA FAST-FORWARDS TO 2012 Redistricting Decisions Influence Latino Power

By Joaquín Avila

"The majestic purpose of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution has been to...banish the blight of racial discrimination in voting...once and for all..."

NEWS ANALYSIS

With the recent election of our country's first African-American president, many have spoken of a post-racial society where race no longer defines the criteria for societal and governmental interactions.

Such a view is inconsistent with the daily realities that affect all aspects of our lives. Elections in many instances are characterized by discrimination. People still vote along the basis of race and ethnicity as a reflection of our racially polarized society.

This should be no surprise given the country's legacy as a slaveholding republic and its continuing difficulty in grappling with issues of racism. Access to the political process for racial and ethnic populations re-

mains a major problem.

The current impediments are many:

- citizenship requirements that prevent individuals from voting even though these persons contribute to a government's tax base and are socially and economically integrated within local communities;

- elections that serve to exclude eligible voters from language-minority communities;

- identification requirements that prevent eligible voters from participating in elections; and

- the exclusion of ex-felons from the electoral process

Apart from these impediments there is the obstacle of racially polarized voting that dilutes or minimizes the opportunity for racial and ethnic minorities to elect candidates of their choice. Racially polarized voting can have a discriminatory effect on communities when elections are conducted on an at-large election basis or in

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The Inside Stories

PAGE 4: Angelo Falcón's *lengua* is *sin pelos*, too.

PAGE 4: Old friend addresses question of Hatch's vote against Sotomayor.

Political Poop

by Patricia Guadalupe



Olga Méndez Dies at Age 83

Olga Méndez, the first Puerto Rican woman elected to the New York State Senate, died July 29 at age 83 after a long battle with breast cancer.

The Puerto Rico native and former teacher came to New York City in the 1950s for graduate studies. After earning a Ph.D. from Yeshiva University, she became involved in Democratic Party politics. She was a George McGovern delegate in the 1972 Democratic National Convention and was involved in registering Latino voters.

In 1978, Méndez was elected to the New York State Senate, representing the largely Latino East Harlem. She held that position

for 26 years.

In a controversial move, Méndez switched to the Republican Party in 2002, saying the Democratic Party was taking her constituents for granted. In 2004, she lost to Democrat José M. Serrano, son of Congressman José Serrano.

Known for her fiery speeches and larger-than-life personality, Méndez received numerous awards, in-



MEÑEZ

cluding the Civil Liberties Honor Roll, the "Operation Push National Citizenship Award, the Effective Leadership Golden Age Award and the Hunter College Presidential Medal of Honor.

New York's Housing Authority named a public housing complex in Spanish Harlem

in her honor.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg credits Méndez as one of his early teachers of politics.

"That's a lesson I carry with me every day, and one that's informed our administration's approach to everything we do, including the issues Olga focused on most acutely: educating our children, creating jobs, supporting small businesses and developing affordable housing," Bloomberg said in a statement issued upon learning of her death.

He added: "Diagnosed with cancer in the early 1990s, Olga didn't recoil from public life or attempt to hide her condition. Instead, she shared her story and her struggle with others. But Olga's legacy will live on with all New Yorkers who benefited from this incomparable woman, who courageously broke barriers and overcame obstacles in her way."

News bytes from East to West

Compiled by Isabel León

Calif. Latino Jobless at 15.7%

LOS ANGELES—The Hispanic unemployment rate in California, 15.7%, has exceeded for the first time that of black unemployment, 15.3%, and is expected to crawl up to almost 18% a year from now, according to an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute.

Nationally, black unemployment remains higher than that of Hispanic, but unemployment among Hispanics has increased faster than for other groups, according to the study's

author, Algernon Austin, a sociologist specializing in black racial relations.

In 2007, black unemployment in California averaged 9.8%, compared with 7% for Hispanics and 4.6% for whites

'Poster Child' Given Extention

ORLANDO, Fla.—Twenty-three-year old former honor student Walter Lara, who has become a poster child for tens of thousand of undocumented teenagers who cannot continue their studies after high school,

received a one-year deferral on his deportation order from the Department of Homeland Security July 2.

Lara and his supporters now have more time to battle in Washington, D.C. for his legalization, either through a private bill that has been introduced by Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL) or the pending DREAM Act immigration reform proposal.

