



CENTRAL AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER

CENTRO DE RECURSOS PARA CENTROAMERICANOS

CARECEN

October 13, 1999

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In Memoriam

Dr. Segundo Montes, SJ
Central American University
San Salvador, El Salvador
(1933-1989)

Organizations listed only for
identification purposes

Solorzano
Executive Director

Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to thank you for the leadership role you are taking in securing an amendment to the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1997. Your support is making a difference. Yesterday, we visited the offices of Sen. Charles S. Robb (D-VA) and he agreed to sponsor S. 1592 partly because of your support to the introduction of H.R. 2722 to Congress.

Congressman Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) has been a tireless supporter of the Central American community in the U.S. and in efforts to amend NACARA. Leaders such as Congressman Gutierrez and yourself help us to increase our enthusiasm for American democracy. As thousands of members of our communities become U.S. citizens, we are learning to recognize the leaders and the party supporting issues that are important to us, our families and communities.

Mr. President, we are making efforts to build support for H.R. 2722 and S. 1592 in California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. We are positive that with the strong support of your administration we will celebrate the new law amending NACARA during the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. As you know, there are thousands of Latinos of Central American heritage that are contributing to the enrichment of our U.S. communities with their labor, taxes and culture.

An amendment to NACARA is urgently needed to end the tortuous uncertainty of Central American and Haitian families who have been living in immigration limbo for over a decade.

Again, we thank you for your support and leadership to amend NACARA.

Sincerely,

Saul A. Solorzano

Saul Solorzano
Executive Director

Luis Flores

Luis Flores
NACARA 99 Campaign Coordinator
Salvadoran-American National Network

October 29, 1999

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge that, as you consider your priorities in final negotiations with Congress on the Fiscal Year 2000 budget, you include the passage of legislation that your Administration drafted—the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act of 1999*—introduced in the House by Christopher Smith and 27 co-sponsors, and in the Senate by Richard Durbin and Edward Kennedy.

As you well know, the individuals who would benefit from this legislation have resided in the U.S. for many years. They now have deep roots in this country, with jobs, family, homes, and other community ties. Their relative success in the U.S. has allowed them to send back hundreds of millions of dollars in remittances to their home countries. The remittances provide a crucial source of foreign exchange, helping to stabilize the emerging democracies of Central America at a time when they are recovering from decades of civil war, and from the natural catastrophe of Hurricane Mitch. The remittances serve to complement American foreign policy, which has tried to bolster the economies of the region and encourage the growth of democracy.

If the relief provided by the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* does not ultimately become law, many Central Americans and others with deep roots in the U.S. will be facing deportation. This will diminish the private flow of money to the region, and will create instability by adding workers to economies already unable to provide enough jobs for the existing workforce.

The individuals who would be covered by the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* all have similar histories. All have fled civil conflict that affected their home countries. Many came to the U.S. at a time when our asylum system was crippled by political bias, and they have a history of being treated unfairly by our government. For many years, they have sought amends for the earlier unfair treatment. During those years, they have resided here in temporary statuses that have kept them in legal limbo. The recently-passed relief legislation, in particular the *Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act*, only perpetuated the discriminatory treatment, by allowing favored groups to gain permanent residence, while others in similar circumstances face the prospect of deportation.

We urge you to act to end this unequal treatment, and in the process bolster our foreign policy interests, by insisting that the relief contained in the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* be included in a final budget deal that is ultimately passed and signed into law.

Sincerely,

American Immigration Lawyers Association
Immigration and Refugee Services of America
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials
National Council of La Raza
National Immigration Forum
National Immigration Law Center
Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE)
United Jewish Communities



514 C Street N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
Tel. (202) 546-2336
Fax (202) 546-4121

October 27, 1999

Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a non-partisan coalition of 30 national Hispanic organizations and distinguished Hispanic leaders from across the nation, we write to thank you for the leadership role you are taking in securing an amendment to the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1997. Central American immigrants are vibrant members of our Latino community; they work hard, they pay taxes and are active participants in the economic and cultural enrichment of their communities in the United States.

It is the NHLA's opinion that an amendment to NACARA is urgently needed to end the long and terrible uncertainty facing Central American and Haitian families who have been living in immigration limbo for over a decade. We stand with our Central American brothers and sisters in their demand for equality and parity under the law. Your administration's support for H.R. 2722 and S. 1592 sends a strong message to Congress that the time has come to amend the law.

As you already know, thousands of Central American immigrants are already eligible to apply for naturalization and once present delays are solved, many will complete the process and start to vote. We want them to feel U.S. laws and institutions treat people equally and fairly in spite of perceived partisan preferences in Congress.

Again, we thank you for your support and leadership to amend NACARA.

Sincerely,

Arturo Vargas
NHLA Chair

cc: Congressman Luis Gutierrez (D-IL)
Congressman Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ)
Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA)
Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-IL)
Oscar Chacon, President, Salvadoran American National Network
Maria Echaveste, Deputy Chief of Staff
Mickey Ibarra, Director of Intergovernmental Relations
Samuel Berger-National Security Council

**Organización
Salvadoreña Americana**

Organization of Salvadorean Americans

November 8, 1999

FOUNDERS

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Mauricio Alarcón

Manuel Alfaro

Dear Mr. President:

María Alvarenga

I am writing to urge that, as you consider your priorities in final negotiations with Congress on the Fiscal Year 2000 budget, you include the passage of legislation that your Administration drafted, the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* of 1999, introduced in the House by Christopher Smith and 27 cosponsors, and in the Senate by Richard Durbin and Edward Kennedy.

