

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
UPON SIGNING THE PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING  
THE NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE WEEK

THE EAST ROOM

12:10 P.M. EDT

First, let me welcome all of you to the East Room in the White House as I sign this proclamation designating September 12 through September 19 as National Hispanic Heritage Week. It is wonderful to have you all here.

Unfortunately, we could not have it outside because of the weather, but both Betty and myself are delighted to have you with us here in the East Room of the White House.

In this Bicentennial year, it is good for us -- I think all of us -- to consider how much all the people who came to the new world in a search for an opportunity to determine their own futures have meant to America. These representatives of many races and many cultures brought with them their own unique heritage and contributed immeasurably to the American spirit and to the American character.

America's Hispanic heritage runs particularly deep. Men and women of Hispanic origin fought in our Revolutionary War. Hispanic Americans have enriched our culture, our arts and our scholarship. They have helped build America where freedom, and equality as well, are the practice as well as the ideal.

In recent months, more than 11 million Americans of Hispanic origin have made great and substantial contributions and accomplishments to a better America. More than 50 Hispanics have been appointed to ranking positions in the Federal Government and, although the Members of Congress with Hispanic origin are not here because of other responsibilities up on Capitol Hill, I am pleased to note, as we all do, that in both the House and the Senate, on both sides of the aisle, those with Hispanic heritage are well represented.

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Federal funds for bilingual education have been increased. A system of Spanish-speaking coordinators has been established to help Hispanic Americans get worthwhile jobs. The Voting Rights Act has been extended to protect Spanish-speaking individuals throughout our country and to protect their rights of the franchise that is so important to all of us.

Hispanic know-how, energy, pride and dedication have strengthened America for over two centuries. The Hispanic contribution to America has been consistent and a vital influence on a better society in our country.

I know that contribution will continue to flourish in the years ahead and continue to add to all that is good in America.

Today, therefore, I am very proud to have the opportunity to sign this proclamation for National Hispanic Heritage Week and I congratulate all of you for the contributions you have made and for the attendance here on this occasion.

END (AT 12:14 P.M. EDT)