Lara was brought to Florida illegally from Argentina by his mother when he was 3 years old.

SOTOMAYOR WOULD BE COURT'S THIRD FEMALE

(continued from page 1)

with one exception. Conservative Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina cast an "aye" although stating he still had his doubts about Sotomayor's impartiality. Some of her speeches "bugged the hell out of me," he said.

The five GOP "nays" marked the first time that any Republican had voted against a Supreme Court nominee put forward by either a Democratic or Republican president.

Sotomayor, 55, is President Obama's first nominee to the nation's highest court. She would become its 111th member, first Hispanic and third female justice.



VARGAS

The Judiciary Committee's four-day confirmation hearing foreshadowed its vote, with Democrats praising Sotomayor's 17-year record as a federal judge and her made-in-America story as a Hispanic woman who

rose to success through hard work and opportunity.

Committee member Orrin Hatch of Utah did not vote for Sotomayor. He said he "genuinely wrestled with this decision," but in studying Sotomayor's speeches, articles and decisions, he found a "troubling approach to judging" that her testimony did not resolve.

Major Hispanic organizations were near-unanimous in their reaction. Among those heralding the decision were the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, National Council of La Raza, MALDEF, LULAC and NALEO.

NALEO executive director Arturo Vargas stated, "The U.S. Senate now has the opportunity to approve the appointment of an exceptionally accomplished jurist who has more experience in the federal judiciary than any other person nominated to the Supreme Court in a hundred years. We urge the Senate to swiftly confirm the historic nomination of Judge Sotomayor to ensure she is seated by the first Monday in October, when the Court publicly convenes."

Message Board Turned Off

HAVANA, Cuba—The U.S. State Department confirmed July 27 the Obama Administration has turned off the message board that scrolled across the windows of the U.S. diplomatic mission here since January 2006.

The ticker, implemented by the Bush Administration as a way to combat censorship in Cuba, had been flashing news and criticism of the Cuban government's economic and human rights policies in 1.5-meter-high red letters. It operated in the windows of the U.S. interests section, a part of the Swiss Embassy at the waterfront where U.S. consular activities take place.

Honduras Pact Still Elusive

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras—Coupleader Roberto Micheletti now states that under no circumstances will he allow the country's elected president, Manuel Zelaya, to return to Honduras to complete the final months of his term of office. He had signaled recently that he might be open to compromise.

Mediation talks arranged by Costa Rica President Oscar Arias have stressed Zelaya's limited return as a key provision.

Voting Rights Act & 2012 — A Critical Juncture for Hispanics

(continued from page 1)

a district election system.

In an at-large method, candidates can reside anywhere in the jurisdiction and all of the voters across the jurisdiction can cast a vote in the selection of local governmental representatives.

If the non-white community is a numerical minority, the at-large-method election coupled with racial polarization will defeat

non-white preferred candidates. For example, if whites are 70% of the electorate, persons of color will

have difficulty overcoming the effects of a discriminatory application of majority rule.

In sharp contrast, in a district-based election where that 30% jurisdiction-wide electorate can be converted into a smaller election district that has a 60% non-white electorate, Hispanics, blacks or other persons of color can offset the discriminatory effect of racially polarized voting.

However, discrimination can also occur in a district-based election system when redistricting or the redrawing of election district boundaries divide or over-concentrate non-white communities.

In some instances a redistricting plan may unnecessarily divide such com-

munities into two or more election districts, thus reducing its potential to elect the community's preferred candidate.

Such was the case in Los Angeles County where the five-member Board of Supervisors consistently adopted redistricting plans that fragmented the East Los Angeles area until litigation in the late 1980s was initiated by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the U.S. Department of Justice.

In other instances, a redistricting plan may over-concentrate non-whites into one election district, thereby limiting their chances to elect more than one representative. That is the current situation in Los Angeles County. Presently, one supervisor district has a super-majority of Spanish-surname registered voters, resulting in an over-concentration of Latino voters.

If the supervisorial lines were redrawn in a manner that does not over-concentrate Latinos, two supervisorial districts, each with a majority of Spanish-surname registered voters, can be created.