Evelio Argueta

Ana Mercedes Campos

As you well know, the Central American community who would benefit from this legislation have resided in the U.S. for many years. They now have deep roots in this country, with jobs, family, homes, and other community ties. Our relative success in the U.S. has allowed us to send back hundreds of millions of dollars in remittances to maintain and rebuild our home countries. The remittances provide a crucial source of foreign exchange, helping to stabilize our emerging democracies at a time when we are recovering from decades of civil war, and from the natural catastrophe of Hurricane Mitch. The remittances serve to complement American foreign policy, which has tried to bolster the economies of the region and encourage the growth of democracy.

Antonio Carrillo

Omar Zavala

Ernesto Campos

Marcial Candido

If the relief provided by the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* does not ultimately become law, many Central Americans and others with deep roots in the U.S. will be facing deportation. This will diminish the private flow of money to the region, and will create instability by adding workers to economies already unable to provide enough jobs for the existing workforce.

Ana María Delgado

Lino Martínez

The individuals who would be covered by the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* all have similar histories. They all have fled civil conflict that affected our home countries. Many came to the U.S. at a time when our asylum system was crippled by political bias, and we have a history of being treated unfairly by the U.S. government. For many years, we have sought amends for the earlier unfair treatment. During those years, they have resided here in temporary statuses that have kept them in legal limbo. The recently-passed relief legislation, in particular the *Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act*, only perpetuated the discriminatory treatment, by allowing favored groups to gain permanent residence, while others in similar circumstances face the prospect of deportation.

Oscar Monge

Emilio Monzón

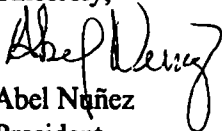
Nadia Pimentel

Mario Rivera

We urge you to act to end this unequal treatment, and in the process bolster our foreign policy interests, by insisting that the relief contained in the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* be included in a final budget deal that is ultimately passed and signed into law.

Saúl Solórzano

Sincerely,



Abel Nuñez
President

Organization of Salvadoran Americans

P.O. Box 43103 N.W. • Washington, DC. 20010
(202) 234-7009

**Office of the President**

3211 Fourth Street NE Washington, DC 20017-1194 (202) 541-3100 Fax: (202) 541-3166

Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza, D.D.
Bishop of Galveston-Houston
President



October 28, 1999

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write on behalf of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to ask your assistance for special immigrant populations who are deserving of the opportunity to become lawful permanent residents of the United States. These groups have lived in the United States for years and have established strong ties within their local communities, but for various reasons have been denied the opportunity to remain in our country on a permanent basis.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) allowed for the legalization of close to 3 million undocumented immigrants. Approximately 350,000 of those eligible were denied their opportunity to legalize because, according to the interpretation of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), they had briefly traveled abroad in violation of the continuous residency requirement of the statute. This situation has led to the filing of several law suits in the federal courts. As a result, these individuals have remained in an indefinite legal status for over 12 years, with no current hope for permanent residency and facing the prospect that they could soon lose their work authorization and be deported back to their countries of origin.

It is the view of the U.S. Catholic Bishops that this population should have their cases resolved expeditiously. The class has lived in the United States at least since 1982, and many have begun families, started businesses, and otherwise contributed to the economic and social fabric of our great nation. We ask you to work with Congress over the next several weeks to fashion a remedy which brings justice to these people and their uncertain situations.

I also would express our support for your Administration's recent initiative promoting legislation which assists Central American and Haitian populations who fled civil strife in their countries and have rebuilt their lives in the United States. As you know, the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), which you signed in November 1997, permitted Nicaraguans and Cubans who fled persecution in their countries during the 1980s and have been present in the United States since December 1, 1995, an opportunity to adjust to lawful permanent resident status. However, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans and Haitians--similarly-situated groups who also left their homelands for similar reasons during the same

Page 2

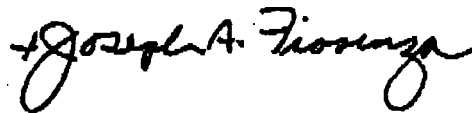
The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton

period--either did not receive equal treatment under the NACARA or were excluded from the legislation altogether. At the time you signed the NACARA, you rightly expressed concern with regard to the disparate treatment given to these groups.

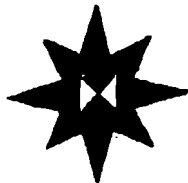
At your behest, legislation has been introduced in Congress (H.R. 2722, S. 1592) which would address the unequal solutions provided similarly-situated Central Americans and Haitians. As the Congress approaches adjournment for the year, we ask that you continue to push for passage of this legislation, which will afford these groups the chance to become permanent residents of the United States and plan their futures with confidence.

Thank you for consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph P. Fiorenza". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Fiorenza" clearly legible.

Most Reverend Joseph P. Fiorenza
Bishop of Galveston-Houston
President



American Friends Service Committee

1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102-1479 • Phone: 215/241-7000

DONALD S. GANN
Chairperson
KARA L. NEWELL
Executive Director

November 4, 1999

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

AFSC's work with immigrants is grounded in the Quaker belief in the equality and infinite worth of every person — and in the belief shared by many faith traditions of the importance of "welcoming the stranger." We believe that every person, regardless of immigration status, deserves respect, compassion, and fair treatment.

AFSC has worked with migrants, refugees, and displaced people since the organization was founded in 1917. Today, AFSC sponsors more than a dozen immigration programs throughout the United States. The work of these programs ranges from documenting and challenging abuses by the Border Patrol, to addressing the needs of immigrant communities in formation, to supporting political organizing by late-amnesty applicants or former refugees from Central America and Haiti who are seeking to secure permanent residency. It is in this vein that we write to you regarding our Central American and Haitian colleagues, neighbors and friends.

