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Students facing deportation test new Obama immigration policy

DETROIT, June 22, 2012: Two undocumented immigrant students currently in deportation proceedings presented themselves to U.S. immigration enforcement officials in Detroit today to test the week-old immigration "DREAM relief" announced by President Obama.

Erika del Rio of Howell was brought to the U.S. from Mexico City at the age of 12. She is now 29 years old, studying psychology and photography at *Lansing Community College*. She is currently in deportation proceedings, and was actually denied relief previously under the so-called "prosecutorial discretion" program as set forth in the Morton Memo of 2011. But, as of last week, she should be eligible to stay in the U.S. without being prosecuted.



Erika del Rio

Nibardo Carrillo Aguilera of Detroit and *Erika del Rio* of Howell are eligible under the new program and came with their lawyers, dozens of community supporters and immigrant rights advocates to verify the promised reform. Both are under 30 years of age, were brought to the U.S. before they were 16, have no criminal records and have graduated from high schools in the United States or Puerto Rico. "We're grateful that President Obama took a bold step forward by offering relief to undocumented young people," said *Juan Sancen*, an AIR student leader from Detroit, "However, we must verify that immigration officials will actually implement this program and stop the deportations. A student here with us today was even denied 'prosecutorial discretion,' so we know that there's a lot of work to do. We have a lot of hope that ICE and the President will keep their word."

Nibardo Aguilera just graduated from *César Chávez High School* of Detroit, where he was a founding member and captain of the football team. *Nibardo* was also brought to the US at the age of 8, has no criminal convictions, and is facing deportation. His dream is to work and attend community college.

On June 15, 2012, the Obama Administration announced a major change to deportation policy that would offer undocumented young people, with deep ties to the community and clean records, the opportunity to temporarily stop their deportations. The administrative "DREAM Relief" policy was modeled on aspects of the *Development, Relief, Education, and Assistance to Minors (DREAM) Act*.

"We congratulate the President for showing bold moral leadership, and recognizing that our country should not punish young people who contribute so much to our communities," said *Rev. Jack Eggleston* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church's Southeast Michigan Synod and AIR leader. "But this is just a first step. We must continue the fight and move the hearts of Congress to finally pass comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act."

More information can be found at the event page within the *Alliance for Immigrant Rights and Reform's* Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ReformImmigrationForAmericaMI

Latino Community Supporters,

If your organization offers services that target the Latino community, send us your information—*La Prensa/La Revista* is developing a directory to inform its readers of resources available. You should include name of organization, brief description of services, and contacts (address, phone, email).

Also, remember to let us know if you have an event coming up during the months of June, July, August and September. The list of events for *La Revista/Summer* is in process right now.

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Missing Latino's remains ID'd in Texas, after 3 decades of mystery

By Kevin Milliken for La Prensa

June 24, 2012: More than three decades of unanswered questions, heartache, and grief will come to an end later this week when the remains of a Toledo man are returned home to his family from Houston, Texas. A cousin will return with his cremated remains for a memorial service and a proper burial.

A cold-case squad in Texas identified the remains earlier this year of 22-year old *Esaw "Chicken" Rodríguez, Jr.* using DNA submitted by his mother Pauline and older sister Marta. But who killed Rodríguez during a cross-country hitchhiking trip may remain a mystery long after his burial in his hometown.

"My closure will be when I get to hold that urn and kiss him and tell him I'll see him someday soon," said his older sister *Marta Rodríguez*, 58. "When you're missing a loved one, they never leave your heart."

Rodríguez was hitchhiking to Louisiana/Texas in August 1980 to visit his cousins. Following a pay phone call to his mother Pauline from a Louisiana truck stop, he was never heard from again. He had told his mother two men in a green truck had been bothering him.

According to family, Pauline, now 79 years old, traveled to that Union 76 truck stop near Cajun country (Southwest Louisiana), but could not find her son. His mother filed a missing persons report with authorities in Lafayette, Louisiana. But the family years later learned the report was never entered into a national database.

