

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON SIGNING A PROCLAMATION
ON
NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE WEEK, 1974

THE CABINET ROOM

Let me sign this Declaration or Proclamation and then I will make sure that you all get a pen, Joe.

In 1968 the Congress passed a resolution which provided for the recognition of Hispanic Americans, that we should have a week once a year where their contribution to the American society would be fully appreciated and totally recognized.

This week begins on September 10th and runs through the 17th and this Proclamation is predicated on that resolution which was approved six years ago.

It is a pleasure for me to be in the company of the Members of Congress who are here and I understand that Congressman Manuel Lujan is flying in from New Mexico but will be a few minutes late, but will be joining us shortly.

In the group here are some leaders of the Spanish-speaking Americans who will be here to give me the benefit of their observations and comments and recommendations as to how we can very appropriately and properly recognize the many, many contributions that have been made from the very beginning of our Nation's history to the great accomplishments of America.

I think history shows that before Plymouth Rock there were Spanish-speaking individuals who had made settlements in not only Florida, but New Mexico and Puerto Rico and possibly California, I am not sure.

I think it illustrates the fact that Spanish-speaking Americans were in the very vanguard of the settlement of this new world and they have contributed significantly with their deep religious conviction. They have contributed unbelievably to a better America by their dedication to an outstanding family life.

We believe in this Administration, as others have, that this important growing part of our American population should be recognized for what they can do for all of us and for what they have done for America over the 200 years, nearly, of our Nation's history.

So it is a pleasure for me to sign this Proclamation in the presence of not only Members of Congress who are representative of the Hispanic Americans, but the others who are here from private life.

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So, without any fanfare, I will undertake this. I have learned how, Ed, to do this with a few letters instead of doing it with one pen.

END