As you consider your priorities in final negotiations with Congress on the Fiscal Year 2000 budget, we urge you to include the passage of legislation that your Administration drafted—the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act of 1999*—introduced in the House by Christopher Smith and 27 co-sponsors, and in the Senate by Richard Durbin and Edward Kennedy. Currently H.R. 2722 has 88 endorsers and S.1592 has 10 signers.

As you well know, the individuals who would benefit from this legislation have resided in the U.S. for many years. They now have deep roots in this country, with jobs, family, homes, and other community ties. Their relative success in the U.S. has allowed them to send back hundreds of millions of dollars in remittances to their home countries. The remittances provide a crucial source of foreign exchange, helping to stabilize the emerging democracies of Central America at a time when they are recovering from

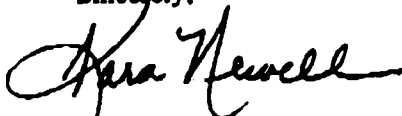
decades of civil war, and from the natural catastrophe of Hurricane Mitch. The remittances serve to complement relief efforts that government and non-governmental agencies have fostered to support the economies of the region and encourage the growth of just political systems.

If the relief provided by the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* does not ultimately become law, many Central Americans and others with deep roots in the U.S. will be facing deportation. This will diminish the private flow of money to the region, and will create instability by adding workers to economies already unable to provide enough jobs for the existing workforce.

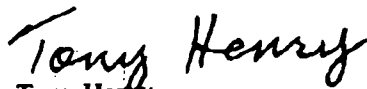
The individuals who would be covered by the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* all have similar histories. All have fled civil conflict that affected their home countries. Many came to the U.S. at a time when our asylum system was crippled by political bias and our government's immigration process infused with unfair treatment. For many years, they have sought amends for the earlier unjust practices. During those years, they have resided here in temporary statuses that have kept them in legal limbo. The recently-passed relief legislation, in particular the *Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act*, only perpetuated the discriminatory treatment, by allowing favored groups to gain permanent residence, while others in similar circumstances face the prospect of deportation.

We urge you to act to end this unequal treatment and promote just foreign policy interests, by insisting that the relief contained in the *Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act* be included in a final budget deal that is ultimately passed and signed into law.

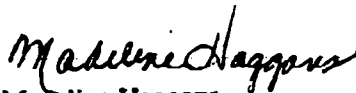
Sincerely,



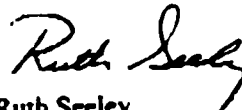
Kara Newell
Executive Director



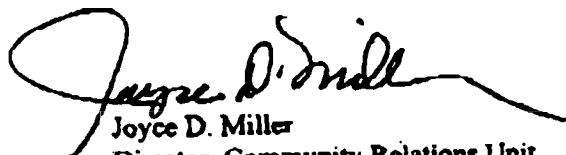
Tony Henry
Associate Executive Director for Program



Madeline Haggans,
Associate Executive Director for Regions



Ruth Seeley
Assistant Executive Director



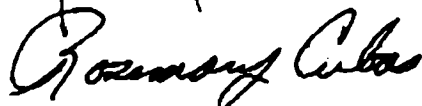
Joyce D. Miller
Director, Community Relations Unit



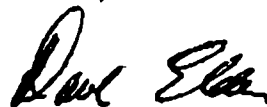
Diana Roose
Director, Peace Building Unit



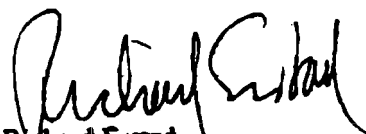
Martin Garaté
Director, International Programs



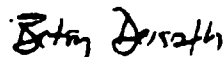
Rosemary Cubas
Director, Third World Coalition



Dave Elder
Coordinator, Asia Programs



Richard Erstad
Coordinator, Latin America
Caribbean Programs



Betsy Deisroth
Director, Development Department

John Blanchard, Jr.
Director, Finance Department



Charles Zoeller
Director, Southeastern Region



Saralee Hamilton
Director, Nationwide Women's Program

Michael Simmons
Coordinator, East/West Program



William Pierre
Coordinator, Middle East Programs



Francine Cheeks
Director, Communication Department



Robert Fuller
Director, Human Resources Department



Sandra Rapoport
Director, Middle Atlantic Region



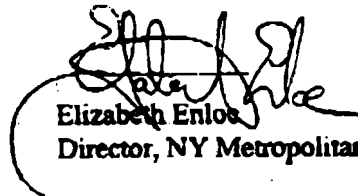
Keith Harvey
Director, New England Region



Michael McConnell
Director, Great Lakes Region

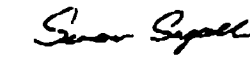


Eloise Cranke
Director, Central Region

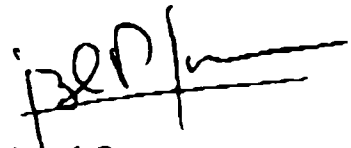


Elizabeth Enloe
Director, NY Metropolitan Region

Wilson Riles, Jr.
Director, Pacific Mountain Region



Susan Segall
Director, Pacific Northwest Region



Joseph Franco
Director, Pacific Southwest Region

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 18, 1999

JOIN US IN COSPONSORING THE "CENTRAL AMERICAN AND HAITIAN PARITY ACT OF 1999"

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to request your support for the "Central American and Haitian Parity Act" (S. 1592). This bill is a necessary and fair expansion of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act. It provides a permanent solution for thousands of people who desperately need one, by giving certain nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti the opportunity to apply for permanent residence on the same terms now available to Nicaraguans and Cubans.

