

BINDER

REMARKS OF GOVERNOR THOMAS H. KEAN

HISPANIC COMMUNITY LEADERS DINNER

PRINCETON HYATT

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1984

THANK YOU, JOE.

I'M PLEASED AND HONORED THAT SO MANY OF YOU ARE HERE TONIGHT. THIS IS A TRUE GATHERING OF THE HISPANIC LEADERS IN NEW JERSEY, AND I'M DELIGHTED TO HAVE THIS CHANCE TO ADDRESS YOU.

YOU ARE THE LEADERS OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY. THIS MEANS THAT YOU ARE THE LEADERS OF ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE COMMUNITIES IN A VERY DIVERSE SOCIETY. FOR THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY EMBRACES MANY COMMUNITIES, LINKED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE AND A COMMON HERITAGE.

THE SPANISH HERITAGE IS A PROUD ONE. AFTER ALL, IT WAS A SPANISH WOMAN OF THIS CENTURY --- LA PASIONARIA --- WHO GAVE THE WORLD THIS FAMOUS SAYING: "IT IS BETTER TO DIE ON YOUR FEET THAN TO LIVE ON YOUR KNEES." AND FOR CENTURIES STRETCHING BACK, THE SAME SPANISH HERITAGE WHICH PRODUCED THOSE PROUD WORDS HAS INFLUENCED THIS COUNTRY AND THE ENTIRE WORLD.

HISPANIC AMERICANS COME FROM MANY PLACES: LATIN AMERICA, PUERTO RICO, MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, CUBA, THE PHILIPPINES AND MANY OTHER COUNTRIES. AS LEADERS OF THIS COMMUNITY, YOU SHARE CONCERNS WITH THE LEADERS OF MANY AMERICAN COMMUNITIES TODAY. YOU WORRY ABOUT WHETHER THEIR VENTURES WILL SUCCEED, IN THE WORLD OF BUSINESS OR ANY OTHER FIELD. YOU WORRY ABOUT THE SAFETY AND HAPPINESS OF THE COMMUNITIES --- THEIR STRENGTH AND HEALTH.

YOU ARE CONCERNED FOR THE CHILDREN --- FOR THEY ARE THE FUTURE OF YOUR COMMUNITY, AS THEY ARE OF ANY COMMUNITY, STATE OR NATION. ARE THEY GROWING UP IN SAFE ENVIRONMENTS --- IN SAFE, HAPPY HOMES? ARE THEY GETTING THE EDUCATION WHICH WILL HELP THEM GET GOOD JOBS --- LEAD REWARDING LIVES AS AMERICAN CITIZENS --- GO AS FAR AS THEIR TALENTS WILL TAKE THEM? ARE THE BOYS AND GIRLS FINDING EVERY OPPORTUNITY OPEN TO THEM, AND DOING THEIR BEST WITH THEIR ABILITIES --- SO THEY CAN GROW UP TO BE CAPABLE MEN AND WOMEN? THESE ARE QUESTIONS WHICH ALL COMMUNITIES ASK, AND WHICH ALL LEADERS TRY TO ANSWER.

THEY MUST BE UNDERSTOOD TOGETHER, AS THE QUESTIONS WHICH SHAPE THE HISTORY OF YOUR COMMUNITY --- JUST AS THE MANY SECTORS OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY MUST BE UNDERSTOOD TO UNDERSTAND THE WHOLE.

AS JOSE ORTEGA Y GASSET WROTE TWENTY YEARS AGO ABOUT HISTORY: "OUR AGE CANNOT BE COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD IF ALL THE OTHERS ARE NOT UNDERSTOOD. THE SONG OF HISTORY CAN ONLY BE SUNG AS A WHOLE."

THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD AS A WHOLE COMPRISED OF MANY PARTS --- BUT IT IS ALSO PART OF A MUCH LARGER WHOLE: AMERICAN SOCIETY. AS HISPANIC LEADERS --- LEADERS OF A MINORITY --- YOU HAVE SOME UNIQUE CONCERNS. YOU ALSO HAVE A UNIQUE STRENGTH TO TAP, WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITIES.