The skeletal remains of Rodríguez were found in the Houston area in 1984—some 200 miles from Lafayette. According to his sister, some boys had been playing in the Buffalo Bayou when they stumbled upon the remains under some rocks. His murder remained a cold case homicide until 2008, when his remains were buried in an anonymous grave.

In 2010, a cousin, *Sgt. Valentino Zavala*, now retired from the Wyandotte, MI police department, started looking into the case.

"I just couldn't stand idle watching my aunt grieve for 28 years thinking that authorities were going to contact her," *Zavala* told the *Houston Chronicle*.

Sgt. *Zavala* got a new missing persons report filed and placed in the national database, which he then scoured looking for a matching Latino male to no avail. He then

convinced Pauline and Marta to submit DNA kits to a Louisiana lab.

"A part of us all for 30 years had wondered 'Where is he at? What are you doing? Are you OK? Did you eat?' All the things you worry about your baby brother," said Marta, thankful for her cousin's assistance.

On Feb. 27 of this year—nearly two years after the DNA samples were submitted—*Zavala* received a phone call from a medical examiner in Houston, TX. Forensic anthropologists there had identified the remains of Rodríguez as a

1984 *John Doe* homicide—putting his family one step closer to closure after wondering for so long what had happened to him.

"We were happy, crying," said Marta as she recalled the ensuing phone call from her cousin. "I asked him 'Are you sure?' He said 'I'm not going to lie to you.'"

According to his sister, an autopsy revealed Rodríguez had suffered a fractured skull, possibly from a surprise attack from behind. Where the attack occurred and who is responsible for his murder remain unanswered questions. His sister believes his body had been dumped by his attacker(s).

"I want to know who did this and why," said Marta.

Rodríguez, Jr. grew up in North Toledo, the youngest of four children and the only son. His sister Marta recalled that is how he ended up with the nickname of "Chicken." His mother called him "pollito," or "little chick."

"It always stuck. But no young man wants to grow up being called 'Chicken,'" recalled Marta with a laugh. "I always called him 'Bro' and he always responded 'Yeah, man.'"

But she admitted there's been an emptiness, a void for more than three decades without her younger sibling. Family gatherings, reunions, and holidays have come and gone; only pictures and memories remain of Rodríguez, who now would be 54 years old.

"Finally, he'll be at the cemetery where my daddy's at. I'll take him his favorite candy, jaw breakers," she said with a chuckle, explaining that her younger brother always had a fresh supply of jaw breakers for his young nephews growing up.

Marta explained the family is planning the memorial service as a celebration of the short life they had with *Esaw*. Instead of mournful music, the funeral home will be filled with his favorite rock-n-roll tunes from the late 1970's instead of sad Mexican music.

"That's not Chick. He sure liked rock-n-roll," said Marta. "He liked Black Sabbath. He liked REO Speedwagon. My brother had an old AC-DC picture booklet."

Marta described her brother as a bit of a "free spirit." He never graduated high school, but had lots of friends and never was afraid to prove he could do something when challenged. The hitchhiking trip started with two of those friends with a destination in Florida. But he continued alone toward Texas when his friends decided to return to Toledo. He had planned to either visit his cousin Miguel in Houston or his cousin Carlos in San Antonio. Miguel now lives in Toledo.

"He liked being with the boys, the guy cousins," recalled Marta. "He was single and didn't have a girlfriend. He liked cartoons. He was still somewhat of a

little kid because he liked cartoons. He also liked card games."

At the time of his disappearance, Rodríguez lived with his mom in a house on Kenilworth near Cherry St. The home has since been demolished.

"He told us 'A man's got to do what a man's got to do,'" Marta recalled just before he left on his hitchhiking excursion that would result in his death.

Decades later, Rodríguez finally will return to Toledo, too, in an urn his mother chose. Marta jokingly described it as a "flying saucer" for its unique shape. But she stated her mother Pauline is "holding up" and ready "for him to come home."

The remains of Rodríguez arrived at a Texas funeral home for cremation last Friday. A cousin who lives nearby will drive them to Toledo where a memorial service is planned next week at Coyle Funeral Home. Rodríguez will be buried next to his father in Forest Cemetery.

