

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



MALDEF

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

Washington, D.C.
Regional Office
1717 K Street, NW
Suite 811
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: 202.298.2828
Fax: 202.298.2849

National Headquarters
Los Angeles
Regional Office
824 E. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90014
Tel: 213.628.2512
Fax: 213.628.0288

Chicago
Regional Office
188 W. Randolph Street
Suite 1406
Chicago, IL 60601
Tel: 312.782.1422
Fax: 312.782.1428

San Antonio
Regional Office
140 E. Houston Street
Suite 300
San Antonio, TX 78208
Tel: 210.224.5476
Fax: 210.224.5382

San Francisco
Regional Office
680 Market Street
Suite 208
San Francisco, CA 94108
Tel: 415.248.5808
Fax: 415.248.5818

Sacramento
Satellite Office
926 J Street
Suite 408
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tel: 916.443.7331
Fax: 916.443.1441

Albuquerque
Program Office
1808 Central Avenue, SE
Suite 201
Albuquerque, NM 87108
Tel: 505.843.8888
Fax: 505.248.9184

Phoenix
Program Office
202 E. McDowell Road
Suite 170
Phoenix, AZ 85004
Tel: 602.307-6918
Fax: 602.307-6928

Atlanta
Census Office
3356 Lanox Road
Suite 790
Atlanta, GA 30326
Tel: 404.504.7020
Fax: 404.504.7021



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November 16, 1999

President William Jefferson Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C.

VIA FACSIMILE

Dear Mr. President:

As the budget negotiations continue, I want to address an issue of great importance to MALDEF and to the Latino community we serve: the need for a change in the date of registry.

The date of registry is that date of record for lawful admission for permanent residence in the U.S. This date has periodically been adjusted forward with the last adjustment occurring in 1986. MALDEF believes that changing the registry date is the most efficient, effective and just remedy for many long-time residents and contributing members of our society who are currently without legal status in this country. In particular, late amnesty applicants who have been in legal limbo for over a decade will be well served by this change.

The entire 350,000 late amnesty class members would benefit from a registry date change. For approximately one-third of the members, a new registry date would be the only remedy.

Neither a filing fee nor the filing of a new application will dissuade applicants. Large numbers within our community who are class members would plainly welcome the opportunity to regularize their status. The prospect of re-filing another application or the payment of another fee are a small price to pay to resolve a decade-long wait for legal status.

The lack of confidentiality of the registry process will not discourage applicants. The lack of confidentiality of a registry application will not discourage the vast majority of our community's applicants. Furthermore, applicants can choose to not apply for registry if they believe they will not be granted the status. We believe that the majority of the affected class members will come forward to finally claim legal status.

*Celebrating Our 30th Anniversary
Protecting and Promoting Latino Civil Rights*

NOV 19 1999

It is our sincere hope that, as difficult decisions are made in these final days of the legislative session, this straight-forward and long overdue change in the immigration law will be given a high priority by your administration.

Sincerely,

ANTONIA HERNANDEZ
PRESIDENT AND GENERAL COUNSEL

Antonia Hernandez

cc:

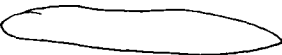
Maria Echaveste
Senator Tom Daschle
Congressman Richard Gephardt

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Dear Antonia:

Thank you for writing to express your views regarding the need to revise the current registry date. I appreciate your insights, and I have shared your correspondence with members of my staff in the Domestic Policy Council.

the Justice Dept
Many people have spoken out regarding the critical situation of families who are late amnesty class members, and I agree that it is a matter of grave concern. That is why I ~~had~~ asked the Department of Justice to review the situation and provide recommendations for solutions. ~~However~~ After an extensive review, DOJ ~~concluded~~ ^{could not} that it ~~cannot~~ offer any administrative relief to members of the late amnesty group, ~~short of~~ ^{and that} a legislative change ^{would be required}.

Like you, I support legislation to revise the registry date to allow the legalization of long-term migrants. The registry date was established in recognition that migrants who have resided in the U.S. for a long period have developed substantial ties to this country including establishing families, homes and their communities. The date has not changed since 1986 and needs revision. Revising the registry date from 1972 to 1986 would not only provide humanitarian relief to many long-term migrants, but also reduce or eliminate the need to continue litigating some of the large class actions still lingering from the 1986 legalization program. I will work with the Congress to enact this legislation to provide help for these families. As we move forward in this  endeavor, I welcome your continued involvement on this matter.

Best regards.

Sincerely,