

# Hispanic Link weekly report

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## Yzaguirre's Senate Hearing Is Smooth

By Luis Carlos López

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Raúl Yzaguirre's nomination by President Obama as U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic moved a step forward March 11 as his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee ran quickly and smoothly.

The longtime National Council of *La Raza* CEO was presented to the committee by U.S. Rep. Rubén Hinojosa, who called the fellow Texas native his "mentor."

Along with three other Obama nominees for federal overseas posts, he answered a few friendly questions. Approval for all four is anticipated within a few weeks.

## Edward Olmos 'Stands and Delivers' for Teacher He Portrayed

By Adrian Rocha

At age 79, Jaime Escalante, the legendary East Los Angeles math teacher who inspired the classic 1988 motion picture *Stand and Deliver* is fighting for his life.

This time "*ganar*" — the Spanish word he used to indoctrinate thousands of Latino students with a fierce desire to learn, may not be enough to save him. A month ago, doctors gave the Bolivian native, now in late stages of gall bladder cancer, two months to live, actor Edward James Olmos, his longtime friend, tells Hispanic Link News Service.

Olmos, who earned an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of Escalante, is on a mission to raise funds to help the teacher and his family in Sacramento, Calif., meet mounting medical bills. "It is not that we are trying to save his life," Olmos says with resigna-

## MAKING THE NEWS THIS WEEK

U.S.Rep. **Luis Gutiérrez** (D-Ill.) says on MSNBC's "Hardball" that without immigration reform he cannot vote for an administration healthcare bill unless anti-legal immigrant elements are removed. He also confirms he won't run this fall for mayor of Chicago against incumbent **Richard Daley**...Mexico communications tycoon **Carlos Slim**, worth an estimated \$53.5 billion, is reported by Forbes magazine to be 2011's richest person. It marks the first time the distinction went to someone from a developing country. He passes USA's **Bill**

**Gates** and **Warren Buffett**, who have contributed much more of their wealth to charities...Venezuela native **Greivis Vásquez**, a University of Maryland basketball guard, is named Atlantic Coast Conference Player of the Year...**President Obama** donates \$125,000 of his \$1.4 million Nobel Peace Prize to the Hispanic Scholarship Fund...Washington, D.C.'s Council passes a one-time waiver to its workplace smoking ban, permitting the Society of the Sons of St. Patrick to renew the tradition of smoking cigars at its annual St. Pat banquet...

## 100,000 EXPECTED TO JOIN IN MALL PROTEST ON IMMIGRATION DELAYS

By Luis Carlos López

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A projected 100,000 immigration reform advocates united under the banner of Reform Immigration FOR America will gather on Washington's National Mall Sunday, March 21, to vent their frustration against the Obama administration and Congress.

*Casa de Maryland* executive director Gustavo Torres said the rally's message is to show the importance of Latinos in the United States.

"We come from around 42 states and we are going to march with white T-shirts waving the U.S. flag to show our gratitude to this great country, but also to show that without

us this country would not be what it is today."

The event's short lead time allows for minimal preparation. Organizers say it was the only way a message could be delivered in time for Congress to shape and pass reform legislation this year.

The collective Reform Immigration FOR America effort involves more than 700 organizations across the nation including the League of United Latin American Citizens and National Council of *La Raza*.

In the spring of 2006, national protests against anti-immigrant legislation by Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.) that passed the U.S. House of Representatives

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tion. "It's that we want to make his days more comfortable."

Olmos spent most of a year with Escalante prior to starting the film. "I was able to build a friendship with one of the greatest people on the planet," he says, proclaiming that Escalante has the greatest depth of any character he has ever played.

Born in La Paz, Bolivia, Escalante taught physics and math for 14 years in his homeland before migrating to the United States in 1964. In California he confronted a new language and the need for U.S. teaching credentials. On earning them, he obtained a job as a math teacher at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles.

After cajoling school administrators, some students and their parents to accept his challenge, he instituted Garfield's first college-level calculus classes.

His greatest triumph — and shock — came in 1982 when he guided 18 of his students to pass the rigorous national Advanced Placement calculus exam, an accomplishment comparable to excelling in college competition.

The shock? Test administrators couldn't believe Chicano students from East L.A.

could be that smart. Suspecting they cheated, AP test officials demanded they take the examination over. The students complied and passed again, many scoring even higher than before.

The sour memory of how the media played (continued on page 2)



HECTOR PONCE MURAL IN LOS ANGELES CAPTURES THE PAIR'S FRIENDSHIP

### THE INSIDE STORIES

PAGE 5: Obama calls three meetings on immigration.

PAGE 8: Argentine filmmaker wins an Oscar.

## Political Poop

by Luis Carlos López



### Nativists 'Losing Traction'

Center for Community Change executive director Deepak Bhargava claimed to guest host Chris Hayes on MSNBC's Rachel Maddow Show March 9 that U.S. nativists are preaching to a shrinking audience.

"The anti-immigrant movement is in real decline. Lou Dobbs is off the air. Turnout at

their meetings is low," Bhargava said. "It's no surprise that they are looking to get on the Tea Party bandwagon, but I don't think that's going to work because it's going to divide the base of that movement."