In the 1980's, thousands of Salvadorans and Guatemalans fled civil wars in their countries and sought asylum in the United States. The vast majority had been persecuted or feared persecution in their home countries. The people of Honduras had a similar experience. While civil war was not formally waged in Honduras, the geography of the region made it impossible for Honduras to be unaffected by the violence and turmoil that surrounded it. Haiti has also experienced extreme upheaval. Haitians for many years were forced to seek the protection of the United States because of political oppression and human rights abuses.

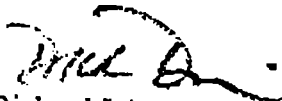
In 1997, Congress recognized that the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act could result in grave injustices to certain groups of people. So in November 1997, the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) was enacted to grant relief to certain nationals of Central American countries.

Ending these injustices was essential. The United States had allowed Central Americans to reside and work here for over a decade, during which time many of them established families, careers and strong community ties. The complex history of civil wars and political persecution in Central America left thousands of people in limbo, without a place to call home.

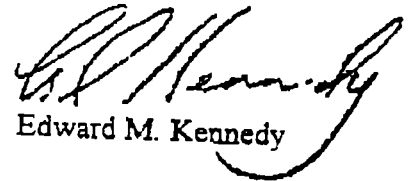
While the restoration of democracy in Central America and the Caribbean has been encouraging, the situation remains complex. Providing immigrants from these volatile areas with an opportunity to apply for permanent resident status in the United States, instead of deporting them, will provide more stability in the long run. Such an approach is the best solution not only for the United States, but also for the new democracies in Central America and the Caribbean.

We urge you to join us in co-sponsoring this fair and needed legislation. Please contact Darla Silva at 224-7274 or Esther Olavarria at 224-0405, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Richard J. Durbin


Bob Graham


Edward M. Kennedy

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Support "The Central American and Haitian Refugee Adjustment Act" (H.R. 2722)

October 18, 1999

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to invite you to co-sponsor our bi-partisan legislation, "The Central American and Haitian Refugee Adjustment Act" (H.R. 2722) a bill that amends current law to provide relief to certain nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. This bill incorporates the legislative language of H.R. 36, "The Central American and Caribbean Refugee Adjustment Act".

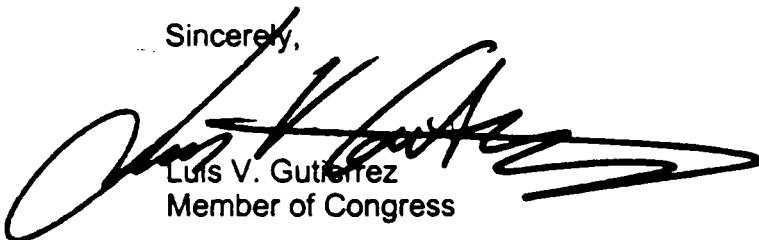
If enacted, H.R. 2722 will provide nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti who entered the U.S. prior to December 1, 1995 the same opportunity to become lawful permanent residents of the United States that is currently available to similarly situated persons from Nicaragua and Cuba. Last month Senator Durbin introduced the Senate companion of this legislation, S. 1592.

Please support our efforts to assist the process of democratization and stabilization now underway in Central America and Haiti and to ensure just and compassionate treatment for immigrants from these countries by becoming a cosponsor of H.R. 2722.

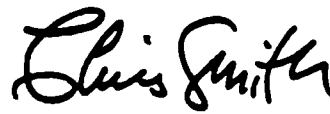
We look forward to you joining the growing numbers of cosponsors of this bill who believe this is a fair, equitable and just legislative initiative.

If you would like to sign on, please contact the Staff of the Subcommittee of the International Operations and Human Rights at x55748 or Jennice Fuentes (Cong. Gutierrez) at x58203.

Sincerely,



Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Chris Smith
Member of Congress

List of current cosponsors: Reps. Diaz-Balart, Meek, Ros-Lehtinen, Rep Delahunt, Ballenger, Ortiz, Gilman, Velazquez, Souder, Roybal-Allard, Thomas Davis, Hinojosa, Becerra, Menendez, Reyes, Serrano, Pastor, Hastings, Rangel, Gonzalez, Martinez, Rush, Jackson, Danny Davis, Waters, McGovern, Mink, Eshoo, Dixon, Cummings, Blagojevich, LaFalce, Capuano, Filner, Owens, Meeks, Pascrell, Stark, Olver, Corrine Brown, Wexler, Robert Brady, Norton, Moran, Nadler, Andrews, Lee, Woolsey, Morella, Crowley, Underwood, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Frost, Martin, Berman, Hinchey, Deutsch, Evans, Moakley, Meehan, Pelosi, Frank, Wynn, Payne, McDermott, Maloney, Schakowsky, Christensen, John Lewis, Lampson & Jackson-Lee.

Congress of the United States**Washington, DC 20515**

November 8, 1999

President William Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our concerns that neither the issue of amnesty for certain Central American and Haitian immigrants nor the updating of the registry provisions found in Section 249 of the Immigration and Nationality Act have been made priorities in the year-end negotiations regarding the budget and pending legislation.

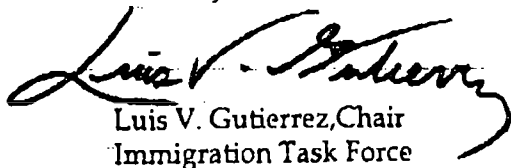
Members of your staff have repeatedly told us that these two items are a priority for you. However, we are aware that very few Members of the House and Senate have been notified of the White House's interest and support of these two issues. We are extremely concerned that if neither of these two issues is resolved this year, the unfairness and injustice that certain immigrant groups are currently facing will continue.