Redistrictings of congressional, state and local election districts will assume greater importance as the 2012 elections approach. Apart from being the end of a precession

cycle of the equinoxes and possibly the end of the world (hopefully it will be just the end of a cycle and beginning of a new cycle) as predicted by the Mayan calendar, the year 2012 represents an important one for Latino political empowerment.

It will be a presidential election year. During presidential campaigns, both major political parties invest substan-

tial resources into increasing their Latino voter registration and turnout. The year is also the first

election after 2011 redistrictings in every state. If a redistricting fairly reflects Latino political strength, then local Latino communities will become more involved and more candidates will seize the opportunity to compete in the newly-drawn districts.

These two events coincide only once every 20 years, with 2012 being the next political convergence. Thus, the likelihood for

The website will include on-line video presentations and tutorials explaining redistricting concepts & a checklist for attorneys seeking to challenge redistricting plans.

greater Latino political empowerment.

For this reason, Seattle University School of Law has established the National Voting Rights Advocacy Initiative. its purpose is to assist local communities and voting rights advocates in challenges to redistricting plans and at-large methods of election that have a discriminatory effect on voting strength

of Hispanics and other communities of color. The Initiative will serve as a web-based legal resource

center that will store important documents such as digitized versions of administrative determinations issued by the United States Attorney General in enforcing a special provision of the Voting Rights Act, of legislative hearings and other governmental reports surrounding the enactment, reauthorization and amendment of the Voting Rights Act.

In addition, the website will include on-line video presentations and tutorials explaining redistricting concepts. An important component of these on-line tutorials will focus on the development of a litigation manual that will provide a checklist for those



LBJ SIGNS THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

attorneys seeking to challenge redistricting plans and at-large methods of elections that discriminate against communities of color.

Where appropriate, law students will assist voting rights attorneys in discreet legal tasks such as conducting research in support or opposition of motions filed in a given case.

Unfortunately, the Initiative will not have the resources to actually draw proposed redistricting plans. However, there are other projects on the horizon.

The Initiative represents an evolutionary step in the development of resources that

will be available to voting rights advocates. From the 1970s, where the redistricting assistance provided by civil rights organizations often consisted of hand-drawing proposed redistricting plans on clear plastic acetate that was overlaid over census maps, to the 1980s, 1990s and 2000,

where computer technology played an increasing critical redistricting role. We are now at a new stage: web access to knowledge-based resources that will assist local communities in the upcoming redistrictings. This Initiative is unique. No other law school in the country has established such a web-based resource center.

Only through aggressive advocacy can our community continue on the trajectory to secure political empowerment.

The Initiative will be one of several available resources.

The objective is to provide local communities with

the tools to challenge any discriminatory election systems.

Only through aggressive advocacy can our community continue on the trajectory to secure Latino political empowerment and "...banish the blight of racial discrimination in voting once and for all"

(Leading national Hispanic voting rights authority and litigator Joaquín G. Avila has been selected as executive director of the newly created National Voting Rights Advocacy Initiative & Distinguished Practitioner in Residence at Seattle University School of Law.)

Why Did Orrin Hatch Say 'No' to Sonia?

Guest Columnist

John Flórez



Knowing Senator Orrin Hatch as I do, I know he meant it when he said he struggled over voting against the appointment of Judge Sonia Sotomayor for the U.S. Supreme Court.

When I first met the then-young Senator from Utah 30 years ago, I argued with him over affirmative action; so much so that he asked me to join his staff on the Labor and Human Resources Committee that he chaired. It was a time when there was a growing backlash and national polarization over affirmative action.

Since then, we have become close friends. Periodically he still asks for my advice on policy matters. Sometimes he gets it even when he doesn't ask. Ours is that kind of a relationship.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HEARINGS WERE A FIRST

Shortly after I joined his staff in 1981, Senator Hatch proceeded to conduct an unprecedented seven days of hearings on affirmative action, spread from July to September. For the first time, the hearings were balanced with employers and advocates of civil rights, all making their recommendations on the question of how best to pursue two important national goals:

1. "to eliminate discrimination," and
2. "to increase employment for women and minorities."

That was the initial intent of the Executive Order 11246.

Senator Hatch found that there was resounding support for renewing those two important national goals.

