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November 4, 1975

Dear Mimi:

It was certainly a pleasure to see you again last Saturday at the Engbretsons' reception for Mary Louise Smith.

As I mentioned to you, I am presently working on a brief background paper on the Ford Administration and the Spanish Speaking and will forward a copy to you upon completion. I would then like the opportunity to meet with you as a follow-up to your meeting with Ben Fernandez of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly.

Keep up the good work and let me know when I can be of help.

Yours sincerely,

Fernando E. C. De Baca

Miss Mimi Austin
The President Ford Committee
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Suite 250
Washington, D. C. 20036

BCC: Mr. Benjamin Fernandez

FECDeB:mmmd:11/04/75

(Phone
457-6400)

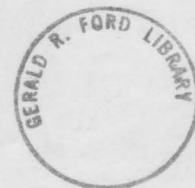


BACKGROUND

After the unprecedented surge of Spanish speaking support for the President in 1972 (Richard Nixon received 35% of the Spanish speaking vote in 1972 compared to 6% in 1968), it was hoped that the inroads that had been made would begin to forge a long and lasting relationship between the Republican Party and the Spanish speaking community. Unfortunately, that did not happen. Instead, the enthusiasm and optimism which had characterized the pre-election months disappeared. There began to develop a widespread feeling of disappointment and resentment at what was viewed as a lack of post-election interest on the part of a Republican Administration in the continued progress of the Spanish speaking. Hispanic community leaders began to openly criticize the Republican Administration for "deceiving" and "betraying" Spanish speaking voters by publicizing the 1972 advancements in appointments, programs and contracts, and then systematically eliminating them in 1973 and 1974.

CONFINED Following the 1972 election, the courting of Hispanics ^{VOTERS WAS} ~~had been limited~~ to a few courtesy meetings with selected community leaders and other similar non-substantive gestures. Up until August 1974, not one substantive new initiative or significant increase in Spanish speaking programs had taken place. The result was a unanimous feeling of frustration and betrayal on the part of Spanish speaking people across the country.

Then came the change in Administrations and the transfer of leadership to Gerald R. Ford as President. There followed a series of actions by the President restoring the confidence of Spanish speaking Americans in their President. Mr. Ford became the first President in the history of the nation to hire a person of Hispanic origin on the White House staff; he signed into law important new legislation designed to provide greater resources for bilingual education programs and for student financial assistance programs; he pushed for passage of the Housing Assistance and Community Development Act of 1974 and later signed the measure into law; he met with Latino Congressional leaders and Hispanic American organization heads; he met with President Echeverria of Mexico and established a Domestic Council Committee on Illegal Aliens to look into the problems of the illegal alien;



2.

he appointed Bert Gallegos as Director of the Community Services Administration and several other distinguished Spanish Americans to important boards and commissions; he presided over public meetings designed to elicit recommendations on how best to deal with the economy in the light of inflation.

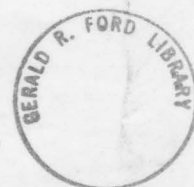


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