We have worked very hard to bring a measure of justice and fairness to Central American immigrants. Our goal, as you have said in respect to these immigrants, is to assure that "similarly situated people are treated similarly". We appreciate the support that you demonstrated for this goal this year by transmitting legislation (H.R. 2722) that will resolve the current situation. We believe that your involvement has been helpful to our ongoing efforts to resolve this issue this year.

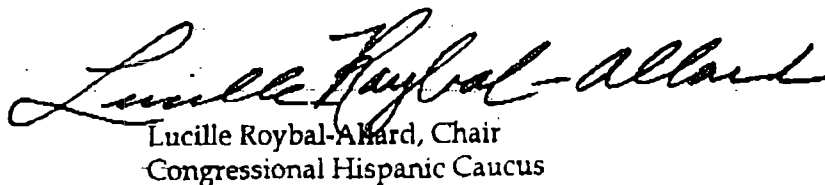
Nevertheless, the immigrant community urgently needs your support now. As Congress moves towards adjournment, many decisions are expected to be made by appropriators in the next few days. For this reason, it is with a renewed sense of timeliness that we request that you send a clear message to the appropriators that you wish to see the language of H.R. 2722 included in a final version of the District of Columbia or the Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations bill.

We look forward to you communicating a clear message to appropriators regarding the urgency of resolving these two issues during the ongoing appropriations discussions.

Sincerely,



Luis V. Gutierrez, Chair
Immigration Task Force



Lucille Roybal-Allard, Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus

E. CLAY SHAW
22nd DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE:

WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CHAIRMAN
SOCIAL SECURITY

TRADE

CHAIRMAN

FLORIDA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0922

September 22, 1999

2400 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3026

DISTRICT OFFICES:

BROWARD COUNTY
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Mr. Bernardo Villela
President
8500 West Flager Street Suite 108A
Miami, Florida 33144

Dear Mr. Villela:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your support of H.R. 2722, the Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act of 1999, introduced by Representative Christopher Smith (R-NJ).

As you may know, H.R. 2722 would amend the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act to allow certain nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti to apply for adjustment of status under that Act. Like you, I believe immigration policies should not favor one group of individuals, but instead apply equally and consistently to all nationalities.

H.R. 2722 has been referred to the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims. While I do not sit on this subcommittee, please be assured that I will keep your support in mind should this bill come to the House floor for a vote.

Again, thank you for contacting me.

Sincerely,

E. Clay Shaw, Jr.
Member of Congress

ECS:tg

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(305) 275-1800
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October 26, 1999

**The Honorable Connie Mack
517 Senate Hart Building
Washington, DC 20515**

Dear Senator Mack:

I am writing to thank you for your unwavering support on immigration legislation that has benefitted well deserving, productive immigrants of Florida's communities, and also to respectfully request that you lend your support to S. 1592 by becoming a cosponsor.

By allowing an opportunity for adjustment of legal status, S. 1592 will ensure that qualified immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Haiti will receive relief measures that refugees from Nicaragua and Cuba are enjoying with the passage of NACARA.

Your cosponsorship of S. 1592 will not only leave behind a powerful legacy of your support for Florida's future voters to witness, but will go far in demonstrating that Republicans do, indeed, stand tall for justice, and moreover extend their arms to victims of violence, and those who have long suffered from tyranny and persecution. On behalf of our many constituents who may receive fair and long due restitution with this legislation, please consider lending your support by publically cosponsoring S. 1592.

Sincerely,

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

IRL:jt

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California State Senate

SENATOR
LIZ FIGUEROA

TENTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON
BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS
CHAIR

COMMITTEES
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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
INSURANCE
TRANSPORTATION

October 22, 1999

Senator Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510



Dear Senator Boxer:

I am writing to request your support for the "Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act of 1999" (H.R. 2722). This national bill is vital and a fair expansion of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), to provide certain nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti an opportunity to apply for adjustment of status under the Act.

In the 1980's thousands of Salvadorans and Guatemalans fled civil wars in their countries and sought asylum in the United States since they had been persecuted or feared persecution in their home countries. Although Honduras did not formally wage civil war, the geography of the region made it impossible for Hondurans to be unaffected by the violence and turmoil that surrounded it. For many years, Haiti has also experienced extreme upheaval and many Haitians were forced to seek the protection of the United States due to oppression, human rights abuses and civil unrest.

In 1998, the Central American region was once again faced with devastation due to Hurricane Mitch, which affected El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Caribbean. Although international assistance had provided some support, the region is facing many basic challenges for at least the next decade. Central American immigrants currently residing in the United States are key to ensuring the reconstruction and healing of these struggling countries.

The restoration of democracy and the rebuilding efforts after a devastating hurricane in Central America and the Caribbean has been encouraging, but the situation continues to be difficult. Providing these productive individuals with an opportunity to apply for permanent resident status in the United States, instead of prolonging their decade long immigration limbo and possibly deporting them to a politically and economically fragile and devastated region, strengthens our national security interests.

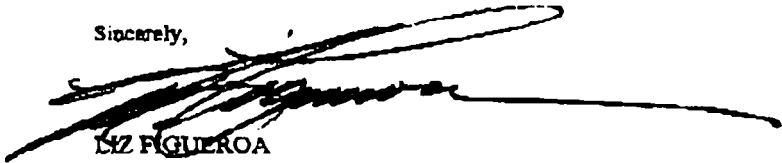
The vast majority of Central Americans who will benefit from H.R. 2722 are already known to the INS. They have resided and worked here for over a decade. They have established families, careers and community ties in this country and particularly in California. The relief H.R. 2722 would provide to Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Haitians is precisely the relief that NACARA already provides to Nicaraguans and Cubans. H.R. 2722 will insure that similarly situated Central Americans are given equal treatment in our immigration laws.