Seeking their involvement allowed him to establish working relationships with civil rights organizations, especially groups such as the League of United Latin American Citizens, American GI Forum, National Council of La Raza and Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

He became one of the strongest U.S. senators in advancing the interests of Latinos on Capitol Hill. He later became the leading senator in advocating for more Latino appointments to presidential

and White House positions. By my recollection, his persuasive powers paved the way for, among others, two Equal Employment Opportunity Commission commissioners, and counsel to the EEOC and Department of Labor. He was key in having established the executive order that created the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

In addition, he created the Republican Senate Advisory Committee that influenced GOP colleagues on critical issues affecting Latinos. In 2005, he introduced the Dream Act, a bill that would allow bright, young high school graduates who had been brought to the United States by undocumented parents to obtain legal status and pursue a higher education.

STOOD UP FOR STEM CELL RESEARCH

Senator Hatch has a reputation for standing up for those in need. He's been an advocate for women's rights and legislation that supported programs regarding HIV initiatives.

Until now, he has voted to confirm all Supreme Court nominees, including those who may have differed with him on public policy positions such as anti-abortion. He was quick to stand up for stem cell research when others hesitated.

Knowing Senator Hatch's extensive history of supporting efforts and appointments to key national positions regarding Latinos, his struggle in deciding not to support Judge Sotomayor to the Supreme Court had to be a tough call. I've seen him stand alone, against his party.

I do not claim to know how and why he came to his decision on Sonia Sotomayor. I do know it was not based on race or gender or to gain political capital. The easy thing would have been to support her appointment.

(In his diverse career in public service, John Flórez worked for the National Urban Coalition, as staff to U.S. Senate Labor Committee, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the U. S. Department of Labor. He was the first director of the President's Commission on Hispanic Education and founder of Latino betterment organizations in Utah. Currently he writes a regular column for The Deseret News in Salt Lake City and contributes commentaries to Hispanic Link News Service on national issues that uniquely affect the country's 50 million Hispanics.)

**Sin pelos
en la lengua**

Kay Bárbaro

By tradition and training, leaders of nationally influential Hispanic organizations speak with diplomatic caution in public about their fellow Latino/a executives and political officials, no matter how badly some of the latter perform or behave. Throughout Weekly Report's 28 years of publishing, we have followed the public commentaries of *Nuyorican* Angelo Falcón, president of the New York-based National Institute for Latino Policy. He is the exception that proves the rule. Here's his latest needle to members, headed, "Our Ethically Challenged Political Latino Leaders in the Northeast":

When I read about the mass arrests of elected officials, rabbis and others in the recent scandals in the New Jersey-Brooklyn area, I quickly looked at the list of the 40 or so who were arrested and, to my relief, found only five Latinos!

In fact, I was supposed to be at a barbeque with one of them last Friday in Jersey City, but it was canceled when he was arrested the day before. ¡Qué cosa!

But, despite this relief, I continue to be deeply troubled by the ethically challenged Latino political leadership we have in the Northeast. In January, we got news that the mayor of Hartford,

Connecticut, a Puerto Rican, was arrested (yes, arrested!) for allegedly getting a city contractor to illegally remodel his home.

Antonia Novello, the former U.S. surgeon general, another Puerto Rican, pled guilty to charges that as New York State Health Commissioner she misused and mistreated her staff.

More recently, Miguel Martínez, a NYC councilmember, a Dominican, had to resign because of an investigation into his misappropriation of city funds. Earlier this year NYS Senator Efraín González, a Puerto Rican, was found guilty of similar charges.

Then in that extension of the Latino Northeast, Puerto Rico, the arrests of political figures appear to be almost continuous. And I'm not even going to get into the situation in the NYS Senate with Pedro Espada and Hiram Monserrate!

While some of these people have only been charged and have not been found guilty, there is a pattern. It seems that before we do anything, we need as a community to at least acknowledge this apparently growing problem ... and maybe even what to do about it.

At this point, the only saving grace is the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor. We need all the wise Latinas and Latinos we can get these days!

(Angelo Falcón is president and founder of the National Institute for Latino Policy, an independent nonprofit and nonpartisan policy center established in 1982 to address Latino issues.)

Health Care Reform — 30.4% of Hispanics Lack Insurance Coverage

By Erick Galindo

With the nation watching, Washington, D.C., has become consumed with its health — for better or worse, and especially bad for those who can't afford it.