HISPANIC GROUPS, WHETHER PREDOMINANTLY MEXICAN-AMERICAN, PUERTO RICAN-AMERICAN, CUBAN-AMERICAN, OR ANY OTHER SPANISH-AMERICAN, TEND TO HAVE A POWERFUL SENSE OF COMMUNITY, OF COMMON PURPOSE AND CONCERN FOR EACH OTHER, OF PULLING TOGETHER, OF WORKING TOGETHER, AND THAT IS THE TREMENDOUS STRENGTH OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN NEW JERSEY.

IT WILL GO A LONG WAY TO HELPING YOU ANSWER AND FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS YOU ADDRESS.

I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE FIRST --- MOST FUNDAMENTAL --- SOLUTIONS TO MEETING HISPANIC NEEDS IS TO INCREASE HISPANIC PARTICIPATION --- IN THE ECONOMY, AND IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS THAT ANY MINORITY FACES IS SIMPLY TO BE HEARD. TO HAVE A VOICE.

AND IN THE PAST, THE MAJORITY IN THIS COUNTRY HAS NOT ALWAYS LIVED UP TO ITS IDEALS OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND PARTICIPATION FOR ALL. THAT IS CHANGING. IT SEEMS TO IMPROVE WITH EACH DECADE.

THE ONE DRAWBACK TO A VERY STRONG TRADITION OF FORMING CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITIES IS THAT PEOPLE MAY OVERLOOK THE OPPORTUNITIES OF A SEEMINGLY LESS FRIENDLY, LARGER OUTSIDE COMMUNITY. AND THAT OUTSIDE COMMUNITY OF THE MAJORITY CAN BE UNFRIENDLY SOMETIMES. EVEN WORSE, PERHAPS, IT CAN BE BLIND OR INDIFFERENT. IT CAN OVERLOOK IN ITS TURN ALL THAT HISPANIC MEN AND WOMEN HAVE TO OFFER.

WELL, HISPANIC LEADERS HAVE FOUND THEIR VOICE. THEY ARE PARTICIPATING MORE AND MORE IN THE POLITICS OF THIS COUNTRY, AND THIS HELPS OPEN UP MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HISPANIC MEN AND WOMEN TO TAKE PART IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY. LEADERS IN FIELDS OTHER THAN BUSINESS AND POLITICS HAVE ALSO FOUND THEIR VOICE --- AND THEY ARE BEING HEARD.

IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT FOR YOUR COMMUNITIES THAT YOU BE FULLY REPRESENTED, ACROSS THE BOARD. THIS TAKES TIME --- BUT IT CAN BEGIN WITH GOVERNMENT. I CONCENTRATE ON THINGS LIKE MORE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, MORE VOICE IN GOVERNMENT, AND MORE JOBS BECAUSE THAT'S MY FIELD. AND I BELIEVE THAT A JOB GIVES ANY HUMAN BEING DIGNITY. DIGNITY --- AND THE STRENGTH TO STAND ON HIS OR HER OWN TWO FEET. I BELIEVE THAT A VOTE GIVES THAT SAME HUMAN BEING A VOICE; A REPRESENTATIVE GIVES HIM OR HER THE STRENGTH TO MAKE THAT VOICE HEARD.

I'VE USED MY APPOINTMENTS POWER TO BRING MANY OUTSTANDING HISPANIC NEW JERSEYANS INTO STATE GOVERNMENT --- WHERE THEY CAN SERVE NEW JERSEY, AND SERVE AS BEACONS FOR THE HISPANIC PEOPLE, LIGHTING THE WAY AHEAD.

I'M PROUD TO HAVE JOE RODRIGUEZ IN MY CABINET --- FRED BURGOS AS DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION --- MIKE GARCIA, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF HISPANIC AFFAIRS --- GUS MELLANDER ON THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, ARMANDO RODRIGUEZ WHO IS DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF CIVIL RIGHTS, AND MANY OTHER MEN AND WOMEN ON THE MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMISSION, AND A FEW MORE.