Marta expects "quite a lot of people, family" to attend the memorial service, because her brother left behind a big family that has only grown over the years.

In January of last year, a team of Houston-area forensic anthropologists used a grant to reopen hundreds of files involving unidentified remains dating back as far as 60 years—including Rodríguez. The effort has made a believer out of both Marta and Sgt. *Zavala* that loved ones of missing persons can find answers.

Marta readily admitted she had only seen forensic science work successfully on TV crime dramas. But she hopes her real-life experience can help others.



Pauline Rodríguez

"I have never read of a Latino or a Mexican family ever going through this before," said Marta. "There may be one out there right now that might have something of their loved one—a hairbrush, a toothbrush—something that has their loved one's DNA. Go and have it tested to see if there's a loved one out there. DNA works."

"Folks who have been touched by a violent crime, including missing persons—either as victims or family members—should always persevere and never give up," *Zavala* told the *Houston Chronicle*. "*Esaw* was somebody's child, brother, nephew, grandson and cousin and didn't deserve to be murdered - nobody does - and all of those lives are touched."

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DPS honors over 300 students with 3.5 GPAs, 'Two All-A' students from Western HS

More than 300 students with grade point averages (GPA) of 3.5 or higher graduated from Detroit Public Schools this year, including 10 students with perfect 4.0 GPAs. Two of those students attended *Western International High School*. **Gabrielle Vaughn**, 18, has a 4.07 GPA and will attend *Wayne State University* in the fall to study nursing.

Jacqueline Vásquez, 18, will attend the *University of Detroit Mercy* to major in pre-medicine and will enjoy a full academic scholarship thanks to her 4.6 GPA.

Both young women said they were motivated by their families to maintain good grades all throughout high school—especially Vásquez, whose parents are still living in Mexico.

Vásquez was born in the United States. She went back to Mexico with her parents when she was three months old and returned to the U.S. in 2009 at the age of 16 to finish high school. She now lives with an aunt and uncle.

"I came back here by myself because I really want to be somebody," she said. "I think about my parents and I want to make them proud. I want to be able to take care of my parents once they are older, and I want to give back to my community. So I want to become a cardiologist to help my community and my family."

Although Vásquez was not able to speak any English when she returned to the U.S., she didn't let that stand in her way.

"I've always been focused and I set goals," she said. "I set goals for every year, every five years, and every 10 years. You have to have a plan on what you want to do and how you want to do it. Although it's been difficult, I want to succeed, so I can't let my language be a barrier. I don't look at things as obstacles; I look at them as challenges to succeed."

Vaughn has also faced personal challenges, but said the best advice she can give to other students is to always believe in yourself, don't be afraid to ask teachers for help, and don't fall victim to peer pressure.



"My grandma always told me 'don't give up, try hard, and always give your best.' I took that and ran with it," Vaughn said. "And my best turned out to be very good." "You don't know if something is too hard until you try, so think the best before you think the worst," she added. "And don't be a follower; otherwise you'll end up going nowhere. I learned that in middle school."

Vaughn and Vásquez were honored during the *28th Annual Excellence Awards Banquet*, held May 15, 2012 in the Cobo Center Riverview Ballroom. The event showcased the top 3 percent of the district's graduating seniors.

More than 300 DPS students who have held a 3.5 GPA or higher during their high school careers were honored. The event also honored 10 all "A" students who received the Excellence Awards Scholarship.

Emergency Manager Roy Roberts delivered the keynote address. Karen Ridgeway, Superintendent of Academics, also addressed students.

About the Annual Excellence Awards Banquet

The end of the school year signifies a great number of ceremonies, but none is more prestigious than the annual Excellence Awards Banquet for Detroit Public Schools' seniors with cumulative grade point averages of 3.5 or higher.

The Excellence Awards Banquet is designed to showcase the top three percent of the district's graduating seniors. Virtually all of these students will enter college or another post-secondary education institution after high school.

Their college choices range from local universities including Wayne State University and the University of Michigan, to historical black colleges and universities including Morehouse and Spelman, to Ivy League schools such as Harvard, Yale, West Coast Stanford, University of Southern California and more.

