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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 2, 1974

MEETING WITH HISPANIC-AMERICAN MEMBERS OF CONGRESS  
AND MAJOR ADMINISTRATION APPOINTEES

Wednesday, September 4, 1974

11:00 a.m. (45 minutes)

The Cabinet Room

From: Anne Armstrong

I. PURPOSE

To elicit suggestions for addressing the problems and needs of this nation's Hispanic-Americans and to demonstrate your personal interest and the commitment of your Administration in addressing these concerns.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

- A. Background: This event is a continuation of your desire and willingness to meet with significant special groups. On August 14, a letter from the six Democrat Hispanic members of the Congress requested an audience with you to "discuss the status of the Spanish-speaking." While statistics on the population size of Spanish-origin people differ, the Census Bureau currently estimates the national population at 10.8 million persons. Due to current birth rate and immigration projections, the number and proportion of Americans of Hispanic descent will increase dramatically in this decade with actual population majorities expected for Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas by 1980. The Hispanic-American ranks at the bottom of almost every demographic enumerator when compared with other racial and ethnic groups.

Additionally, you will be signing a proclamation making the period of September 10-17 "National Hispanic Heritage Week" - an action annually fulfilled by the President in accordance with a joint resolution of Congress as passed on September 17, 1968.



B. Participants:  
(Members of Congress)

Honorable Joseph Montoya  
U.S. Senate, New Mexico  
Honorable Herman Badillo  
Member of Congress, New York  
Honorable Jaime Benitez  
President Commission, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico  
Honorable Eligio de la Garza  
Member of Congress, Texas  
Honorable Henry B. Gonzalez  
Member of Congress, Texas  
Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr.  
Member of Congress, New Mexico  
Honorable Edward Roybal  
Member of Congress, California

(Administration Officials)

Mr. Alex Armendaris  
Director, Office of Minority Business Enterprise  
Department of Commerce  
Mr. Jorge Cordova  
General Counsel, ACTION  
Mr. Bert Gallegos  
Acting Director, Office of Economic Opportunity  
Mr. Reynaldo Maduro  
Executive Director, Cabinet Committee on Opportunities  
for Spanish Speaking People  
Ms. Carmen Maymi  
Director, Women's Bureau, Department of Labor  
Mr. Louis Nunez  
Deputy Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Mr. Raymond Telles  
Commissioner, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
Mr. Albert Trevino  
General Manager and Board Member, New Communities  
Development Corporation, HUD  
Mr. Carlos Villarreal  
Commissioner, U.S. Postal Rate Commission

(White House Staff)

Honorable Anne Armstrong  
Counsellor to the President  
Mr. Fernando DeBaca  
Special Assistant to the President  
Mr. Fredric Slight  
Staff Assistant to the President

- C. Press Plan: Press photo opportunity in the Cabinet Room. Meeting to be announced. Press briefing following event by no more than three meeting participants.

III. TALKING POINTS

1. I have been meeting with representatives of special groups during the last few weeks and I am delighted to meet this morning with my former colleagues of the Congress in order to talk openly and with no specific format about this nation's Spanish-speaking peoples. In line with my desire for closer cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of government, I have invited top Hispanic officials in the Administration to join in the meeting.
2. Last April, I had the opportunity to visit with a cross-section of organization and community representatives and the result, I feel, was particularly rewarding to me in becoming better informed as to the diverse needs as well as to the diversity of the Hispanic-American peoples themselves.
3. As I stated in my recent address to the Congress, I intend to be President of all the people and with your guidance and assistance I am hopeful that government will continue to move forward in assuring equal rights and opportunities for all Americans.
4. I was delighted to learn of the actions taken this Spring by Civil Service Commission Chairman Bob Hampton in expanding and upgrading the Sixteen Point Program for Spanish-speaking Americans and I look forward to improved progress in Federal employment of Hispanic-Americans in this current year, despite the projected reductions in the size of the Federal workforce.
5. Because of the bureaucracy's resilience and tendency to resist change, I am having my staff review this matter for additional appropriate direction to the departments and agencies. I think this is one area where it is absolutely essential that the Federal government set a positive example for the private sector and for state and local governments.
6. A key to the upward movement of any group in our society has been economic progress. I was pleased to learn that the business development programs at OMBE and SBA have paid-off so handsomely for those Hispanic businessmen who have been able to take advantage of these services. The Hispanic businessman has proven to be a successful competitor and a solid contributor to the economy. And in turn, his contribution to the community has proven significant as well.

Hampton

DMB  
SBA

De Baca

7. I am pleased that beginning this week Fernando De Baca assumes his responsibilities as my Special Assistant. He will be working closely with you concerning Hispanic-American affairs.
  
8. As an important segment of our national character, it is essential that Hispanic-Americans take advantage of the Bicentennial era to gain a clearer understanding of the principles and beliefs of our country. Accordingly, it is important that government becomes better aware of the needs and concerns of the Spanish-speaking and move rapidly and decisively in alleviating the many problems which confront these Americans.

PROPOSED SEATING CHART

THE PRESIDENT

Senator Joseph Montoya

Edward Roybal, M.C.

Eligio de la Garza, M.C.

Jaime Benitez, M.C.

Manuel Lujan, Jr., M.C.

Herman Badillo, M.C.

Carmen Maymi

Fernando De Baca

Luis Nunez

Jorge Cordova

Alex Armendaris

Reynaldo Maduro

Albert Trevino

Carlos Villarreal

Raymond Telles

Bert Gallegos

Anne Armstrong



(Coyne)RH

September 3, 1974

REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT FORD -- HISPANIC-AMERICAN  
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND MAJOR ADMINISTRATION  
APPOINTEES MEETING

I'd like to thank my friends and colleagues from the House and Senate for joining us here today.

As you all know, I've been trying for the past few weeks to meet with groups that are particularly concerned with the needs and desires of their constituents. The reason behind these meetings is a very simple one. You just can't sit here in Washington and talk about solving people's problems without knowing what those problems are. And you can't know what those problems are without talking to the people who understand them best.

It is a special pleasure for me to meet with this distinguished group of public servants who understand and care deeply about the condition, the desires and the aspirations of our Hispanic-American citizens.

I know that everyone here today appreciates the contributions to America made by Spanish-speaking Americans.

When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, there was already a flourishing Hispanic civilization in what is now Florida, New Mexico and Puerto Rico. And today, the patriotism, the dedication to family life, and the deeply held religious beliefs and strong moral codes of Hispanic Americans serve as an inspiration to all Americans of every faith and every ethnic background.

I think that it's appropriate at this point to welcome Fernando DeBaca on board as a member of the White House team. As a Special Assistant to the President, Fernando will be working closely with you on a full-time basis in the area of Hispanic-American affairs.

Now, let's get down to business. I didn't invite you here to listen to me. I asked you here so that you could tell me what's on your minds and on the minds of your constituents. My job today is to listen, and after I've listened, to do everything in my power to help make sure Spanish-speaking Americans achieve that full partnership in our society which is theirs by right.

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