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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
REMARKS TO LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS (LULAC)  
WASHINGTON, DC  
OCTOBER 6, 1994**

[Acknowledgements: Congresswoman Roybal-Allard, who will introduce you; Belen Robles, newly elected President of LULAC; and First Lady "Maga" Rossello [Ro-say-yo] of Puerto Rico]

Thank you for inviting me to join you this evening. And thank you even more for the spirit and support you have lent the Clinton Administration as we work together to solve some of the most pressing issues of the day.

For nearly 70 years, LULAC has been a voice of progress not only for Hispanics, but for all Americans who care about fairness, opportunity, and compassion. Nearly every significant social crusade of the last half century bears your stamp: voting rights, the expansion of educational opportunities, fair housing, civil rights, to name a few.

Although the President couldn't be here to tell you this in person, he is particularly grateful for your energetic support of health care reform over the last 20 months. You have always understood the importance of health care reform for children, families, and for ourselves collectively as a nation. Rest assured, we will succeed with reform and we will make sure that every one among us has access to comprehensive health care coverage that can never be taken away.

As we look ahead to a new century, we see a world as complicated and as challenging as ever. But we also see the extraordinary promise of Americans and America in facing the new challenges that await us.

My husband ran for the Presidency because he believes that by investing in our greatest resource -- our people -- we can build a world of peace and prosperity in which all Americans have the opportunity to fulfill their God-given potential.

To do that, we must make diversity our strength, not our burden. We must unite, not divide. We must restore the values that you, the leaders of LULAC, so firmly uphold -- family, community, self-reliance, and responsibility.

And we need only look to the founders of LULAC for inspiration. When Ben Garza was 15, his father died. So he had to quit high school and work to help support his mother and six siblings. He worked as a waiter in a restaurant and saved enough money to put the other kids through school. Ben kept working, and

kept saving, and soon he had enough to invest in the restaurant and become a partner. Eventually he became one of the leading businessmen in Corpus Christi.

Some years after he helped found LULAC, he came to Washington -- this was more than a half century ago -- to protest immigration policies. Even with all of his personal success, which was built on years of hard work and determination, he never lost sight of his responsibilities to the larger community.

Today Belen Robles and all of you are entrusted with helping LULAC carry forward that rich legacy. And I'd like to congratulate Belen for the vision and commitment she brings to this important position. And I'd also like to thank all the members of LULAC, all of the individuals and local councils, who together keep alive the hopes and dreams that prompted the founding of this organization in the first place.

The lesson we learn from LULAC's history, and the lesson we learn from any march for social progress, is that one must never give up the good fight. Think of the court battle LULAC waged in the early 1950s to ensure that Hispanics could sit on juries in Texas (*Hernandez v Texas*). Or the fight for school desegregation in Orange County in the 1940s that served as one of the precursors to *Brown v Board* and helped tear down demeaning racial stereotypes. These were not always popular crusades. Often they met extraordinary resistance from the status quo. But through patience and hard work, progress was made and justice prevailed.

Think of the LULAC women who, year after year, held *tamaladas* [tah-mah-LAH-das -- a Texas version of a bake sale, where tamales are sold instead of cookies] to raise money for scholarships for promising young students.

Think of the labor and dedication that went into creating and sustaining the SER [pronounced serr, the verb "to be" in Spanish] program that has helped 150,000 men and women with job training and counseling.

These are efforts worth making because they make a difference in the lives of hard-working, responsible citizens who are part of the rich social fabric of our nation. They are efforts worth making because, not only do they define us as individuals, they define us as a society and as a people.

I saw some statistics recently that showed that the largest population group among Hispanics is children under the age of 5. I saw another statistic that showed that Hispanic children are twice as likely to be living in poverty as non-Hispanic children. These statistics should sound an alarm bell in all of us, calling us to action and reminding us why we can never give up the march progress and change -- whether it is economic renewal, health

care reform, welfare reform, crime legislation, voting rights, fair housing, or an expansion of Head Start.

The President's agenda envisions government as a partner for people and for communities that need a boost to do better -- much the way your local councils give people the tools they need to take responsibility for their lives and move ahead.

And we are making progress:

**THE ECONOMY** Deficit reduction; tax relief for working families; trade; creation of 4.2 million jobs in 19 months

**CRIME** (LULAC was very supportive of the Crime Bill)

**EDUCATION** Goals 2000; School to Work; Loan Reform; Head Start expansion; AmeriCorps (in Texas alone, the community service program has helped immunize 100,000 more children in the first year it was in place)

**ENSURING BASIC RIGHTS** Motor Voter Bill; the Administration argued in federal court to expand the interpretation of the Voting Rights Act; the President authorized a nationwide investigation of discrimination by financial institutions in the area of home mortgages

\* The President is making "Naturalization" a top priority of the INS to ensure the continuation of legal immigration while combatting illegal immigration.

#### **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Whether your parents or grandparents or great grandparents came from Mexico, Puerto Rico, South or Central America, the Caribbean, the Iberian Peninsula or any other region, many of you probably were raised believing in the American Dream. It's an ideal that we all want to pass on to our children with some degree of credibility. We want our children to believe that their futures can be rewarding, productive, and secure. And that's why the President's agenda focuses so heavily on giving our children the right start in life.

He believes that we cannot afford to waste a single person in this country, particularly not a child. That's why, with nearly 10 million American children currently lacking health insurance, he believes so firmly in the need for health care reform that will make sure that all children have immunizations and well-baby exams.

It's why he believes in a world-class education system that begins in pre-school and continues through high school, college, job training, and beyond. It's why he believes in tough crime