The Excellence Awards program began in 1985. To date, 8,915 students have been honored since the program originated. The event is sponsored by the Detroit Public Schools Foundation, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishers, Pearson Publishers, SVS Vision, Target Corp, and Spike Lawrence.

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Análisis: Fallo de Corte Suprema complica a Romney ante hispanos

Por CHARLES BABINGTON

WASHINGTON, DC, 26 de junio del 2012 (AP): *Mitt Romney* habla lo menos posible de inmigración a fin de mejorar su complicada posición entre los electores hispanos. Sin embargo, los más recientes acontecimientos sobre el tema obran en su contra.

El ejemplo más reciente, es el fallo que emitió el lunes la Corte Suprema emitió un fallo sobre la ley de inmigración de Arizona, 10 días después de que el presidente *Barack Obama* anunciara una medida que permite la permanencia de algunos inmigrantes aun cuando no tengan autorización para estar en el país.

La incomodidad de Romney ante un tema que lo sitúa en una disyuntiva conflictiva quedó de manifiesto con los comentarios cautelosos que hizo sobre la decisión de la Corte Suprema.

El virtual candidato presidencial republicano necesita entusiasmar a sus huestes conservadoras—entre las que existe un fuerte rechazo a la inmigración en condiciones irregulares, pero al mismo tiempo necesita reducir la considerable ventaja que le lleva Obama entre los electores hispanos.

Es cierto que la inmigración no es el único tema que interesa a los hispanos y por lo mismo Romney intenta atraerlos centrándose en aspectos sobre la economía del país. La economía es el principal tema en importancia para los hispanos, al igual que para otros grupos de electores.

Sin embargo, muchos hispanos se sienten ofendidos ante lo que consideran como el trasfondo racial y social de las denuncias de algunos republicanos sobre las personas que cruzan la frontera ilegalmente desde México.

Si las elecciones del 6 de noviembre son tan reñidas como auguran diversos expertos, los hispanos podrían constituir la diferencia en los estados donde ningún partido tiene predominio, como Nevada, Colorado, Florida, Carolina del Norte y Virginia.

La realidad es que la inmigración es un tema delicado para ambos candidatos. Ninguno se mostró animoso de criticar el fallo de la Corte Suprema, la cual anuló gran parte de la Ley de Arizona.

Mientras que el equipo de campaña de Obama mantuvo el silencio, el presidente elogió en una declaración gran parte del fallo. Sin embargo, Obama dijo que “continúo preocupado por la secuela práctica de las disposiciones restantes de la Ley de Arizona, la cual obliga a la policía a que verifique la condición migratoria de cualquier persona de la que sospeche que se encuentra sin autorización aquí (en el país)”.

En un comentario que posiblemente suscite simpatías entre las minorías en todo el país, el presidente agregó: “Ningún estadounidense debe vivir jamás bajo un manto el sospecha sólo por su apariencia”.

Romney, por su parte, emitió dos declaraciones breves en las que evitó entrar en detalles sobre la ley de Arizona y el fallo de la Corte Suprema.

“Dado el fracaso de la política de inmigración en este país”, el republicano señaló a donadores de recursos de campaña en Scottsdale, Arizona: “Yo habría preferido que la Corte Suprema hubiera conferido más flexibilidad a los estados”.

Antes, Romney había dicho que Obama “no ha asumido un papel de liderazgo en el tema de la inmigración”. Romney señaló que Arizona jamás habría elaborado su ley si el Congreso, bajo un ejecutivo firme, hubiera decretado una política federal “que garantizara (la seguridad de) nuestras fronteras y preservara el estado de derecho”.

La política de inmigración estuvo estancada durante años en el Congreso, fuera con presidentes republicanos o demócratas.

Durante el proceso interno para elegir al candidato presidencial del Partido Republicano, Romney rechazó las acusaciones de que entre todos los contrincantes él era “el candidato más anti inmigrante”, como se decía en un mensaje político radiofónico de Newt Gingrich.