If the Republican Party continues to buy in to the Tea Party rhetoric on immigration, it faces long-term "electoral suicide."

### Mexico May Face Oil Crunch

Mexico's current oil infrastructure is not enough to keep the country competitive, U.S. Department of Energy data indicate.

If Pemex, which supplies more than 30% of that country's revenue, does not bring in foreign investors and new technology, the

country won't even produce enough oil to satisfy its own needs within this decade,

Then the United States, which receives 10% of its oil from Mexico, would have to depend on more unstable or hostile countries to meet its consumption demands.

Ricardo Alday, spokesperson for the Mexico Embassy, told Weekly Report that our southern neighbor will find ways to stay competitive.

"Mexico faces tremendous challenges, but we continue to search for alternative options including investing further in renewable energy," Alday said.

Mexico plans to host a conference in Cancún on renewable energy this year.

## Immigrant Advocates Tell Obama, Congress, 'It Has to Happen This Year'

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the previous December drew several million marchers throughout the nation.

Regional and local efforts by disk jockeys, union and religious organizers, students and a myriad of civil and human rights groups helped ignite marches in some 140 cities, drawing half a million or more in Los Angeles, Dallas, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Among groups active in organizing this month's capital rally are the National Immigration Forum, Center for American Progress, National Council of *La Raza*, America's Voice and Center for Community Change.

In total, 16 organizations are involved in coordinating the event.

Among speakers confirmed to date include Wade Henderson, president of the Leadership Conference for Civil Rights, Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahony and actress Kate del Castillo. Other celebrities and ad-

vocates for reform are expected to attend but not yet confirmed, including radio personality Piolin and *Los Tigres del Norte*.

Center for Community Change spokeswoman Mary Moreno said the protest's impetus came soon after President Obama's Jan. 27 State of the Union speech on Jan. 27 where he breezed through the immigration dilemma with 37 carefully crafted words with "reform" never included.

"It has to happen this year," Moreno said.

Many cities, Los Angeles among them, are planning separate events in coming weeks.

The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, which is participating in the Washington rally, is also holding a protest there March 26.

CHIRLA spokesman Jorge-Mario Cabrera told Weekly Report, "Our goal is to give those who can't make it to Washington a chance to voice their opinion." He added that as member of the California Table, a chain of

about 40 organizations across the state, CHIRLA will coordinate demonstrations in Santa Barbara, San Francisco, and other California cities.

### Students Stage Chicago Protest

The newly formed Youth Justice League met in downtown Chicago March 10 as part of a regional and national campaign to fight for immigration reform.

Following a series of emotional speeches, an estimated 1,000 advocates marched from Union Park to Federal Plaza as part of a nationwide "Coming Out of the Shadows Day," the *Chicago Tribune* reported.

During the event, many youth told stories of missing out on opportunities because of their undocumented status. They urged others to phone and text U.S. Senator Dick Durbin to be more active in pushing reform.

The league will join other Latino organizations on March 21 in Washington D.C..

## Press Attacked Escalante, Olmos Recalls, after False Claim that Students Cheated

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the drama has remained with Olmos. "The press came after him," as the cheating charges received far more attention than the achievements of Escalante and his students, Olmos recalls with lingering rancor.

The actor first met Escalante in the early '80s when both were being honored by the NAACP — Olmos for his relentless devotion to helping the community and Escalante for his classroom magic.

Escalante's odyssey made its way to the big screen in 1988, showing the world that kids from disadvantaged backgrounds are just as capable as students from affluent ones. They possess the potential to "understand the highest form of mental use achieved by mathematics," Olmos says. Stand and Deliver continues to be screened regularly in high schools and middle schools throughout the country. Olmos makes the claim it is "the world's number 1 most influential movie."

His big acting break came as *El Pachuco*

in Zoot Suit. His roles over the years include Gaff in *Blade Runner*, Lt. Martin Castillo in *Miami Vice*, Montoya Santana in *American Me*, which he directed, and most recently, Admiral William Adama in *Battlestar Galactica*.

But today Escalante remains foremost in his thoughts. Three presidents — Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush and William Clinton — have hosted the remarkable teacher at the White House in the past. With Escalante unable to travel, Olmos says. "I'm praying that President Obama will find a way to see Jaime and thank him for all he's done for our nation."

(Adrian Rocha is a reporter with Hispanic Link News Service in Washington, D.C. His email: [Arocha41@gmail.com](mailto:Arocha41@gmail.com))

To help the family of Jaime Escalante, contact:

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Pasadena, CA 91103  
Or call 626-793-5300.

## QUOTING . . .

***He repeatedly reminded me and all my classroom peers that math was something in our blood and our nature through our ancestors the Mayas. He would say, "You burro, your ancestors were so good in math that they even developed the concept of zero...and you don't know nothing. What a shame! But you can make them proud – take the chalk and show me that you can make them proud."***

—Former Garfield High School student Erika Camacho, recalling to Weekly Report her calculus teacher Jaime Escalante.

Camacho, PhD, is now an assistant professor at Arizona State University's New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Science.