The original documents are located in Box 37, “7/27/76 - Recorded Message for the Convention of the American GI Forum to be Held in Denver” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN......

TAPING: DENVER CONVENTION OF AMERICAN G.I. FORUM, JULY 27, 1976
I AM HONORED TO GREET THE AMERICAN G.I. FORUM

ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR 28th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION.

LET ME COMMEND YOUR NATIONAL CHAIRMAN,

MR. TONY MORALES, FOR HELPING SO CONSTRUCTIVELY TO

RESOLVE THE SCHEDULING PROBLEM THAT EMERGED. ALTHOUGH

I AM NOT WITH YOU IN PERSON, I AM WITH YOU IN SPIRIT

AND IN HARMONY WITH YOUR IMPORTANT GOAL OF MORE

COMPLETE INVOLVEMENT OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN THE

MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN LIFE.
YOU ARE STRUGGLING IN A VERY REAL SENSE TO ACHIEVE AMERICA'S HIGHEST POTENTIAL BY DEVELOPING THE LEADERSHIP AMONG THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY NECESSARY TO HELP HISPANICS HELP THEMSELVES. YOUR WORK GIVES REAL MEANING TO OUR BICENTENNIAL. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REALIZE THE BEST QUALITIES OF AMERICA AND NOT JUST TALK ABOUT OUR GOOD FORTUNE. OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE MUST PROVIDE MORE THAN AN UNFULFILLED PROMISE. ALL AMERICANS, INCLUDING HISPANICS, MUST HAVE FULL ACCESS TO ALL THE RICH OPPORTUNITIES AMERICA HAS TO OFFER.
I commend your achievements in voter registration and voter education. Your effective efforts for the fulfillment of Hispanic economic development must continue. An important element of this undertaking is the expansion of bilingual educational opportunities for children and adults.

I salute especially the Hispanic participation in the American armed forces in all of our major wars.
HISPANIC COURAGE HAS BEEN AMPLY DEMONSTRATED BY THE

NUMBER WHO HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR.

I AM EAGER TO ASSIST HISPANIC -- AND ALL AMERICAN

VETERANS -- THROUGH THE G.I. BILL OF RIGHTS AND OTHER

FEDERAL PROGRAMS. BUT AMERICA MUST DO EVEN MORE.

WE MUST LIVE IN KEEPING WITH THE IDEALS FOR WHICH SO MANY

OF OUR BRAVE G.I.'S DIED.
I am proud to be served by over 95 Hispanic appointees in high positions in our government.

I refer to such distinguished officials as our ambassadors to Mexico and a number of Latin American countries.

Our assistant secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, my own special assistant at the White House, Mr. Thomas Aranda, Jr., and others.
MANY HUNDREDS OF OTHER HISPANICS ARE SERVING IN
DISTINGUISHED CAPACITIES. BUT WE MUST DO MUCH MORE
TO ASSURE FULL EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT.
OVER 1,000 SPANISH-SPEAKING COORDINATORS ARE TODAY WORKING
IN MY ADMINISTRATION TO ACHIEVE THIS END; 130 OF THEM IN THE
MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES OF THE WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA.

IN ALL THESE ENDEAVORS, I AM AWARE THAT THE
GOVERNMENT, ALONE, CANNOT AUTOMATICALLY ACHIEVE SOLUTIONS.
WE REQUIRE, IN THE FINEST AMERICAN TRADITION, THE
STIMULATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT PROVIDED BY SUCH CITIZENS
GROUPS AS THE AMERICAN G.I. FORUM. YOUR 500 CHAPTERS
MUST EACH BECOME A CENTER OF ACTION TO TRANSLATE THE
SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL VALUES THAT HISPANICS BROUGHT
TO AMERICA EVEN BEFORE 1776. JUST AS YOUR FOREBEARS,
ESTABLISHED MISSIONS FROM COAST-TO-COAST, YOUR
CHAPTERS MUST KEEP ALIVE YOUR MISSION TODAY -- THE
STRUGGLE FOR FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL AMERICANS IN OUR
NATIONAL DESTINY. LET US WORK TOGETHER FOR FINAL
VICTORY.

END OF TEXT