Romney había criticado al gobernador de Texas, Rick Perry, por conceder matrículas universitarias de menor costo a inmigrantes sin permiso para estar en el país.

Además, Romney se distanció del llamado de Gingrich para la adopción de una política de facto tendente a disminuir las deportaciones de inmigrantes sin permiso de residencia, si éstos llevaban vidas estables, de mucho tiempo y sin haberse implicado en algún delito en Estados Unidos.

Romney comenzó a suavizar su discurso sobre inmigración después de que derrotara a sus contrincantes republicanos. Sin embargo, Obama le complicó las cosas el 15 de junio. El presidente anunció que su gobierno no iba a deportar a inmigrantes jóvenes aun si no tienen permiso para estar en el país si van a la escuela y evitan implicarse en delitos, en una medida que fue elogiada por los diversos grupos hispanos.

Romney y sus colaboradores se han abstenido en diversas oportunidades de comentar si el primero revocaría esa política, aun cuando han criticado a Obama por no diseñar una “solución de largo plazo” al aspecto de la inmigración.

El desafío que afronta Romney entre los hispanos queda patente en una nueva encuesta de electores latinos registrados que estuvo a cargo de USA TODAY/ Gallup Poll. En esta comunidad, Obama aventaja a Romney con 66-25% de las preferencias.

En 2008, Obama captó más votos hispanos que McCain, 67% contra 31%, de acuerdo con un análisis de las encuestas de salidas del Pew Hispanic Center (Centro Hispano Pew).

Lo que es más, de acuerdo a una encuesta que efectuó en diciembre el Centro de Investigación Pew entre electores que participarían en las elecciones primarias republicanas, Romney podría alejar a su base del Partido Republicano si suaviza demasiado su postura sobre la inmigración.

Según la encuesta, 57% de los electores republicanos de 65 años o más dijeron que una seguridad fronteriza más firme y una aplicación estricta de la ley deberían ser los únicos ejes de la política de inmigración, sin que haya opción a la ciudadanía para los inmigrantes que no tengan permiso de residencia.

Los electores republicanos de menor edad respaldaron una posición algo más equilibrada, pero su asistencia a las urnas es menos confiable que la de los electores mayores.

Los estrategas republicanos destacan que los empleos y la economía son los temas de la mayor importancia para los hispanos. Advierten que los electores hispanos, que son ciudadanos y a menudo son estadounidenses de varias generaciones, no simpatizan totalmente con las personas que ingresan y permanecen ilegalmente en el país.

Sin embargo, la mayoría de los principales dirigentes demócratas han censurado el caso de Arizona en tal tono que posiblemente han cautivado a una amplia franja de electores hispanos y de otras minorías.

Estos demócratas dijeron que la Ley de Arizona—que elaboraron los republicanos y a la que Obama se opuso terminantemente—puede propiciar detenciones humillantes e interrogatorios de la policía a ciudadanos que no sean caucásicos.

La Corte Suprema rechazó las disposiciones de la Ley de Arizona que habría convertido en delito estatal infracciones a la ley federal sobre inmigración.

Sin embargo, ratificó el punto de “muéstreme sus papeles” que obliga a la policía a verificar la condición migratoria de las personas a las que detenga por diversas razones y que podrían estar en el país de manera ilegal.

El representante Luis V. Gutiérrez, demócrata de Illinois, presidente de la Fuerza Especial de Inmigración de la Asamblea Legislativa Hispana, dijo: “Lo experiencia nos indica que la policía improbablemente detendrá a un individuo cuyo último apellido sea Kennedy o Roberts por sospecha de que no sea ciudadano estadounidense, pero quien se apellide Gutiérrez o Martínez, cuidado”.

Romney ha dicho que las leyes de inmigración como la de Arizona no afectará a personas por su mera apariencia racial.

El aspirante republicano tiene menos de cinco meses para que intente reducir la ventaja de Obama entre los electores hispanos. Romney confía en que le funcione para este propósito una agenda basada en las oportunidades económicas.

Mientras tanto, sin duda, Mitt Romney estaría feliz de que amainara el tema la inmigración.



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