Meanwhile, 45 million people remain uninsured, with the majority being people of color.

According to the Centers for Disease Control 30.4% of Hispanics and 17.0% of blacks are uninsured.

President Obama's primetime speech on July 22 attempted to refocus the issue and press Congress to get comprehensive health care reform passed posthaste. It served to highlight the partisan battle on Capitol Hill.

"I understand how easy it is for this town to become consumed in the game of politics," Obama told the U.S. public on national television. "I've heard that one...Republican senator said defeating health reform is about 'breaking' me."

Obama touted the drafting of the first comprehensive reform bill in 15 years and the endorsement of the American Medical Association as victorious battles, but eased off his insistence of an August deadline for lawmakers to have complete bills in each chamber.

The president and his opponents have been scrambling to gain grassroots favor in hopes that public opinion will shift the debate in their favor.

The past several weeks have seen TV ads, rallies and press conferences promote their opposing views on an administration plan that it maintains would insure 97% of the U.S. population.

In the nation's capital, grassroots groups have stepped up the pressures. On July 21, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce launched its campaign opposed to what it calls "irresponsible" reform.

On the same date, the Center for American Progress held a teleconference highlighting the positive effects of a comprehensive health care initiative on communities of color.

Jennifer Ng'andu of the National Council of *La Raza* was one of the panelists during the teleconference.

Ng'andu told Hispanic Link News Service that the huge disparities among communities of color are directly addressed by the House health committee's version of the proposed bill.

Another report, released by Health Care for America Now, a grassroots organization dedicated to comprehensive cover-

age for all, cited the damage done to communities of color if everyone is not covered.

HCAN's report cited the lack of an affordable health care option as the main reason for the disparity. The group also called the battle in Washington counterproductive to true reform, stating, "On Capitol Hill, the American public is witnessing a historic clash of Washington special interest groups fighting to protect their revenue streams."

Across the aisle on the issue, U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Bruce Josten released a statement saying, "A government-run plan will cause businesses to cut jobs and could seriously harm our economic recovery."

This, adversaries argue, is despite the fact that cheaper health care would offer savings across the board, even for members of the Chamber.

Americans for Limited Government President Bill Wilson released a statement calling for anyone who votes in favor of public option to "forgo their right to participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program and agree to enroll under that public option." Wilson failed to note that the FEHBP is a government-run public option.

Connecting

By Arlinda Arriaga

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's summer congressional interns gathered in the capital's Columbia Heights neighborhood July 26 to spread the word to Hispanic community members there about the importance of being counted in the 2010 Census.

In the Census 2000, 281.4 million U.S. residents were counted; including 35.3 million Hispanics. As 2010 approaches, the U.S. population has already surpassed 300 million

Miguel García, who is completing an internship in the office of

Rep. Gene Green (D-Texas), said he feels the community has many misconceptions about the Census.

"Most people don't realize how they impact the Census and how they directly impact the money that is allotted to their communities. I think Latinos are hesitant to fill out a form because they don't want to disclose their immigration status so it's very important that we let them know and that it can't be used against them and how important it is that they count," García told Weekly Report.

For more information about the 2010 Census visit www.2010census.gov.

Calendar

In the Link 25 Years Ago

A new study shows that only 43% of Latinas make it through high school and just 6% graduate from college.

CONVENTION AND BUSINESS EXPO

McAllen, Texas July 30-Aug. 3
Texas Association of Mexican-American Chambers of Commerce stages its 33rd annual convention and business expo.

Information: <http://www.tamacc.org/cal/php>
Phone: (512) 444-5727

NAMME CONVENTION

Tampa, Fla. Aug. 4, 5
The National Association of Minority Media

Executives holds its annual convention.
Information: <http://www.namme.org/programs/conference>
Phone: (703) 854-7178. Toll-free (888) 968-7658

CCBA JOB FAIR

Chicago, Aug. 8
Cook County Bar Association conducts its 26th annual minority law student job fair.
Information: <http://www.ccbaminortyjobfair.com>

This Week

NSHP JOB FAIR

Atlanta Aug. 28
The National Society for Hispanic Professionals holds a job fair.

GI FORUM NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Denver Aug. 28-29

The American GI Forum holds its national conference.