I CREATED THE MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ESPECIALLY TO GIVE LEADERS OF MINORITY COMMUNITIES A VOICE WITH WHICH THEY COULD ADVISE MY OFFICE ON HOW TO ENCOURAGE BUSINESS AND JOBS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. I ESTABLISHED THE OFFICE OF MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE TO IMPLEMENT THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS AND OTHER GOOD IDEAS, INSOFAR AS IT IS IN THE STATE'S POWER. I HAVE ALSO CREATED AN INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON PROCUREMENT FOR MINORITY FIRMS, TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY GET A FULL SHARE OF STATE CONTRACTS. THIS IS ONE WAY THAT THE STATE CAN USE ITS PURCHASING POWER TO ENCOURAGE MINORITY ENTERPRISE.

TO GIVE YOU SOME MORE CONCRETE EXAMPLES, I HAVE SET A GOAL THAT 25 PERCENT OF THE CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING AND RUNNING THE NEW PRISON PLANNED IN NEWARK WILL GO TO MINORITY FIRMS. AND PART OF MY \$3 BILLION PROPOSAL FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS INCLUDES A PROVISION THAT AT LEAST 10 PERCENT SHOULD GO TO QUALIFIED MINORITY FIRMS. AND I HAVE RECENTLY SIGNED A BILL THAT SETS ASIDE 15 PERCENT OF ALL STATE CONTRACTS FOR BIDDING AMONG SMALL BUSINESSES --- MANY OF WHICH ARE OWNED AND RUN BY MINORITIES. ONCE THE PROVEN GOOD WORK DONE BY THOSE FIRMS BECOMES FAMILIAR TO OTHERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, I THINK YOU'LL SEE A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES OPEN UP. A LOT OF OPPORTUNITY FOR HISPANIC PEOPLE TO USE THEIR GREAT ABILITIES.

WHEN A MAN OR WOMAN CAN USE HIS OR HER TALENTS, AND IS REWARDED FOR THEM, AND CAN CONTRIBUTE IN ANY WAY --- TANGIBLE OR INTANGIBLE --- TO THE COMMUNITY: THAT IS DIGNITY, THAT IS AN UNDENIABLE SENSE OF WORTH.

KNOWING THAT YOU HAVE ABILITY AND SEEING THAT OTHERS
RECOGNIZE YOUR GIFTS IS A PRECIOUS GIFT IN ITSELF --- ONE THAT
ANY OF US CAN EARN. THE ABILITY TO SUPPORT YOURSELF --- TO FEED,
CLOTHE AND HOUSE YOUR FAMILY --- THAT IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN
NEED. TO DO THOSE THINGS WELL --- THAT IS PRIDE. KNOWING THAT
YOU CAN DO THIS --- THAT YOU CAN STAND ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET AND
DO EVEN MORE --- IS PRECIOUS INDEED. AND I BELIEVE THAT IS WHAT
IS MEANT IN OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, WHEN IT 'DECLARES
THAT AMONG THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF ALL PEOPLE ARE "LIFE,
LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."

THIS IS THE HERITAGE WHICH ALL WHO COME TO AMERICA MAY
SHARE. YOUR CHILDREN ARE FORTUNATE. THEY HAVE TWO GREAT
HERITAGES. THEY DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO. THEY CAN
HAVE BOTH --- BECAUSE BOTH ARE PROUD, BOTH ARE NOBLE, AND BOTH
ARE WORTHY.

LAST YEAR, I ADDRESSED THE VERY FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PUERTO RICAN LITERATURE IN THE UNITED STATES. I WAS PROUD TO SEE THAT CONFERENCE HELD BY RUTGERS, NEW JERSEY'S STATE UNIVERSITY. ITS TITLE WAS "IMAGES AND IDENTITIES." AND I REMARKED THEN THAT IT WAS A GREAT EVENT FOR HISPANIC NORTH AMERICANS, BECAUSE IT GAVE THEM RECOGNITION IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

THERE HAS BEEN A WORLDWIDE EXPLOSION OF INTEREST IN SPANISH LITERATURE OF OTHER COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY LATIN AMERICA. BORGES, NERUDA AND GARCIA MARQUEZ HAVE WON THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL PRAISE FOR THEIR WORK. AND YET TOO OFTEN, THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF HISPANIC PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED.

ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING WRITERS AT THIS CONFERENCE WAS A MAN NAMED JOSE LUIS GONZALES. HE HAS WRITTEN MANY MOVING STORIES ABOUT HISPANIC IDENTITY. IN ONE SKETCH CALLED "THE LETTER," HE DESCRIBES A MAN WHO MAINTAINS A DOUBLE IDENTITY BY WRITING BACK TO HIS FAMILY IN PUERTO RICO ABOUT HIS FICTITIOUS, WONDERFUL JOB IN THE CITY --- AND THEN HAVING TO BEG FOR THE MONEY TO PAY FOR A STAMP.

THE DOUBLE IDENTITY OF HISPANICS IN NEW JERSEY DOES NOT HAVE TO BE DESOLATE. THE WONDERFUL JOB --- THE HAPPY LIFE --- CAN BE TRUE, AS MANY OF YOU KNOW. BUT IT WILL TAKE A LOT OF EFFORT TO HELP MORE OF YOUR COMMUNITIES ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

THAT MEANS PARTICIPATING, AND DOING IT TO THE FURTHEST LIMIT OF YOUR PROVEN ABILITIES. THE HISPANIC POPULATION IS THE FASTEST GROWING MINORITY GROUP IN THIS STATE AND IN THE NATION. 8.3 PERCENT OF THE CHILDREN NOW IN NEW JERSEY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE OF HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND THE PERCENTAGE GOES WAY UP WHEN YOU LOOK AT URBAN SCHOOLS. WE'VE GOT TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE SURE THOSE CHILDREN GROW UP WITH EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

NEW JERSEY HAS A LONG TRADITION OF WELCOMING THE SPANISH HERITAGE. FOR A LONG TIME, THIS STATE WAS EVEN CALLED "THE SPANISH STATE, "IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, DO YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE IN 1816, THE EXILED KING OF SPAIN FOUND REFUGE HERE AND BUILT HIS HOME HERE IN NEW JERSEY --- RIGHT NEAR BORDENTOWN. THAT EXILE WAS JOSEPH BONAPARTE, NAPOLEON'S BROTHER, AND ONCE A DELEGATION FOR MEXICO CAME TO NEW JERSEY, TO VISIT HIM IN BORDENTOWN. THEY WANTED TO OFFER HIM THE THRONE OF THEIR COUNTRY.

WELL, THIS BONAPARTE REFUSED THE THRONE. HE TOLD THEM
"EVERY DAY I PASS IN THIS HOSPITABLE LAND PROVES MORE CLEARLY TO
ME THE EXCELLENCE OF REPUBLICAN INSTITUTIONS FOR AMERICA. KEEP
THEM AS A PRECIOUS GIFT FROM HEAVEN."

SO YOU SEE THAT THE HISPANIC HERITAGE AND NEW JERSEY'S
HERITAGE GO BACK A LONG WAY TOGETHER.

I HAVE FAITH IN YOUR ABILITY TO KEEP HISPANIC COMMUNITIES
STRONG. I PLEDGE MY SUPPORT TO YOUR WORK, AND I WILL CONTINUE MY
WORK IN EDUCATION, IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, IN OPENING
OPPORTUNITIES, AND IN GUARANTEEING YOU A VOICE IN THE STATE'S
AFFAIRS.

I BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL SUCCEED AS LEADERS, BECAUSE OF SOMETHING THAT KATHERINE DAVALOS ORTEGA SAID LAST FALL, WHEN SHE WAS BEING SWORN IN AS UNITED STATES TREASURER. SHE SAID "I AM THE PRODUCT OF A HERITAGE THAT TEACHES STRONG FAMILY DEVOTION, A COMMITMENT TO EARNING A LIVELIHOOD BY HARD WORK, PATIENCE, DETERMINATION AND PERSEVERANCE."

TONIGHT, I'M HAPPY TO WITNESS THE SWEARING-IN OF SOME MORE PRODUCTS OF THAT HERITAGE, WHO WILL LEAD MY ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS.

THANK YOU.