As a Salvadoran American, and as a member of the California legislature, I feel that your support is crucial for this legislation and for the state of California, since a significant amount of affected families reside in the state and contribute to its economic growth.

I urge you to meet with Central American leaders in Washington D.C. to discuss the issues and see how you can further support this needed and fair legislation on behalf of my Central American brothers and sisters. Should you have any questions, please contact my office at 916-445-6671 or Mr. Carlos Vaquerano, from SALEF, at 213-480-1092.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


LIZ FIGUEROA

LF:llm

COUNTIES OF ALAMEDA AND SANTA CLARA



Embajada de Guatemala
Washington

November 10, 1999

The Honorable William Clinton
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Ambassador of Guatemala before your great country, I am writing to unite my voice to those expressions of concern in regard to the situation of Central American and Haitian immigrants in the United States of America. The fact that the year-end negotiations is here and there is still no tacit action being taken for neither the registry provisions of Section 249 nor the amnesty issue on behalf of the Administration is worrisome.

On several opportunities, members of your staff have explained that these two issues are of priority to you. Nonetheless very few members of Congress have heard of the White House's interest and support for the fast solution of these important situations. The saddest part of the issue is that we are talking about people, about families, even citizens of the United States that will see their lives torn apart when losing a relative due to his or her immigration status.

As Guatemalans, we very much appreciate the support that you gave for this very humane goal by introducing H.R.2722, that would come to provide a solution to the matter. Several members of Congress, under the leadership of Senators Richard Durbin, Bob Graham and Edward Kennedy, as well as of Congressmen Chris Smith and Luis Gutierrez and Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, have stated their commitment towards solving this problem.

Mr. President, we urge you to express your support now. Adjournment is near giving us a sense of timeliness. We know that members of Congress have requested that H.R.2722 be added to the final version of the District of Columbia or the Commerce, justice and State Appropriations Bill. Please consider that solving this sad situation will add up to your impressive record of achievements.

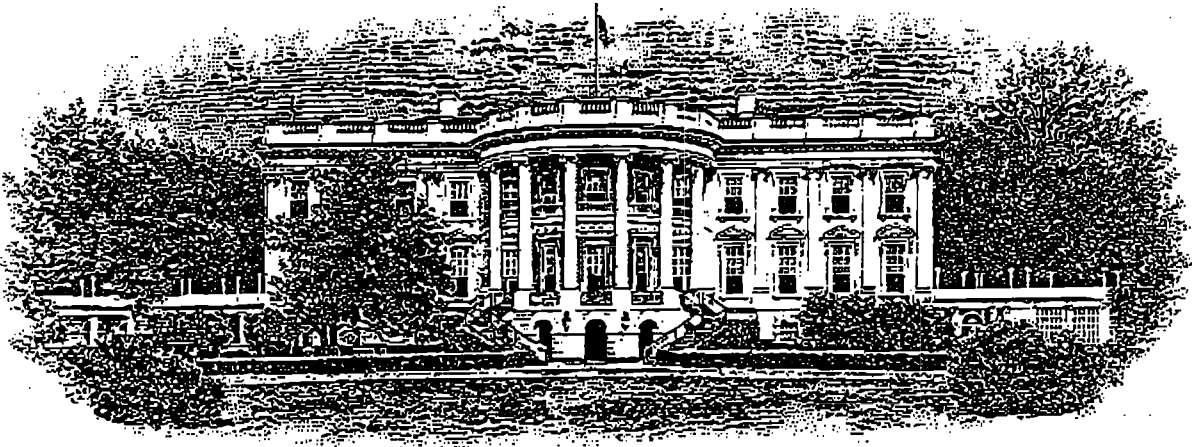


Sincerely yours,

William Stixrud
William Stixrud
Ambassador

bms

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
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From: Judy London / Angela Sanbrano

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Phone: (213) 385-0987

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Date:

11/16/99

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Dear Maria,

We look forward to hearing
from you.

Yours,
Angela



CARECEN

CENTRAL AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER / CENTRO DE RECURSOS CENTROAMERICANOS

November 16, 1999

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Ms. Maria Echaveste
Deputy Chief of Staff
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Echaveste:

We write to provide an update on the implementation of Section 203 of NACARA and to urge the President's support for those amendments to NACARA now pending in Congress. These amendments are essential to providing meaningful relief from deportation for thousands of Central Americans currently ineligible for NACARA.

CARECEN in Los Angeles is the largest agency in the country providing legal services to Central American immigrants. We are thus well situated to observe the impact that NACARA is having on the Central Americans seeking permanent residency in this country. Section 203 of NACARA must be amended for all of the following reasons: 1) the law as currently written is dividing families instead of ensuring family unity; 2) thousands of Central Americans who have resided legally in the United States since 1990 cannot benefit from NACARA because they did not complete the technical requirement of registering for ABC benefits; and 3) the law's complexity will result in a huge percentage of eligible Central Americans losing the relief and becoming deportable because they lack access to competent legal assistance.

1. Separation of Families

Of over 15,000 Central American families who visit CARECEN each year for advice on NACARA, nearly half of these families learn that at least one member of their immediate family cannot benefit from NACARA and will be subject to removal.

A. The "Aging-out" Problem.

Under NACARA, a child who entered this country after October 1, 1990, loses NACARA eligibility unless his or her parent is granted NACARA relief before the child turns 21. Since NACARA was enacted in November 1997, thousands of children have turned 21 and by so doing lost the possibility of gaining permanent residency. The Justice Department's delays have thus caused the greatest harm to the segment of the population most assimilated to American culture: high school students who have spent most of their lives here and are pursuing college education.