Information: <http://www.americangiforum>
Phone: (303) 458-1700

THIS WEEK IN LATINO HISTORY...

Mexican actress and dancer **Dolores Del Río** was born **Aug. 3, 1905**.

Spanish-American actor **Martin Sheen** was born **Ramón Estévez** on **Aug. 4, 1940**.

U.S. grants Puerto Rico power to elect its own governor on **Aug. 4, 1948**.

Mexican-American political leader **Miguel Antonio Otero Jr.** passed away **Aug. 7, 1944**.

Mexico's revolutionary leader **Emiliano Zapata** was born **Aug. 8, 1880**.

The late **César Chávez** was awarded the Medal of Freedom on **Aug. 8, 1994**.

Graduation Initiative Proposal Seen as Boon for Hispanics

By Arlinda Arriaga

Community colleges, the fastest growing segment of U.S. higher education institutions, may see a boost in Hispanic enrollment as early as this fall because of President Obama's American Graduation Initiative plan.

The Administration's \$12 billion proposal calls for funding spread over 10 years. It was announced July 14 during the president's visit to Macomb Community College in Warren, Mich.

There are 1,177 community colleges in the United States. Their total enrollment is 6.7 million, or 46% of all college students, with non-whites entering at increasingly higher rates, according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

As of spring 2009, more than half of all African-American and two-thirds of Latino undergraduates attend these institutions.

Of the Latinos, 39% are the first in their families to go to college.

The figure for Asian Americans is 45%; for Native Americans 52%.

At present, whites comprise 63% of community college enrollment, Hispanics 16%, blacks 13%, Asians 7% and Native Americans 1%.

The AACC also estimates that because of the economic downturn, enrollment nationally increased by about 10% in 2009 over 2008.

Of the Obama plan, \$9 billion would go toward challenge grants to motivate colleges to be innovative in recruitment and address dropout rates, and \$500 million for online education, with the remaining \$2.5 billion serving as seed money to generate an additional \$10 billion in renovation and construction on community colleges.

Some of the funds could be available by

the 2010 budget year that begins Oct. 1, according to the White House.

Dr. Cecilia Cervantes, president of the National Community College Hispanic Council, an AACC affiliate, focuses on preparation and support of Hispanic leaders in education. She told Weekly Report she hopes this funding brings more Hispanic staff, faculty and administrators onto campuses.

"We've been trying for many years to open the door wide enough for students to come in. These funds will help our efforts to create that much needed opportunity for students," Cervantes, who heads Hennepin Technical College in Hennepin, Minnesota, told Weekly Report.

For more on the American Graduation Initiative Plan visit www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Investing-in-Education-The-American-Graduation-Initiative/.

RED CARD OFFERS NEW DEAL FOR IMMIGRATION, SAYS PROMOTER

By Brittney Cooley

To "bring order to U.S. borders" by separating citizenship and workers, the Red Card Solution was presented to several congressional staff members this summer at the Library of Congress by Helen Kriebel, president of the Vernon K. Kriebel Foundation.

Kriebel explained that the "solution" is not immigration reformation, but a step toward it. The presentation included an advance screening of a mini-documentary explaining how the process would work.

The documentary described how undocumented agricultural workers often come to the United States to work for a season and then "because they're afraid to go home, they stay through the off season and become permanent illegal residents."

Behind the solution is the Kriebel Plan, which she deemed "a reform plan that wins

elections and is good for America." The plan outlines how immigrants can receive and use their red cards:

After undergoing thorough background checks, applicants would be allowed to secure jobs in the United States. Then they would be issued a "smart card" containing all of their personal information. The card could be swiped like a credit card to allow them to cross the U.S. border legally.

Their jobs would be seasonal. The smart card would allow them access to the United States for the amount of time contracted for the seasonal labor. They would be given the same health care and workman's compensation as other U.S. workers.

"The Kriebel Plan will help secure the border by providing an easy method that allows legal workers to go through a background check and enter the country legally," Kriebel

emphasized, stressing how the workers would not be eligible U.S. citizenship. Employers would be required to pay them at least the minimum wage, just as they do for other workers.

When asked how the job offers would be posted for immigrants to find, Kriebel said they would be computer-based, with hard copies of job postings available. She also responded that they would find out about work opportunities through word of mouth, just as they do today.

