

The original documents are located in Box 37, “7/27/76 - Recorded Message for the Convention of the American GI Forum to be Held in Denver” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

FLOWAL



TAPING: DENVER CONVENTION OF AMERICAN
G.I. FORUM, JULY 27, 1976

I AM HONORED TO GREET THE AMERICAN G.I. FORUM
ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR 28th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION.

LET ME COMMEND YOUR NATIONAL CHAIRMAN,
MR. TONY MORALES, FOR HELPING SO CONSTRUCTIVELY TO
RESOLVE THE SCHEDULING PROBLEM THAT EMERGED. ALTHOUGH
I AM NOT WITH YOU IN PERSON, I AM WITH YOU IN SPIRIT
AND IN HARMONY WITH YOUR IMPORTANT GOAL OF MORE
COMPLETE INVOLVEMENT OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN THE
MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN LIFE.

YOU ARE STRUGGLING IN A VERY REAL SENSE TO ACHIEVE
AMERICA'S HIGHEST POTENTIAL BY DEVELOPING THE LEADERSHIP
AMONG THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY NECESSARY TO HELP HISPANICS
HELP THEMSELVES. YOUR WORK GIVES REAL MEANING TO OUR
BICENTENNIAL. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO REALIZE THE BEST
QUALITIES OF AMERICA AND NOT JUST TALK ABOUT OUR GOOD
FORTUNE. OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE MUST PROVIDE MORE
THAN AN UNFULFILLED PROMISE. ALL AMERICANS, INCLUDING
HISPANICS, MUST HAVE FULL ACCESS TO ALL THE RICH
OPPORTUNITIES AMERICA HAS TO OFFER.

I COMMEND YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN VOTER
REGISTRATION AND VOTER EDUCATION. YOUR EFFECTIVE
EFFORTS FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF HISPANIC ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT MUST CONTINUE. AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF
THIS UNDERTAKING IS THE EXPANSION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS.

I SALUTE ESPECIALLY THE HISPANIC PARTICIPATION
IN THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCES IN ALL OF OUR MAJOR WARS.

HISPANIC COURAGE HAS BEEN AMPLY DEMONSTRATED BY THE
NUMBER WHO HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR.

I AM EAGER TO ASSIST HISPANIC -- AND ALL AMERICAN
VETERANS -- THROUGH THE G.I. BILL OF RIGHTS AND OTHER
FEDERAL PROGRAMS. BUT AMERICA MUST DO EVEN MORE.
WE MUST LIVE IN KEEPING WITH THE IDEALS FOR WHICH SO MANY
OF OUR BRAVE G.I.'s DIED.

I AM PROUD TO BE SERVED BY OVER 95 HISPANIC
APPOINTEES IN HIGH POSITIONS IN OUR GOVERNMENT.

I REFER TO SUCH DISTINGUISHED OFFICIALS AS OUR AMBASSADORS
TO MEXICO AND A NUMBER OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES,
OUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR, MY OWN SPECIAL ASSISTANT AT THE
WHITE HOUSE, MR. THOMAS ARANDA, JR., AND OTHERS.

MANY HUNDREDS OF OTHER HISPANICS ARE SERVING IN
DISTINGUISHED CAPACITIES. BUT WE MUST DO MUCH MORE
TO ASSURE FULL EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT.
OVER 1,000 SPANISH-SPEAKING COORDINATORS ARE TODAY WORKING
IN MY ADMINISTRATION TO ACHIEVE THIS END; 130 OF THEM IN THE
MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES OF THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA.
IN ALL THESE ENDEAVORS, I AM AWARE THAT THE
GOVERNMENT, ALONE, CANNOT AUTOMATICALLY ACHIEVE SOLUTIONS.

WE REQUIRE, IN THE FINEST AMERICAN TRADITION, THE
STIMULATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT PROVIDED BY SUCH CITIZENS
GROUPS AS THE AMERICAN G.I. FORUM. YOUR 500 CHAPTERS
MUST EACH BECOME A CENTER OF ACTION TO TRANSLATE THE
SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL VALUES THAT HISPANICS BROUGHT
TO AMERICA EVEN BEFORE 1776. JUST AS YOUR FOREBEARS,
ESTABLISHED MISSIONS FROM COAST - TO - COAST, YOUR
CHAPTERS MUST KEEP ALIVE YOUR MISSION TODAY -- THE
STRUGGLE FOR FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL AMERICANS IN OUR
NATIONAL DESTINY. LET US WORK TOGETHER FOR FINAL
VICTORY.

END OF TEXT