Between 1997 and the present, these "aging-out" children could take no action to preserve their eligibility, as the INS refused to create meaningful procedures to expedite the cases of families in this precarious situation. In August, our agency succeeded in having the first NACARA interview in the country. The interview was scheduled to protect our 20-year-old client from "aging-out" of eligibility. This means that until August, only one child nationwide was given this opportunity. Now, the INS has conducted a handful of such interviews in Los Angeles. However, attorneys throughout the country remain unaware of how to expedite their cases and watch hopelessly as their clients turn 21 and lose all relief. What the law has thus created is a situation in which thousands of young adults who have turned 21 since the law's enactment will be deportable, while the parents and sibling of these children gain greencards.

B. The Motion To Reopen Problem.

A separate reason that families are being divided by NACARA relates to the Motion to Reopen problem. In implementing NACARA, the Justice Department promulgated a regulation requiring any NACARA applicant with a final order of deportation to file a motion to reopen his or her case by September 8, 1998. This requirement was impossible to meet for the majority of applicants with old final orders. Of 230,000 ABC class members, an estimated 40,000 have final deportation orders from the 1980s, a decade when the Justice Department unlawfully discriminated against asylum applicants from El Salvador and Guatemala. These individuals were told eight years ago, when they registered for TPS, that their deportation orders were stayed under the ABC settlement and would no longer matter. Because of this message, a message that was accurate at the time and for the following seven years, it was extremely difficult to explain to this same group of people that the deportation orders suddenly were relevant and a motion had to be filed to reopen old proceedings.

What is most unfair about the motion to reopen deadline is that thousands of NACARA applicants had no way to learn in 1998 whether or not they had a final deportation order. The INS records are not complete and often do not appear in an applicant's file nor in the Court's database. If the order was *in absentia* and/or the applicant could not recall his or her A number from a case that was fifteen years old, the applicant had no way to document the final order and thus could not file a motion to reopen. Nevertheless, such an applicant will find himself barred from NACARA relief should the Justice Department subsequently discover the old order.

Each day at CARECEN, we interview an average of six people who have missed the motion to reopen deadline and have thus become ineligible for NACARA relief. Their failure to file a motion is nearly always due to the fact that they did not know they had a final deportation order. We subsequently discover the order through a request for FBI records. In most cases, these individuals have spouses and children who will be eligible for NACARA relief.

Because of the impossible burden placed on NACARA applicants in determining the existence of a final deportation order and then complying with the 1998 reopen deadline, the INS General Counsel's office distributed a memorandum to local INS District Counsel Offices to stipulate to a late filing of a NACARA motion to reopen "for any valid reason." Despite the reasonable approach authorized by this Memorandum, in Los Angeles it is rare if not impossible to obtain such a stipulation from the Office of the District Counsel. For example, CARECEN represents a Salvadoran man who is an ABC class member. In September, 1998, he had only vague information about NACARA and believed it benefited only Nicaraguans. When he learned that Salvadorans could also qualify for relief, he came to CARECEN. An attorney then discovered that he had an *in absentia* deportation order by reviewing a copy of his recently obtained INS file. The discovery was made after the motion to reopen deadline had passed. This man had resided legally in the United States since 1991. He supports his wife and three

teenage children as a mechanic. He has paid taxes every year of his residence in this country and is an active member of his church. The INS has refused to stipulate to a filing of a late motion to reopen this case, and the INS Office of General Counsel has refused to intervene to change this result. Most likely, this man will be subject to removal, leaving his teenagers without a father, his wife alone to care for them, and rendering the family destitute. This case is typical of the family separations resulting from the implementation of NACARA.

2. Thousands of Central Americans Who Are In The Same Situation as ABC Class Members Cannot Benefit From NACARA Because They Cannot Satisfy Its Overly Technical Requirements.

Tony is a 19-year-old college student and a United States wrestling champion. He has overcome enormous obstacles on the way to such achievements. In 1990, Tony and his sister, who were then ages ten and seven, fled El Salvador and came with their parents to the United States. That same year, Tony's mother was deported. While trying to return again to her children, she drowned in a river. After her death, Tony's father abandoned his children. Tony was left alone to care for his sister. The two moved from house to house, staying as long as friends would have them. Eventually, a neighbor adopted Tony's sister, and she became a legal permanent resident. Tony was left alone, and despite meetings with over thirty teachers and lawyers, not one adult gave Tony immigration advice that then would have helped him obtain permanent residency.

Though frequently homeless, Tony persevered and graduated from high school. Along the way he became the California wrestling champion in his division, and moved in to live with his wrestling coach and the coach's family. Tony now has a real home but no way to ever legalize his immigration status. He cannot qualify for NACARA relief because he never registered for TPS in 1991 nor filed for asylum prior to April, 1990. Even if his mother had taken such steps, her death prevents Tony from deriving NACARA eligibility.

While Tony's achievements are remarkable, his story in terms of his immigration history is not unique. Thousands of children and young adults in California cannot benefit from NACARA because they did not register for ABC benefits. In all other respects, these individuals are in the same situation as the NACARA-eligible population. Sadly, the population most heavily prejudiced by NACARA's technical requirements is that of young adults who as children did not have the capacity to obtain immigration assistance. These young adults often cannot speak adequate Spanish, and are completely acculturated and immersed in American society. In depriving them of the chance to legalize their immigration status, these children (no matter how much they succeed in school) will have no options in this country other than day labor. They will not return to their countries of origin as they no longer have any ties to such countries.