The cards, like green cards, would need to be renewed as they expire in order for immigrants to remain in this country.

The Red Card Solution is being presented to Congress as a way to help combat our current immigration crisis by "welcoming workers securely and legally," Kriebel said.

Menéndez Introduces 'Unlawful Detention Act'

By Patricia Guadalupe

Sen. Robert Menéndez (D-NJ) July 30 introduced the "Protect Citizens from Unlawful Detention Act" and "Prevent Detainee Deaths and Abuse Act," which require immigration authorities to inform anyone arrested of their rights, whether they are citizens or not, and to ensure they are treated humanely while detained.

"Having met with dozens of detained immigrants across the United States, it is clear that the one consistency is the utter disregard for their humanity," said Sarnata Reynolds, of Amnesty International USA, which supports the legislation.

Earlier this year, Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.) introduced similar legislation in the lower House.

Party Leaders Swap Charges over Sotomayor Motives

By Patricia Guadalupe

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid July 29 asked his Republican colleagues to join Democrats in voting next week to confirm New York judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court, saying not doing so could bring the same voter backlash against the GOP that followed the party on other issues, such as immigration.

"I just think that their voting against this good woman is going to treat them about the same way that they got treated as a result of their votes on immigration," said Reid in a statement.

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), countered that Democrats are "trying to exploit (the nomination) to give cover to groups and individuals to nurture racial grievances for political advantage."

Cornyn has announced he is voting against her nomination.

"I don't think it influences people's votes, but what it does encourage is a very poisonous — indeed a very toxic — tone of destructive politics," Cornyn told The Associated Press.

"They ought to be ashamed of themselves. To say my vote is based on anything other than a principled opposition to some of her positions is deeply offensive."

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the Judiciary Committee chairman, has said he was "disappointed" that more Republicans hadn't voted in support of her nomination. Only one Republican, South Carolinian Lindsey Graham, voted with the Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee to move on to the Senate floor.

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**New Reads**

Explore the latest books
on Latino subjects

by Brittney Cooley

Rudolfo Anaya — The Essays: *Rudolfo Anaya* is best known for his first work, *Bless Me, Ultima*, a fictional story about a young boy in New Mexico trying to figure out the world around him. With these 53 essays, Anaya takes on nonfiction. In this novel, he displays his talent for telling stories and portraying his Mexican-American roots.

The Essays is divided into parts.

The novel is composed of six parts, each of them made up of various essays. Among them are *I'm the King: The Macho Image*, *On the Education of Hispanic Children*, *Letter to Chicano Youth*, *The Journal of a Chicano in China*, *A New Mexico Christmas*, *A Celebration of Grandfathers* and *An American Chicano in King Arthur's Court*.

In his exposition Anaya discusses a diversity of views and beliefs in society. Racism, sexism, politics, religion and history are some of the target points throughout the book. In the essay *Aztlán: A Home Without Boundaries*, he steps back into the 1960s when the Chicano community named Aztlán its homeland.

"This communal event and the new consciousness and consequent creative activity generated within the Chicano community during this period marked an important historical time for our people," he writes.

Through *The Essays*, Anaya also reveals some of the ups and downs in his personal life. In *An American Chicano in King Arthur's Court*, Anaya takes the reader through eastern New Mexico, where he grew up, to the

barrios of Albuquerque. From discussing the diving accident that nearly took his life at the age of 16 to who he has become today, as a well known author and teacher, he gives the reader a detailed understanding of himself.

"I remember when I started writing as a young man, fresh out of the university, my mind teeming with the great works I had read as a student," he says.

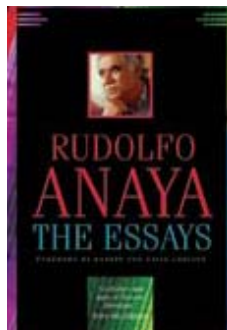
Although the author shares his story, along with his views, the book is not given to readers strictly as an informational piece. Rather, it allows them to see the world through the eyes of a Chicano.

The stories are filled with Chicano history and culture, showing the reader through true stories not just who Anaya is but where he came from.

Reading *The Essays* is a way for readers to connect with the Chicano community and understand it.

