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 “ganas” — 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 long-time 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-

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 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)
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 advocates for reform are expected to attend but not yet confirmed, including radio personality Piolín 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 in Zoot Suit

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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.”

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To help the family of Jaime Escalante, contact:

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