In addition to young adults, thousands of indigenous Guatemalans did not register for ABC benefits and thus cannot seek relief under NACARA. These Guatemalans suffered extreme persecution in Guatemala's civil war, and were too fearful of authorities to seek immigration advice about the ABC agreement. Many also could not speak Spanish and thus could not obtain information they needed about immigration law. For other reasons, a huge percentage of the Guatemalan indigenous community in California will never be able to obtain permanent residency, despite having equities equal or greater to those Guatemalans who are ABC registrants.

3. Because of NACARA's Complexity, Thousands of Central Americans Eligible For NACARA Relief Will Be Subject To Removal Because They Will Be Unable To Obtain Competent Legal Assistance.

The *notarios* who prey upon vulnerable immigrants are out in force, selling NACARA services. CARECEN sees dozens of people every week who have been victims of *notario* fraud. These clients are told they are NACARA-eligible, charged a thousand dollars, and then assisted to do NACARA applications by individuals with no knowledge of the law. These applications are often never mailed. When they are sent to the INS, they will likely be denied because they contain so many inaccuracies or outright fraud. In some cases, *notarios* are applying for children who still have not resided in the United States for the requisite seven years. These children would become NACARA-eligible if they simply waited to accrue the seven years, but by filing for NACARA relief prematurely, these children will be denied and subject to removal. There is no end to the variety of scams perpetrated by the *notarios*.

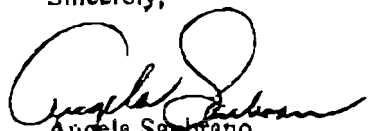
The reason that so many immigrants resort to these *notarios* is because they have no other option. CARECEN is the largest agency in the country assisting low-income immigrants in applying for NACARA. CARECEN is only able to prepare 200 applications a year (80 families). This limitation is because of the complexity and time required to complete a NACARA case. Low-income Central Americans (the average income of a CARECEN client is \$10,000) cannot afford to pay private lawyers to take their cases. The average fee charged by a private attorney is \$2,000 per family member. Thus, a family of four would need \$8,000 to have private representation. Because of limited financial resources, the NACARA-eligible population is forced to rely on *notarios*. Many applicants will never be granted relief, not because of the merits of their case but simply because they lack competent assistance in preparing their cases.

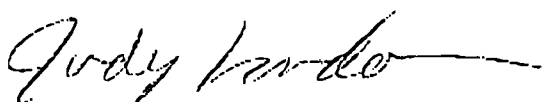
4. To Insure Fairness for Central Americans, NACARA Must Be Amended.

The Central American community continues to feel cheated by NACARA. There is a deep sense of anger that Congress chose to grant Nicaraguans and Cubans a simple way of securing permanent residency while providing much more limited Section 203 relief to Salvadorans and Guatemalans. This fundamental unfairness has become even more apparent from the implementation of NACARA. Those eligible face huge hurdles in obtaining permanent residency because of the law's complexity. For a significant percentage of families, the law is bittersweet. These families watch helplessly as a child turns twenty-one and "ages-out" of NACARA relief, or another family member learns of the existence of an old deportation order and thus loses his or her chance at residency. Finally, too many people who warrant the relief are ineligible for technical reasons that serve no broader public policy.

We urge the Clinton Administration to do everything in its power to amend NACARA and deliver on a promise to treat Central American immigrants fairly. All Central American immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti who entered this country before December 1, 1995 should be granted the same relief that NACARA provides for Nicaraguans and Cubans. Legislation that creates such parity will finally result in justice for Central Americans, and will ensure that the United States fully benefits from the enormous contributions that Central Americans seek to make in this country as permanent residents.

Sincerely,


Angela Sanbrano
Executive Director


Judy London
Legal Director


CARECEN
CENTRAL AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER / CENTRO DE RECURSOS CENTROAMERICANOS
November 16, 1999
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The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to urge that, as you consider your priorities in final negotiation with Congress on the Fiscal Year 2000 budget, you include the passage of legislation that your Administration drafted the Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act of 1999-introduced in the House by Christopher Smith and 27 cosponsors, and in the Senate by Richard Durbin and Edward Kennedy.

As you well know, the individuals who would benefit from this legislation have resided in the U.S. for many years. They now have deep roots in this country, with jobs, family, homes, and other community ties. Their relative success in the U.S. has allowed them to send back- hundreds of millions of dollars in remittances to their home countries. The remittances provide a crucial source of foreign exchange, helping to stabilize the emerging democracies of Central America at a time when they are recovering of decades of civil wars, and from the natural catastrophe of Hurricane Mitch. The remittances serve to complement foreign policy, which has tried bolster the economies of the region and encourage the growth of democracy.

If the relief provided by the Central American And Haitians Adjustment Act does not ultimately become law, many Central Americans and others with deep roots in the U.S. will be facing deportation. This will diminish the private flow of money to the region, and will create instability by adding workers to economic already unable to provide enough jobs for the existing workforce.

The individuals who would be covered by the Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act all have similar histories. All have fled civil conflict that affected their home countries. Many came to the U.S. at a time when our asylum system was crippled by political bias, and they have a history of being treated unfairly by our government. For many years, they have sought amends for the earlier unfair treatment. During those years, they have resided here in temporary statuses that have kept them in legal limbo. The recently-passed relief legislation, in particular the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act, only perpetuated

the discriminatory treatment, by allowing favored groups to gain permanent residence, while others in similar circumstances face the prospect of deportation

I urge you to act to end this unequal treatment, and in the process bolster our foreign policy interests, by insisting that the relief contained in the Central American and Haitian Adjustment Act be included in a final budget deal that is ultimately passed and signed into law.

Sincerely,



Angela Sanbrano
Executive Director
CARECEN