Through Anaya's poetic voice, the reader gains an understanding of Chicano history. "It is understood that whenever cultural groups as different as the Anglo-American, Chicano, Native American and others exist side by side, cultural sharing takes place; but also each group will develop a set of biases or stereotypes about the other groups," he writes. "This is unfortunate, but it is a historical fact".

(University of Oklahoma Press; hardcover; \$24.95; 313 pp.)



If you have a recently released book or CD you would like included in New Reads or New Sounds, send a copy to Editor, Hispanic Link, 1420 N St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. (202) 234-0280. E-mail: editor@hispaniclink.org

Arts & Entertainment

By Antonio Mejías-Rentas



READY FOR RETURN: George López is upbeat about his upcoming entry into the crowded late-night television market.

At this month's Television Critics Association gathering in Pasadena, Calif., the star of the late, lamented, self-titled **ABC** sitcom talked about *López Tonight*, which premieres on **TBS** in November.

"The simple plan of the show is to create an energy that isn't anywhere on TV," he said, joking "but apparently in some parts of the country I'll be up against *telenovelas* — can't win that battle."

As to competing for top guests, he added, "I don't think *The Tonight Show* is going after *Menudo*." Then he presented a pilot episode that included a cameo appearance by President Barack Obama.

López campaigned for Obama and called the President a "close friend." He told reporters he would be "personally offended" if he did

not appear on *López Tonight* the next time he's in Los Angeles.

But the comedian will be on TV before his new show premieres: he will co-host, with actress Eva Longoria-Parker, the 2009 Alma Awards in September.

The Desperate Wives costar will again executive-produce the ceremony produced by the National Council of *La Raza*. It will air for the first time during Hispanic Heritage Month. The ceremony will be taped in Los Angeles Sept. 17 and be shown the next day on **ABC**.

In other television news:

■ *Latin Music Legends*, a musical variety show hosted by Trini López, will have its national premiere in the singer's hometown of Palm Springs before being rolled out to **PBS** stations nationally. The special, taped at the Orpheum Theatre in Los Angeles, will debut Aug. 14 on **KCVR** and includes performances by Julio Iglesias, *El Chicano*, *Tierra* and a tribute to another legendary Palm Springs resident, the late Lalo Guerrero.

■ *Telemundo* will air the original version of a drama airing successfully on Spain's state-run *Televisión Española* (TVE). It will be the Latin American distributor for *Amar en tiempos revueltos*, set in Spain's post-war period at the beginning of the last century.

Media Report

By Aaron Sheperd



NAHJDEBT: The **National Association of Hispanic Journalists** has cancelled its *Noche de Triunfos* fundraising awards banquet planned for Hispanic Heritage Month, and its president, Ricardo Pimentel, is asking its 1,400 members to raise \$200 each to help meet a \$300,000 budget shortfall.

Executive director Iván Román told Richard Prince's *Journal-isms*, "It's a matter of time. Do we spend a lot of time in the next few

months putting together an event that could raise a more modest amount or focus all of our time doing a variety of fundraising that could probably render a better result? We're betting on the latter."

PBS PROGRAMS: Latino programs on **PBS** have received nominations for 2009 news and documentary Emmy awards plus *Imagen* nominations for Best Documentary/Television and Best Children's Programming.

The *Imagen* awards were established in 1985 from a suggestion by veteran television producer Norman Lear to recognize the positive portrayals of Latinos.

PBS Emmy nominees include the Kieran Fitzgerald-directed P.O.V. documentaries "The Ballad of Esequiel Hernández" and "The Judge and the General," co-produced

and directed by Elizabeth Farnsworth and Patricio Lanfranco.

Imagen nominations included P.O.V. *The Last Conquistador*, directed by John Valadez, *Latinos '08*, from filmmaker Philip Rodriguez, and *American Experience: A Class Apart* by Carlos Sandoval and Peter Miller.

The 30th annual news and documentary Emmy Awards will be presented Sept. 21 at Lincoln Center in New York City. The *Imagen* awards will be at a black-tie gala Aug. 21 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills.

MOST INFLUENTIAL: *ImpreMedia* won the 2008 *Cambio 16* award for being "the best and most influential Hispanic media company in the U.S."

The annual award recognizes achievements in politics, the arts, business and media, both in Spain and internationally.

Hispanic Link weekly report

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