

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it has been said that the United States is like a brilliant tapestry woven from a dazzling array of colors and patterns into a unique whole. If that is true, then the contributions of Hispanics are surely among the largest and most vibrant swaths in our rich national tapestry, and Hispanic Heritage Month is a good time to reflect on those contributions.

This celebration runs each year from mid-September to mid-October. The dates were chosen to coincide with the dates in which several Latin American nations—including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile—celebrate their own independence from colonial rule. This national celebration used to be just a week long, but in 1988, Congress wisely and unanimously voted to expand Hispanic Heritage Week to Hispanic Heritage Month. The legislation was sponsored by Congressman Esteban Torres and my friend and political mentor, Senator Paul Simon. It was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan, a proud, conservative Republican who understood that America's heritage as a nation of immigrants is one of our greatest sources of strength—economically, politically, culturally and morally.

The contributions and influence of Latinos on our Nation has grown dramatically in the three decades since the establishment of Hispanic Heritage Month. Today there are more than 60 million Latinos in the U.S. Illinois is proud to be home to one of the largest Latino populations in the country, including many people of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Guatemalan heritage. Latinos and Latinas are leaders in every walk of life, including business, the arts, sciences, education, sports, entertainment, and public service. A “wise Latina,” Justice Sonia Sotomayor, now serves on the U.S. Supreme Court. Ellen Ochoa, an engineer and the first Latina astronaut, is now director of NASA's Johnson Space Center. Latinas are literally helping America reach for the stars.

In my home State of Illinois, Dr. Juan Andrade, Jr., is the president of the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute, based in Chicago. He and his organization are doing critical work to educate and motivate Latinos to vote and to fill out the Census, ensuring that Latinos are seen and their voices heard. Alexis Esparza is president of Economic Strategies Development Cor-

poration. For nearly half a century, his organization, ESDC, has worked in the Pilsen community of Chicago to preserve historic buildings, build affordable new housing, and help create new commercial and industrial economic development opportunities. They are part of a long and proud tradition of Hispanic men and women whose work has made America's economy more prosperous and fairer for all of us.

Many Americans know the names Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. In 1966, these two brave labor leaders helped organize farm workers in Delano, CA, to form the United Farm Workers of America. Standing together, backed by their union, the farm workers were able to strike for higher wages, safer working conditions, and protections for women farm workers from sexual violence.

Far fewer people recognize the name Guadalupe Marshall. She is also a hero for workers' rights. Let me tell you about her. On Memorial Day 1937, 10 unarmed union demonstrators from Republic Steele were shot down by police in Chicago. Lupe Marshall, who had immigrated to America from Mexico when she was 10 years old, was one of the people attending that strike. She was a mother of three and a volunteer social worker at the Jane Addams Hull House. The “Memorial Day Massacre” is how many history books label the carnage at Republic Steele. Three weeks after the killings, Lupe Marshall travelled to Washington, DC, to testify before the Senate about what she had witnessed.

She described placing herself on the front line when shots rang out and then turning to see many people lying face down on the ground. She ran, but she was clubbed in the head and arrested. Her courage helped to build support among the American people and in Congress for laws to help working people stand together for fair wages, safe working conditions, and civil rights.

During this Hispanic Heritage Month, we are especially aware of the enormous contributions that Hispanic Americans continue to make to America's economy. Sadly, we know that this COVID-19 pandemic is taking a disproportionate toll on Black and Brown Americans. Nationwide, Latinos are being hospitalized with COVID-19 at more than 4½ times the rate of White people. In Illinois and several other States, Latinos have the highest COVID-19 infection rates of any ethnic group. COVID-19 is also threatening the livelihoods of Latinos throughout the US. Almost 60 percent of Latino households have experienced job loss or wage reductions during this pandemic.

At the same time, our Nation is relying heavily on Latinos, both citizens and immigrants, to help steer us safely through this pandemic. Latinos are working on the frontlines of this pandemic as doctors, nurses, and home healthcare workers. They are also working around the clock, behind the scenes, to disinfect our workplaces, schools, stores, and health centers. Latino farm workers continue to work

in the fields and in packing plants, harvesting, and preparing the food that keeps us fed. Despite the virus and, now, the thick smoke of wildfires blanketing much of the west coast, they remain on the job.

Latinos are working as grocery clerks, teachers, postal employees, servicemembers, and other “essential worker jobs.” Many of these heroic essential workers are immigrants, and many are Dreamers. They continue to work and serve in their communities while their own status remains in limbo.

Latino-owned businesses are one of the fastest growing segments of America's economy. Nationwide, nearly 1-in-4 newly created businesses today are Latino-owned. More than 4 million Latino-owned businesses provide jobs for 2.7 million workers. Together, these businesses pump over \$700 billion into America's economy. In Illinois, 120,000 Latino-owned businesses generate \$15 billion and create jobs for 100,000 workers. These passionate entrepreneurs are the heart and pride of their communities. I see them in communities all across Illinois. Let me tell you about some of them.

In Chicagoland, Latino community and business leaders have created programs such as the Food for Hope Program and the Big Shoulders Fund to distribute free food to families who are hungry because of economic hardships related to the pandemic.

Pedro Perez owns his own maintenance company, PCY General Services. He and his daughter are part of a team that diligently disinfects Esperanza Health Centers on the Southwest Side of Chicago to make sure that the space is safe for families and for the medical professionals who work there. What is even more remarkable is that he does all of this without charge. Why? Pedro says, with a smile, because “it's his community.” Every day, in every community in Illinois and every corner of America, you can find stories like theirs.

The beauty and richness of the Latino community goes beyond food and traditions. At the heart of the Latino community is an exceptionally resilient spirit that has sustained them through history and is helping to sustain America today through the most severe health and economic crises most of us has ever experienced. I am honored to represent so many of these hard-working families in my State and look forward to see how they continue to inspire us to keep building a better America for everyone.

 DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
MEMORIAL

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, we celebrate the 130th birthday of America's 34th President and Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary