HEARING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, REFUGEES, BORDER SECURITY, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY; SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: BECOMING AMERICANS, U.S. IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION; CHAIRED BY: REPRESENTATIVE ZOE LOFGREN (D-CA); WITNESSES: JOHN FONTE, PH.D., SENIOR FELLOW, THE HUDSON INSTITUTE; GARY GERSTLE, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY; DONALD KERWIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC.; RUBEN G. RUMBAUT, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE; LOCATION: 2141 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Federal News Service

May 16, 2007 Wednesday

Section: CAPITOL HILL HEARING

Length: 15159 words

Body

HEARING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ***IMMIGRATION***, CITIZENSHIP, REFUGEES, BORDER SECURITY, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE ***IMMIGRATION REFORM***: BECOMING AMERICANS, U.S. IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION CHAIRED BY: REPRESENTATIVE ZOE LOFGREN (D-CA) WITNESSES: JOHN FONTE, PH.D., SENIOR FELLOW, THE HUDSON INSTITUTE; GARY GERSTLE, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF HISTORY, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY; DONALD KERWIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CATHOLIC LEGAL ***IMMIGRATION*** NETWORK, INC.; RUBEN G. RUMBAUT, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE LOCATION: 2141 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. TIME: 9:37 A.M. EST DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2007

REP. LOFGREN: This hearing of the Subcommittee on ***Immigration***, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law will come to order.

I would like to welcome the ***Immigration*** Subcommittee members, our witnesses, and members of the public who are here today for the subcommittee's ninth hearing on comprehensive ***immigration reform***.

I would like to welcome the ***Immigration*** Subcommittee members. We wanted to -- we started our series of hearings at Ellis Island, where we examined the need for comprehensive ***immigration reform*** to secure our borders, to address economic and demographic concerns, and we reviewed our nation's rich history. We studied ***immigration reform*** from 1986 and 1996 in an effort to avoid the mistakes of the past.

We've considered the problems with and proposed solutions for our current employment and worksite verification systems. In light of recent proposals by the White House to eliminate family priorities in ***immigration*** and replace it with a completely new and untested point system, we studied the contributions of family immigrants to America and various ***immigration*** point systems used around the world.

The genius of America has always been our strength as a society. People from all over the world come to America to become Americans with us. When a new citizen raises her hand to become an American at her citizenship ceremony, she pledges her future to America, she promises to defend our country and our Constitution, and she immediately inherits a grand history of her new country, from George Washington to today.

Today some fear that America has lost its exceptional status and some contend that unlike immigrants from other generations, immigrants today are not ***assimilating*** fast enough or at all. One clear and objective sign of ***assimilation*** is the process by which immigrants master the English language. The census and various academic studies and research show that immigrants and their descendants are learning English at a rate comparable to the past waves of immigrants. According to the 2005 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 82 percent of immigrants 24 and older report that they speak English well or very well. Younger immigrants fare even better -- 95 percent of immigrants from 18 to 23 report speaking English well or very well. By the third generation, most grandchildren of immigrants can in fact speak only English, even in heavily Spanish-speaking areas of the country such as Southern California.

Our first witness, Professor Gerstle, explains that the Southern and Eastern Europeans who immigrated to the United States a century ago and are now held up as model immigrants were once depicted much as immigrants of today -- unable and unwilling to ***assimilate***. Yet, the professor explains, these European immigrants did well in joining American society. He finds that these so-called new immigrants of then successfully integrated into the United States despite such hostility because of three factors: the ability of immigrants to participate in American democracy, natural transition from immigrants to their children, ability of immigrants to achieve economic security.

He states that the ability of immigrants to participate in politics and to feel as though their votes made a difference was crucial to their engagement with and integration into America. He also notes that an immigrant population that finds itself unable to move out of poverty or to gain confidence that it can provide a decent life for their children is far more likely to descend into alienation than to embrace America.

What we can learn from this historical account is that including immigrants in mainstream American society and the economy is a quick way -- is the quickest way to ***assimilation*** and integration. If creating new Americans is a goal of our ***immigration*** policy, then we should ensure that comprehensive ***immigration reform*** reflects that objective.

Purely temporary worker programs with little opportunity for those who contribute to our economy to become full members of the country that they've helped to build run contrary to the goal of Americanism and ***assimilation*** because such programs relegate people to a life in a permanent underclass. Furthermore, under purely temporary worker programs, there is little incentive and little time to learn English if after two or three years of full-time work in the U.S. the only choice is returning home to a non-English-speaking country.

As we develop comprehensive ***immigration reform***, we must not forget that mandating and facilitating the process for immigrants to learn English is important but not sufficient in achieving the goal of ***assimilation*** and allowing new immigrants to become Americans. The opportunity to become fully participating members of our polity, our civic society and our economy is a ***key*** to, as Professor Gerstle so pointedly discussed in his written testimony, allowing new immigrants to become our new Americans.

I would now recognize the ranking member for his opening statement.

REP. STEVE KING (R-IA): Thank you, Madame Chair.

As I expressed to the witnesses this morning, I appreciate you being here and committing your time to the knowledge base of this Congress, this panel, and the American people.

However nothing in these hearings will replace hearings on actual legislation when we can actually examine the language and have input on the impact of that language on the American life with that policy that might come from specific language.

But facing us on the back wall of this hearing room we're looking at our national seal. And on the seal is our nation's motto: "E pluribus unum." And that means, of course, "Out of many, one." This motto was proposed by a committee appointed by Congress on July 4th, 1776, and on that committee were John Adams, Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Lest there be any doubt about what meaning was intended by our founders in choosing that phrase -- E pluribus unum -- I point out that the design they proposed for the seal was not the eagle originally, as you see today, but rather a shield containing the six symbols for, and I'll quote, "the countries from which these states have been peopled.

"

The patriotic ***assimilation*** of new immigrants has been a primary objective of our ***immigration*** policy since our nation's birth. Washington recommended that ***assimilation*** into the mainstream of American life and values be encouraged so that immigrants and native- born Americans would soon become one people. Only within the last generation or so have the terms ***assimilation*** and Americanization given away to cultural pluralism and multiculturalism.

The title of this hearing uses the word integration, a term that's defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as, "the bringing of people of different racial or ethnic groups into an unrestricted and equal association, as in a society or organization." Or alternatively, mostly we understand it to mean desegregation.

That term, however, does not capture the spirit of Americans. In a public speech after the publication of the 1995 report by the U.S. Commission on ***Immigration Reform***, Barbara Jordan declared that: "The term Americanization earned a bad reputation when it was stolen by racist xenophobes in the '20s. But it's our word, and we are taking it back," according to Barbara Jordan. She explained, and I quote: "When using the term Americanization, the commission means the cultivation of a shared commitment to the American values of liberty, democracy and equal opportunity, something that is possible regardless of the nationality or religious background of immigrants and their children. We view Americanization positively as the inclusion of all who wish to embrace the civic culture which holds our nation together," closed quote.

I agree with her on this policy. We need to refocus our priorities on helping those who are here legally now and help them embrace our new country by emphasizing the rapid learning of our common language of English, by instilling core American values, the ideals of our constitutional republic, and by ensuring that immigrants' loyalty to America and not to the country from which they came is achieved.

There are tens of thousands of people marching -- who have marched in the streets of America under thousands of flags of foreign countries, chanting for another nation -- doesn't give me confidence that we have established the Americanization or the ***assimilation*** that we need to hold this country together under one cultural foundation. Teddy Roosevelt spoke to it powerfully in a number of his writings and statements.

But I would just skip forward and say that on a different subject, the minority requested a hearing for last week because we were denied the opportunity to present a witness of our choice from the previous week. What transpired was the use of the hearing process to demean the efforts of Mr. Willard Fair, one of our volunteer witnesses as well. He's the president and the CEO of the Urban League of Greater Miami and he's worked for 40 years to help the lives of African-Americans and increase their employment. He was not allowed to answer or respond to the questions that were peppered at him, and I believe that we need to treat you all with a level of respect and deference, and I insist that we do so. But when I asked for unanimous consent for Mr. Fair to respond to those questions, there was an objection and that's something that I hope does not happen again with any of the witnesses. I want to hear from you myself.

And so with that, I would say also that there was a rebuttal to the Rector study, and I hope that we can have a panel here to allow Mr. Rector to be able to face his accusers. I read the rebuttal. I didn't find any facts in that rebuttal. But what I do have here is a request for a minority hearing, Madame Chair, and I'd ask unanimous consent that the letter be introduced into the record, and hopefully we can move forward with the proper edification of this panel and the people of this country as they observe our process here.

This is a very pivotal issue that is before us in this Congress. There is no putting the toothpaste back in the tube. We had better get it right. We can learn from history. We can learn from facts. And as the chair stated last week, we are entitled to our own opinions. We are not entitled to our own facts. The facts are in the Rector study. They do not include national interest or national defense in his conclusions. They are only there that you can draw your own calculation if you choose, but not in Rector's conclusions. I look forward to hearing from him, and hopefully we can have that kind of a hearing in the future.

Thank you, Madame Chair, and I'd yield back.

REP. LOFGREN: Without objection, the letter will be made a part of the record and dealt with according to the rules.

I would now recognize the chairman of the full committee, Mr. John Conyers, for his statement.

REP. JOHN CONYERS JR. (D-MI): Thank you and good morning, Madame Chairperson, and members of the committee and our very important witnesses here.

This to me -- and I congratulate you, Ms. Lofgren -- is a philosophical inquiry that we're making today. Are new immigrant groups any different from old immigrant groups? That's a great subject to kick around on a Wednesday morning.

And I remember -- I'm so happy to hear the ranking subcommittee member, Steve King, tell me that we need to refocus our energies on those who are doing their best to make it here because that means he's come a little distance from an assertion that I remember him making, that we've gotten so messed up in the ***immigration*** issue that even legal ***immigration*** is unworkable. And I'm happy to know that that is a direction that he's moving in.

Now, are the new wave of immigrants different from the ones that came from Germany in 1751 or Ireland in 1856 or from China in 1882 or from Italy in 1896 or from Mexico in 1956, and now, of course, the Latino groups completely, from Latin America? And what I'm thinking is that this discussion becomes critical in our understanding of what our job is about ***reform*** -- major ***reform*** of the ***immigration*** law -- because it's very easy to get caught in a time warp. That is to say that we're looking at now and good night; this is different, Conyers. Don't you get it? This isn't the 18th century or the 19th century or the 20th century. This is different. And if you don't understand that, we're not going to be able to get anywhere.

And so this discussion amongst us and with our witnesses becomes important because it attempts to pull another layer off the onion that gets us to the importance of what it is we're going to do legislatively. We've been given another week by the Senate. I think that's critical. I was very nervous when I came in to ask what finally happened late last night. But it just occurred to me that the first person killed in Iraq was Lance Corporal Jose Antonio Gutierrez -- an illegal immigrant, if you please, who was undocumented. Our country gave him a chance, a home, a career in the military, and he was just one of millions who've embraced America's promise of freedom and opportunity.

And so yes, I say, time and time again, we've worried about whether some people can ***assimilate*** satisfactorily into this so-called American melting pot. And time and time again, these fears have proven to be completely unfounded.

So I look forward to all of the witnesses, including the minority's witness as well, to join us in this discussion this morning. And I thank you for this opportunity.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you, Mr. Conyers.

Noting that we have witnesses to hear from, without objection all members of the committee are invited to submit their statements for the record.

Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the hearing at any time.

We have a distinguished panel of witnesses here today to help us consider the important issues before us.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Gary Gerstle, a professor of history at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Gerstle's research is focused on the nexus between ***immigration***, race, and nationhood. His co-authored college textbook, "Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People," will soon enter its fifth edition. He comes to Vanderbilt after teaching at the University of Maryland, the University of Pennsylvania, and the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris.

In addition to his teaching and research responsibilities, he serves on the editorial board of the Journal of American History. He earned his doctorate degree in history from Harvard University.

We will next hear from Dr. Ruben G. Rumbaut, professor of sociology at the University of California -- my home state -- at Irvine. A native of Havana, Cuba, Dr. Rumbaut has conducted world- renowned research on ***immigration***, including his current work on the landmark Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study, which began in 1991, and the large-scale study of ***Immigration*** and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles. He was a fellow at the Center of Advanced Study in the behavioral sciences at Stanford -- my alma mater -- and the founding chair of the Section on International Migration of the American Sociological Association, and a member of the committee on population in the National Academy of Sciences. He received his bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis, a master's degree from San Diego State University, and a master's and doctoral degree from Brandeis University.

I'm pleased to next welcome Donald Kerwin, the executive director of the Catholic League (sic/Legal) ***Immigration*** Network, Inc., or CLINIC, since 1993. CLINIC, a public interest legal corporation and a subsidiary of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, supports a national network of 161 charitable legal programs for immigrants from more than 260 locations across the nation. Prior to his work at CLINIC, Mr. Kerwin practiced law as an associate with the Washington law firm of Patton Boggs. He serves as an adviser to the Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration, a member of the American Bar Association's Commission on ***Immigration***, and a fellow at the Migration Policy Institute. He earned his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and his law degree from the University of Michigan Law School.

Finally, we're pleased to welcome the minority's witness, Dr. John Fonte, the director of the Center for American Common Culture and senior fellow at the Hudson Institute here in Washington. In addition to his work at the Hudson Institute, Dr. Fonte has worked as a senior researcher at the U.S. Department of Education and a program administrator at the National Endowment for the Humanities. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Arizona and his Ph.D. in world history from the University of Chicago.

Each of you has written statements which I have read with great interest, and they will all be made part of the record in their entirety.

I would ask that each of you summarize your testimony in five minutes or less. And to stay within that time, you can see that there's a little machine on the desk. When the light turns yellow, it means that you have one minute, and when it turns red -- this always surprises witnesses because the time flies -- it means that five minutes are actually up, and we would ask that you summarize your last sentence so that we can hear from all the witnesses and then also get to questions.

So if we would begin, Dr. Gerstle?

MR. GERSTLE: (Off mike.)

REP. CONYERS: Turn on your mike, please.

MR. GERSTLE: I wish to thank you for the invitation to appear before your committee today.

Since its founding, the United States has arguably integrated more immigrants -- both in absolute and relative terms -- than any other nation. In the years between the 1820s and 1920s, an estimated 35 million immigrants came to

the United States. Approximately 40 to 50 million more came between the 1920s and the 2010s, with most of those coming after 1965.

The immigrants who came in the first wave are thought to have been enormously successful in integrating themselves into American society. We are here today because many Americans doubt the ability or willingness of the immigrants of the second wave -- especially those who have come since 1965 -- to replicate the success of that earlier wave.

I am here to offer you the benefit of my historical knowledge regarding these earlier immigrants and to draw conclusions about what their experience means for today's immigrants. My main points are as follows.

First, that the integration process of earlier immigrants, especially the 20-plus million who came from Eastern and Southern Europe in the years from 1880 to 1920 has been mythologized as quick, easy and unproblematic. In fact, these immigrants were widely regarded then, as many immigrants are regarded today, as radically different in culture and values from Americans and as lacking the desire and ability to integrate themselves into American society. Their integration would ultimately be an outstanding success, but it took about 50 years. It required a generational transition in these immigrant communities and engagement on the part of these immigrants with American democracy, and an opportunity for them to achieve economic security for themselves and their families.

Point two: Are there too many immigrants present in American society today even to contemplate a successful campaign to integrate them all? My answer to that is no. Immigrant density was greater 100 years ago than it is today. Twenty-four million came into a society in 1900 that numbered only 76 million people. To match that immigrant density today, we would have to admit four times as many immigrants a year and sustain that for a decade.

Third point: There is greater diversity culturally and economically among today's immigrants than those who came 100 years ago. However, for the majority of today's immigrants who are poor and non-white, the distance of their values and cultural traditions for mainstream America is no greater than what separated native-born Americans and immigrants 100 years ago. That we integrated the last wave should give us confidence that we can integrate this wave too.

Fourth point: That confidence must be grounded in a realistic and robust sense of what successful immigrant incorporation requires. Immigrant incorporation requires two generations in time and a generational transition within immigrant families and communities during that time so that the power of the first generation recedes and the power of the second generation comes to the fore. Successful immigrant integration also requires immigrant engagement with American democracy, becoming citizens and active participants in American politics. And it also requires the achievement of economic security.

The institutions that were once so important in the early 20th century in bringing immigrants into politics and aiding their quest for economic security, political parties, and the labor movement, are no longer as well-positioned to continue performing that role. Either these institutions must find ways to broaden their involvement with immigrants, or other institutions, such as the Catholic Church, must step forward to take their place.

Fifth point, and my final point: Engaging immigrants in American democracy and broadening the access of the immigrant poor to economic opportunity and security will in the short term yield as much contention as it will yield comity. But if done right, it will work to bind together the foreign-born and immigrant-born into one American nation and demonstrate, yet again, the remarkable ability of America to take in people from very different parts of the world, to make them into Americans, and, in the process, to reinvigorate the power of American ideals and the promise of American life for all who have had the good fortune to make themselves a home on U.S. soil. We should try to make this happen again.

Thank you very much.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you very much, Doctor.

Dr. Rumbaut?

MR. RUMBAUT: Chairwoman Lofgren, Chairman Conyers, Ranking Member King, and members of the Judiciary Committee and the ***Immigration*** Subcommittee, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear at this hearing.

I could never have imagined when I arrived in this country on the eve of my 12th birthday, speaking no English at all, that one day 46 years later I'd be speaking to a congressional committee -- in English -- about the fate of immigrant languages in the U.S. and of immigrants' acquisition of English.

But life, like history, is full of surprises and often unfolds like a telenovela in a Spanish-language TV channel in L.A.

I used that metaphor deliberately because two summers ago in the Nielsen ratings of the 10 most watched TV programs in the huge television market of greater Los Angeles -- where I live and work -- nine of the top 10 primetime programs were telenovelas, broadcast in Spanish by KMEX, the Univision channel. It was -- (in Spanish) -- Tuesday -- (in Spanish) -- Wednesday -- (in Spanish) -- Monday -- (in Spanish) -- Tuesday -- (in Spanish) -- and number nine was "CSI" -- and then -- (in Spanish) -- Friday, which, you know, came in last.

Such anecdotes would seem to support the concerns that have been expressed by some that immigrant integration today -- and especially their linguistic ***assimilation*** in areas of geographic concentration -- is being slowed or even reversed to the point of threatening the predominance of English in the United States, above all, among Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, most notably Mexicans in Southern California and Cubans in south Florida.

However, as the evidence from the census itself, from the American Community survey that was just cited by Chairwoman Lofgren, and from every major national and regional study shows, compellingly and incontrovertibly -- including cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys carried out in Los Angeles and San Diego and Miami -- the process of linguistic ***assimilation*** to English today is occurring perhaps more quickly than ever in U.S. history. I have summarized that evidence in detail in my written statement, including an analysis of the determinates of English fluency, et cetera, so I need not repeat it here except to highlight a few main points.

First, the evidence documents a pattern of very rapid language transition from the first to the second and third generations, a switch to English that is completed before the third generation for most immigrant groups, and by or before the third generation even for those of Mexican origin in Los Angeles and of Cuban origin in Miami. The power of assimilative forces is nowhere clearer than in the linguistic switch across the generations.

But in addition to that, secondly, longitudinal studies such as our own Children of Immigrants' Longitudinal Study -- which have followed a large sample of children of immigrants representing 77 different nationalities for more than 10 years in San Diego and Miami -- have documented the extraordinarily rapid switch to English in degrees of proficiency, preference and use for all groups. Tables 6 and 7 in my written statement has specific information in that regard. But just to give you a taste of it, by earlier adulthood, by their mid-20s, over 93 percent of the Mexicans in San Diego and 98 percent of the Cubans in Miami preferred English over Spanish, and for some of the other groups it was 100 percent.

And third, we carried out an analysis of what we call linguistic life expectancies for all the main immigrant groups concentrated in Southern California from San Diego and the Mexican border to Los Angeles, and demonstrated the generational point at which language death occurs. Even for Mexican Spanish in Los Angeles -- one of the largest Spanish-speaking cities in the world -- where the adult immigrant parents may be watching -- (in Spanish) -- on TV in one room but their kids are watching "CSI" and "American Idol" in the room next door in English; indeed, their parents may talk to them in Spanish, but they will answer back in English.

Additional point: English proficiency has always been a ***key*** to socioeconomic mobility for immigrants and to their full participation in their adopted society. The last person you need to tell that to is an immigrant, who came to the United States precisely with that in mind. Today is no different in that respect. In fact, the United States has been described as a language graveyard because of its historical ability to absorb millions of immigrants, as Professor

Gerstle mentioned, and to extinguish their mother tongues within a few generations. And Spanish appears to offer no threat to this reputation, unfortunately.

English has never been seriously threatened as the dominant language of the United States, and with nearly a quarter billion English monolinguals in the United States today, it is certainly not threatened today, not even in Southern California. For that matter, English has become firmly established throughout the world as the premier international language of commerce, diplomacy, education, journalism, technology, the Internet and mass culture.

REP. LOFGREN: Dr. Rumbaut, your light is on. If you could wrap up, that would be --

MR. RUMBAUT: What is endangered instead is the survivability of the non-English languages that immigrants bring with them to the United States, and whether that loss of such assets is desirable or not is, of course, another matter.

Thank you very much.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you very much.

Mr. Kerwin?

MR. KERWIN: Madame Chairwoman, Chairman Conyers, distinguished members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today on the importance of citizenship in immigrant integration.

There are more than 11 million lawful permanent residents in the United States who are eligible or who will soon be eligible to apply for citizenship. As you know, citizenship confers important rights and responsibilities. It is a precondition to full membership in our society.

In our experience the naturalization process is also a focal point for a range of integration activities. These include English classes, citizenship classes, homeownership seminars, and provision of public health information.

Earlier this year my agency released a report titled, "A More Perfect Union: A National Citizenship Plan." The report is based on more than 100 interviews and the best thinking of an advisory group of 22 experts on this issue.

It details the resources, partnerships and commitments that would be necessary to achieve the following goals.

First: to create a federally lead citizenship initiative that could play a central role in what we hope will be an emerging national immigrant integration policy.

Second: to increase naturalization numbers and rates so that more immigrants can contribute fully to our nation.

Third: to make the naturalization process more meaningful by deepening the knowledge and commitment of immigrants to our nation's history, political institutions and democratic ideals.

Fourth: to increase opportunities for citizenship by expanding English as a second language and citizenship instruction.

Fifth: to address barriers to citizenship like proposed fee increases and security clearances that can drag on for three or four years.

Sixth: to build stronger bonds between the native-born and naturalized.

And seventh: to forge strong public-private partnerships in support of all of these goals.

Our plan details how a wide range of stakeholders, faith communities, federal, state and local government, business, labor, civic organizations and others can promote citizenship.

While it includes hundreds of recommendations, I have included just 13 ***key*** proposals in my written testimony. For example, we propose that charitable agencies expand their citizenship services, particularly by offering more group naturalization processing sessions.

My agency now funds and supports naturalization sessions in 21 communities, a number that we hope to increase, some of those communities represented by you.

Many other networks like the New American Initiative in Illinois have also mobilized to do this work. These sessions at modest cost allow large numbers of immigrants to apply to naturalize. They also help to prepare charitable agencies for the maximum amount of work they will need to assume if comprehensive ***immigration reform*** legislation is to pass and be successful.

We also recommend that the Office of Citizenship be funded sufficiently so that it can coordinate a national citizenship program and can support the work of community-based organizations. Federal leadership and coordination will be essential to a national citizenship drive. The Office of Citizenship, which has a $3 million budget and does not currently have grant-making authority, needs to be strengthened if it is to play this role.

We support increased funding for ESL and citizenship classes. Lack of proficiency in English and the shortage of such classes represent a major barrier to citizenship. In addition, federally funded ESL classes do not typically cover civics or citizenship issues.

We also support the efforts of U.S. Citizenship and ***Immigration*** Services to develop a more meaningful citizenship test. And we particularly support more meaningful preparation for this test. Of course, we also hope that the revised test does not preclude worthy immigrants from taking this important step.

While ***immigration*** is a volatile issue, we have found broad and deep support for citizenship. We worry that the national debate over how many and what types of immigrants to accept may overshadow the many contributions that immigrants make to our nation.

We also worry that this debate may obscure our need to promote immigrant integration and attachment to our nation's core principles. We believe that a national citizenship plan would represent a step in the right direction and we pledge our gifts and resources to this important goal.

We thank you for taking on this issue.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you Mr. Kerwin.

And now Dr. Fonte.

MR. FONTE: Thank you, Chairwoman Lofgren, and Ranking Member King.

What do we mean by integration? Let's start by using a more vigorous term, ***assimilation***. There are different types of ***assimilation***: linguistic, economic, civic, patriotic.

Linguistic ***assimilation*** means the immigrant learns English. Economic ***assimilation*** means the immigrant does well materially. Civic integration means the immigrant is integrated into our political system, votes and has some involvement in civic affairs.

These forms of ***assimilation*** are necessary but not sufficient. We are reminded again in the Fort Dix conspiracy that there are naturalized citizens, permanent residents and illegal immigrants living in our country who speak English, are gainfully employed and would like to kill as many Americans as possible.

The type of ***assimilation*** that matters most is patriotic ***assimilation***, political loyalty and emotional attachment to the United States. This was accomplished in the days of Ellis Island because America's leaders, including

Democrat Woodrow Wilson and Republican Theodore Roosevelt, believed that immigrants should be Americanized.

They were self-confident leaders. They didn't use weasel words like integration; they talked openly about Americanization. July 4th, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson declared National Americanization Day. The president and his Cabinet addressed naturalization ceremonies around the nation.

The most powerful speech was delivered by Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, in which Brandeis declared, "Americanization meant that the newcomer should possess the national consciousness of an American."

In the 1990s, the late congresswoman, Barbara Jordan, called for revival of Americanization and a new Americanization movement.

Yesterday I was at a conference where Henry Cisneros said, "The best term is Americanization."

Unfortunately, for decades we have implemented anti- Americanization policies: multilingual ballots, bilingual education, and Executive Order 13166; this hurts ***assimilation***.

Traditionally the greatest indication of ***assimilation*** is intermarriage between immigrants and the native-born. A major new study published in the American Sociological Review found a big decline in interethnic marriage. The author declared, quote, "These declines are a significant departure from past trends" and "reflect the growth in immigrant population" in which Latinos are marrying Latinos, Asians are marrying Latinos -- in the past reversed. So the '70s, the '80s, the '90s reversed.

The Pew Hispanic Survey found that a seven months after 9/11 only 34 percent of American citizens of Latino origin consider their primary identification of Americans -- as American first. On the other hand, 42 percent identify with their parents' country, Mexico and El Salvador, so on; 24 percent ethnic identity first.

Professor Rumbaut's excellent work on the children of immigrants show that after four years of American high school, self- identification with hyphenated Americans went down, identification with parents in birth country went up.

An article in the Chicago Tribune, Friday April 6th, by the person in charge of the New Americans office is I think very revealing. The state official declared, quote: "The nation-state concept is changing. You don't have to say, 'I'm Mexican', 'I'm American'; you can be a good Mexican citizen and a good American citizen and it's not a conflict of interest. Sovereignty is flexible."

Well, a very different view was given by the president of the United States 100 years ago in 1907. The president said -- Theodore Roosevelt: "If the immigrant comes here in good faith, ***assimilates*** himself to us, he shall be treated on exact equality with everyone else. But this is predicated upon that person becoming an American and nothing but an American. There can be no divided allegiance here. We have room but for one loyalty and that is loyalty to the American people."

So we're presented with two very different views of the oath of allegiance and what this means -- in the Chicago Tribune article of 2007 and Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. We'll have to choose.

What shall we do today? Well, it makes no sense to enact comprehensive ***immigration reform*** which means a slow-motion amnesty, a massive increase in low-skilled ***immigration*** further exacerbating our ***assimilation*** problems.

What we need first is comprehensive ***assimilation reform*** for those immigrants who are here legally.

One, first we should dismantle the anti-***assimilation*** regime of foreign language ballots, voting in foreign countries by dual nationals, bilingual education and Executive Order 13166.

Second, we should follow Barbara Jordan and Henry Cisneros' lead and call for Americanization not integration.

Third, we should enforce the oath of allegiance.

I had six or seven others; they are in the written statement. I can take questions on that.

We need comprehensive ***assimilation reform*** first. Comprehensive ***immigration reform*** is not comprehensive; that's the problem. It's basically not comprehensive; it doesn't deal with ***assimilation***.

Comprehensive ***immigration reform*** is primarily about the special interest needs of particular businesses, not the interests of the American people as a whole. It ignores ***assimilation*** and puts the market over the nation. But Americans must remember: We are a nation of citizens before we are a market of consumers.

Thank you.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you, Dr. Fonte.

We will now begin questioning by members of the committee and I will start off. We have just five minutes apiece.

I would like to ask Dr. Rumbaut -- Dr. Fonte just mentioned you and a study that you did about the affiliation of teenagers and their loyalty to the United States. Have you done any additional longitudinal studies on that subject?

MR. RUMBAUT: Yes. Dr. Fonte was referring to data from the second wave of interviews from our CILS study which were published in a book called "Legacies" that he was referring to. We have continued to follow that sample of thousands of young people into their mid-'20s and we have continued to ask questions about language, about identity, about some of the issues that he's been talking about.

I would make a couple of comments in response to that. First, when you ask young people when they're 17, 18 years old what their identity is and they're in high school and so on, their sense of self, their self-definitions, their identities and so on reflect the context of an adolescent culture in high school, their peers and so on.

In the United States, that is heavily weighted to racial notions of racial identities which are made in the USA. A lot of kids are using their national origin of their parents as a response to what their racial identity is and they're not talking really about national identity or patriotic identities, but how they fit in the particular subculture of the high school where they happen to be at.

REP. LOFGREN: Would that change after graduation?

MR. RUMBAUT: It changes. By their mid-'20s we saw a complete reversal back to patterns that have been seen at the (time-one ?) baseline survey; so that dissipates. Second, some of the most striking responses to a national identity that we observed in 1995, which is when Dr. Fonte was referring to, was among Mexicans in Southern California.

We went into the field immediately after the passage of Prop 187 in California and it was in reaction to that, what we call "reactive ethnicity," that an assertion of a national identity as Mexican was made even by U.S.-born Mexican-Americans because of perceived discrimination and prejudice against their nationality as a whole; that, again, dissipates.

When we asked the same questions to Mexicans in Florida at the same time that Prop 187 was passed in California, we saw an assimilative pattern among Mexicans in Florida, but we didn't see that among those that were responding to conditions of discrimination and prejudice.

So a lot of what this debate about identities is concerned -- entails is a response to what the larger conflicts in which they are ***assimilating*** is composed of. ***Assimilation*** has never been about simply individual acculturation on the part of an immigrant; it has always entailed an absence of prejudice and discrimination on the parts of the whole society. It takes two to ***assimilate***. It takes two to tango.

It was Robert Park 100 years ago, one of the leading sociologists of ***assimilation*** in the country, at the University of Chicago at the time, who said that the most acculturated American at the time was the American Negro. He said, "The American Negro is an English-only- speaking Protestant," and yet he was the least ***assimilated*** in this society --

REP. LOFGREN: Because of discrimination.

MR. RUMBAUT: -- not because of a lack of acculturation, but because of the caste restrictions that were imposed on him by the whole society.

REP. LOFGREN: Let me ask -- I found your study on language absolutely fascinating because it matches so much what I find at home where my colleagues who are second generation are pulling their hair out because their kids are monolingual English and cannot speak to their grandparents.

And you really identify the death of foreign languages in the United States -- which I think adds some other issues, but it would be nice if we had more people who could speak another language. But do you see any chance that English will stop being the common language of the United States from your studies?

MR. RUMBAUT: Absolutely not. In fact, you talk about what you see at home -- my wife, who is of Mexican origin, and I have been trying to raise a bilingual child. If there is anyone committed to bilingualism in the United States and sees the benefits of it it is me. It was my wife and I against Michigan and that -- now we moved to Southern California and we thought he'd be in a context where his bilingualism would -- we talk to him in Spanish and he answers only in English.

REP. LOFGREN: Right. My time is almost up.

I'd like to ask Dr. Gerstle: Is there a preset number where America should say we can't accept anymore immigrants because they would not become American because there's too many of them, in your judgment?

MR. GERSTLE: I don't think there is a preset number. I made the point in my statement today and in the longer statement that ***immigration*** density was far greater a hundred years ago than it is today.

REP. LOFGREN: My time has expired. I'm going to try and be good about that.

Mr. King.

REP. KING: Thank you, Madame Chair.

First I'd note that although when the process kicked off some time Wednesday afternoon, by the time the testimony reached me, the chickens had gone to roost so I didn't have an opportunity read thoroughly through all the testimony. I have scanned most of it.

Dr. Rumbaut, I understand that you have a lot of material here and I appreciate that input, and hopefully I can review it after this hearing.

I'd like to turn first to Dr. Gerstle and your statement about the numbers of immigrants and the percentage and the concentration. If I recall -- and I do -- the U.S. Census reports, the first ones we got on ***immigration*** were in 1820 and you go to that year yourself when you tabulate those numbers.

And I've gone back to those PDF files and reviewed and they're a little hard to see, but they're on the computer and you can find them on the Internet. And totaled, those numbers from 1820 until the year 2000, which would be our last census -- and they are -- according to the U.S. Census Bureau, we have 66.1 million immigrants. And that number -- that doesn't match up with the numbers in your testimony. Can you explain that discrepancy?

MR. GERSTLE: Well, the -- calculating the total number of immigrants who have come to this country turns out to be rather difficult because one has to account not only for those who came and stayed but for the very significant numbers who came and went home. So I think --

REP. KING: Where do your numbers come from now, please?

MR. GERSTLE: They are -- they come from the census materials.

REP. KING: Then why don't we match?

MR. GERSTLE: Well, because there are instances in the past and where those who have come have sometimes gone home, and sometimes those who came have also gone unrecorded and have been undocumented.

REP. KING: Do you use some other information to add to that number? Because when I look at those numbers they're finite numbers.

So I don't see any latitude there to expand that number or subtract from --

MR. GERSTLE: I can get those -- I don't have those -- I don't have that data with me today. I can get those for you.

REP. KING: I'd appreciate it if you would for the benefit of this committee. And then I look at today; we're 11 percent immigrants and that includes 35 million, 12 million of which are counted as illegal, and a lot of us believe that number is greater. That takes us up to 11 percent. And if you go to the high-water mark, the immigrant number concentration of the population is 14 percent roughly a century ago. So I'm having trouble understanding the statement that we'd have to multiply our current ***immigration*** number by a factor of four to meet the concentration level at the high-water mark.

MR. GERSTLE: Well, the -- I was referring to those who are coming in annually at the height of that ***immigration*** period where the numbers approached or exceeded a million a year.

And a few years ago the numbers coming into the United States were calculated to have reached that level, and that was advertised at the time as being the all-time high. My point there is those million a year coming into the United States now are coming into a society of approximately 300 million people.

REP. KING: That would be the legal ones.

MR. GERSTLE: Yes. Whereas those coming in --

REP. KING: Excuse me, Dr. Gerstle. I do have to measure my time a little bit, but I appreciate your testimony and your answers.

I'd like to turn, if I could, to Mr. Kerwin.

In your testimony, your statement here that there is a real concentrated interest in naturalization, and if I look at the naturalization numbers -- I go back to 1970 -- of those -- and according to the USCIS, they show that immigrants who are admitted prior to 1970 naturalized at a rate of 82 percent; those from 1970 to'79 naturalized at a rate of 66 percent, and from '80 to '89, 45 percent. You see the trend. From 1900 to the year 2000 it fell to 13 percent.

So how can -- how come -- how can the U.S. Citizenship and ***Immigration*** Services have a number that shows a dramatic decline over a period of 30 years from 82 percent to 13 percent -- how can that comport with your statement that there is an interest in naturalization?

MR. KERWIN: Well, as I understand it, the most recent study by Pew Hispanic Center shows that there's actually been an increase in naturalization among lawful immigrants -- legal, permanent residents.

REP. KING: You'll allow there's a lot of room for improvement?

MR. KERWIN: Oh, absolutely. And that's the point of our study. And what we'd like to do is we'd like to take the entities that were involved and ***key*** in integrating immigrants in the past and get them together -- the federal government, churches, charitable agencies, civic associations.

REP. KING: Let me say, if might, Mr. Kerwin, you make a lot of good points in your testimony.

MR. KERWIN: Thank you.

REP. KING: And I can take issue with some parts of it, but there are a lot of good points that I think we all need to review.

And I'd like to quickly, if I could, turn to Dr. Fonte.

And you referenced intermarriage. I'd ask this question: The reduction in the amount of intermarriages that we have, interracial intermarriage, could that be -- and what are your thoughts on it being a result of the effects of multiculturalism that might tend to isolate young Americans in those ethnic enclaves rather than being further ***assimilated*** into the broader society where they have contact with people of different areas of the society?

MR. FONTE: Yes, I think that's part of it. And the research from the Ohio State professor said the main point was we're bringing in large numbers of unskilled immigrants with low education and the people usually marry within the group in this particular category. So Latinos are marrying Latinos and Asians are marrying Asians. So this is a complete reversal in the '90s from what we saw in the '70s and '80s. So it has something to do with numbers and it suggests large numbers of unskilled folks are marrying each other.

REP. KING: Thank you, Dr. Fonte.

I yield back, Madame Chair.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you, Tom.

The chairman of the full committee, Mr. Conyers is recognized.

REP. CONYERS: Thank you, ma'am.

This is a great discussion we're having. And if we could only find a way to get around the five-minute rule. (Laughter.) Because there's so much -- I've been looking very carefully, Dr. Fonte, to find something that you and I agreed upon. We got to have a starting point here, and I may have it. When you say that multiethnicity and ethnic subcultures have enriched America and have always been a part of our past since colonial days. Now that's a good starting point, isn't it?

MR. FONTE: We agree.

REP. CONYERS: But the executive orders -- intermarriage -- it was against the law until 1967 when a Supreme Court case made it legal for couples to decide to cross the line. The Clinton executive order didn't bother me that much.

But let's get to what seems to be the heart of the matter in a couple minutes. English-language-only laws: That's what seems to be bugging a lot of people in the Congress and outside too. Now, does that -- would English-language-only laws help promote immigrants into Americanization? There I used your term.

MR. FONTE: And Barbara Jordan's term.

REP. CONYERS: Who wants to try that?

Dr. Rumbaut.

MR. RUMBAUT: I would argue that exactly the opposite would happen. Much as you saw with the instance of identity expressions and so on, the moment you try to coerce and to impose a rule on someone and tell them what you can and you cannot speak, you're going to engender a reaction to that.

The best way to Americanize, to use Barbara -- in Barbara Jordan's sense, is to treat the process of ***assimilation*** or Americanization as a seduction. People will become American because they desire to. They don't become American or speak English because they are told to, or because they are required to. All that would do is end up driving a wedge in immigrant families between parents and children, and it would end up creating far more unintended but serious problems than you are trying to achieve. Besides there's no need for it when you look at the evidence that you have in front of you; there is no need to require people to speak a language that they are all moving toward at historic speeds.

REP. CONYERS: Dr. Gerstle, answer that and talk with me about the impression I've had since the mid-'60s that innumerable swearing- in ceremonies of people becoming naturalized citizens, where the pride and the patriotism, the loyalty, the excitement, the dedication is so overpowering.

I mean, you take that away and then they have -- in Detroit you have right outside the swearing-in ceremony, you can register to vote, right on the spot, as soon as you're given the oath.

Talk to me about that and the previous question with the time I have left.

MR. GERSTLE: I second what Dr. Rumbaut said. We're struggling with this issue in Nashville, Tennessee, now where an English-only ordinance was put forward by the city council attracted hundreds of people to meetings. It was ultimately passed by the council and then vetoed by the mayor -- splits among Democrats and Republicans in that place. And I think the feeling was, and it's a feeling that I agree with, that it would be more of a barrier to integration and involving people in America than it would be a benefit.

Historically there were efforts in the 1920s to have English-only laws. There were efforts to banish private schools where any language was taught other than English. There was an effort to impose on public schools complete teaching of English every period of the day. The teaching of foreign languages was curtailed. Several of these were thrown out by the courts.

It did have this effect: It did mobilize the immigrant community and made them realize the importance of participating in politics, naturalizing, engaging American democracy, learning it, participating in it, and that, I believe, is their most important school.

REP. LOFGREN: The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Goodlatte.

REP. BOB GOODLATTE (R-VA): Thank you, Madame Chairman. I appreciate your holding this hearing. It is, I agree with the chairman, very interesting.

Dr. Gerstle, I was very interested in your testimony regarding the capacity of our country to ***assimilate***. I am not sure that I disagree with you, but I am very concerned that it's not happening.

The evidence cited by the gentleman from Iowa regarding the dramatic downward trends of permanent residents applying for citizenship from 80 percent in the 1960s down to 13 percent in the last decade is very disturbing.

What do you attribute that to? Why are we failing to ***assimilate*** --

MR. GERSTLE: I think the first thing I would say is that this country went through a really tough period in the 1960s and '70s where all kinds of people became very anti-American, native- born and foreign-born alike. And this had to do with the frustration over civil rights, a frustration over the Vietnam War.

The origins of multiculturalism are as an anti-American creed: One's ethnicity, one's ethnic identity is preferable to one's American identity. So I think the decline in loyalty and belief in America happened across the board and it happened among immigrants and the native-born.

REP. GOODLATTE: But during that decade, 82 percent of permanent residents who became eligible for citizenship during that decade applied for citizenship. In the 1980s when you didn't have that, it was dramatically down.

In the 1990s, so-called Clinton era, it was plummeting. And I don't know what it's been for the last decade, but those figures would seem to rebut not support your contention that --

MR. GERSTLE: Well, I think -- I think -- I would be very interested to see -- I don't have them handy, what the figures are for the last couple years and to see if they have ticked upward in that regard.

A couple things are important. First, I think length of residence of time, is very important in terms of naturalization. If we look at the historical period we find very low rates of naturalization among European groups for very long periods of time. In fact, if you look at the census and naturalization figures of 1920 you'd find only a quarter of any of these Eastern and Southern European populations having naturalized, and many of those people had been there 20 or 25 years.

REP. GOODLATTE: Let me ask --

MR. GERSTLE: The '20s and '30s are the big decades of naturalization.

REP. GOODLATTE: All right, we'll take a look at those.

Let me ask you about another subject: dual citizenship. As you may know, the Supreme Court ruled a number of years ago that you couldn't deprive an individual of their citizenship in another country. They could maintain that even upon swearing allegiance to the United States.

Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing? Does that help ***assimilation***? Is it good that somebody is voting for elected officials in another country elsewhere in the world as well as participating in the United States? Does that help with that?

MR. GERSTLE: I think it is a worldwide phenomenon that most countries are moving towards this and reflects, I think, the degree to which people move around the world and are comfortable with that. I think it would be difficult to resist that.

I would say that the most --

REP. GOODLATTE: Is it dual citizenship or is it no citizenship if effectively people are choosing in such low numbers to affiliate themselves with the United States?

MR. GERSTLE: I don't think it's no citizenship. I think citizenship and integration and I'm very comfortable using the word Americanization -- ***assimilation*** is a more problematic term that maybe we can talk about later -- but these happen through institutions and through the engagement of immigrants in the practice of American politics.

If we find ways to do that, to bring them into American politics, give them a stake in the political system, through their representatives, mobilize them in this way, that will lead to a deepening attachment to America and appreciation for this country's heritage of freedom.

REP. GOODLATTE: I hope you're right.

Let me ask Dr. Fonte: Would an official English language be helpful in promoting that ***assimilation***?

MR. FONTE: I think that that would be fine as a statement of E pluribus unum. I think there's no reason we shouldn't all be voting in English; that gives the signal that we're all in this together.

It hurts the immigrant and the ethnic group if the immigrant is only following the election -- you could do this -- following the foreign language venue, but you wouldn't have a full range of the debates; you wouldn't have all the arguments out there. So it hurts the immigrant more than anyone else, I would think.

REP. GOODLATTE: What about the issue of dual-citizenship?

MR. FONTE: I think dual-allegiance is a problem. If someone is voting and holding office or running for office in a foreign country -- Felix Frankfurter, one of our great Supreme Court Justices, says this shows allegiance to a foreign power incompatible with allegiance to the United States and --

REP. GOODLATTE: Could we retest that in the Supreme Court?

MR. FONTE: What we could do is pass legislation. Earl Warren, who wrote -- favored this decision, said you couldn't lose your citizenship but he said there could be laws against voting in a foreign country, serving in a foreign government. So it could be made simply against the law by legislation and not -- someone wouldn't lose their citizenship, but they're unlikely to do it if it's against the law.

So there -- measures could be taken and should be taken, because this is going to be a major problem for us. And in the past, we had a person elected to the Mexican Congress last -- in 2004. He was an American citizen and his loyalty now is obviously to the Mexican Congress.

REP. LOFGREN: Dr. Fonte, if you could rest --

REP. GOODLATTE: Thank you, Madame Chairman.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman -- Mr. Luis Gutierrez from Illinois.

REP. LUIS GUTIERREZ (D-IL): Thank you very much.

I want to thank all of the panelists. I hope that the ranking member does find time to read Dr. Rumbaut's documentation that he sent before the committee. I think it's very important that the one time that we do have somebody from the Latino community come before this committee that we at least read the testimony that he or she has submitted; given that most of the ire and focus has been on the Latino community and Latino immigrants, as though they were the only immigrants to the United States of America, when indeed we know that 40 percent of the undocumented never crossed that border. They came here through a legal fashion and that there are indeed millions of undocumented immigrants.

We watched www.LegalizetheIrish.org come here before the Congress, and the Polish community and the Ukrainian community, the Filipino community, from so many different other nations enriching this great nation. So I hope that we would take time.

I would like to also say to Dr. Rumbaut, thank you so much for coming and giving the personal testimony. And I just want to share with you, I -- the only reason my daughter speaks Spanish is because we enrolled them in Spanish immersion classes from kindergarten through eighth grade. And I thank the public school system of Chicago for having those classes because if it were up to me and my wife, who are bilingual but only speak English at home and rarely watch Univision or Telemundo, unless, of course, we want news that's relevant to our community in the evening and we want to find out what really happened in our neighborhood and in our life -- well, we put them on. But this is the experience.

I would hope that members of the committee would just take some time to visit immigrant communities and walk among the immigrant community. And they would find that if you want to pass English-only, that's fine. It's a waste of time, a waste of money to enforce it, because obviously my parents didn't come here as immigrants. They came here as migrants from Puerto Rico. But they were monolingual. They only spoke Spanish.

And as we look at ***assimilation***, I think we also have to look at segregation, the kind of society that we live in. The fact is, I became more ***assimilated*** as I grew older because economic and social possibilities were afforded to me that were not afforded to me as a youth. I grew up in a Puerto Rican neighborhood. Most everyone I knew was Puerto Rican -- my parents, my family, the church I went to on Sunday, where my parents worked, almost every -- I mean, that's part of American society. It's an unfortunate part of American society that segregation exists.

But if we're going to deal with this, quote, "***assimilation***," I think we should also look at the underlying bias and prejudice that sometimes raises its ugly head, unfortunately, in our great American society that stops people from becoming ***assimilated*** into American society. As you become older, well, my kids are now going to college and my grandson -- we're going to have a real big problem with the grandson. Unfortunately, it's going to be a tough battle.

MR. : As they say in Brooklyn, forget about it.

REP. GUTIERREZ: Forget about it. (Laughs.) We're going to have a tough problem. And I just -- I share this with my colleagues on the other side to say, "Fear not." My parents only spoke Spanish. I obviously have some English proficiency that's allowed me to come here to the Congress of the United States. I may not be as great as members on the other side of the aisle, but I try each and every day.

And my daughters -- I assure you, we spent an inordinate amount of money. I don't do it -- I do it because I want to maintain that rich cultural history and linguistic history, but I also do it because I want to make sure the job opportunities and economic opportunities are available to them, As things are posted in the newspaper, "bilingual preferred," by large American national corporations so that American citizens can produce goods and distribute those goods throughout the world and we can become a more prosperous nation.

People do buy goods because they're advertised in other languages. And Dr. Rumbaut knows, Univision isn't entirely owned by Latinos; much less Telemundo, which is owned by GE and NBC. (Laughs.) I mean, so these corporations are not just Latino corporations.

I would like to say to all the witnesses, thank you so much. And I would hope that we would simply read the literature because -- instead of English-only, I wish we could all get together, because I could join my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Let's fund English classes. Let's fund them and let's open up centers and you will find that they will be filled to capacity. People want to learn English in this country. They aren't given the ability to learn English, number one. Well, part of the reason is the segregation; another is access to educational opportunities.

I thank the witnesses. And I want to thank the gentlelady from California, our chairwoman, for putting this wonderful panel together.

REP. LOFGREN: Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Gohmert.

REP. LOUIE GOHMERT (R-TX): Thank you, Madame Chairwoman.

And I do appreciate my colleague's comments about English classes. You probably have a very good idea there. One of my close friends in Tyler, Texas, said -- you know, his parents, both of them came from Mexico, and speaking English was a struggle, but they opened two restaurants that are two of our best in Tyler. And they made clear that their children were to learn English, that if they were to reach their potential in this country, they needed to speak good English and they speak probably better than I.

But it does seem that some well-meaning people encourage and want to allow people to continue to speak Spanish, which to me is almost a form of discrimination because that would prevent individuals from reaching their potential. My friend Mr. Ramirez, at home, has been a city councilman and a county commissioner and that wouldn't have happened had he not spoken such excellent English and been able to communicate ideas so effectively.

But I go back to some of the things that were said here, and I admire greatly, Dr. Rumbaut, your testimonial. My great-grandfather came over in the late 1700s, didn't speak English. But he did two things: He learned to speak English and he worked his tail off. And within 25 years, he built one of the nicest homes in Quero, Texas. It's still there with the historic marker on it.

I'm curious, just as a hypothetical, if something tragic happened and all of us in this room were wiped out -- although there are those that might say if I were wiped out it wouldn't be all that tragic, but for the rest it might be. This is being recorded.

Dr. Rumbaut, where would you want your loved ones to have your remains placed, whether cremation or burial? Where would you want them to place you? You've moved around, you've seen the best of all kinds of places. What do you think?

MR. RUMBAUT: I can tell you that my brother is here. I have a sister in Texas that has an urn containing the ashes of my father and we're waiting for the politically appropriate moment which, at his request, to take his ashes to Cienfuegos, which is a city in Cuba where he was born and where he first saw the sea and so on.

On the other hand, his name was -- (name inaudible) -- Rumbaut. My son is named -- (name inaudible) -- Rumbaut after my father. He was born in Michigan. He's a Detroit Pistons fan, a Detroit Redwings fan; he's a Detroit Tigers fan. We're in Anaheim now, but he doesn't follow the Angels; he doesn't follow the Ducks. It's the Redwings, "go Redwings," and so on.

He would not -- he knows that his grandfather came from Cuba and so on, but he would have no attachment to that whatsoever.

He would not want to be buried there. If anything, he would want to go back to Detroit. We all form our own attachments in the context of our lives. There is no plot out there that says that immigrants want to go back and that their fifth column --

REP. GOHMERT: Okay, but I take it from your answer you hadn't made that decision yet yourself. And I appreciate the discussion of other individuals.

MR. RUMBAUT: Unimportant.

REP. GOHMERT: What you would want?

MR. RUMBAUT: It's unimportant what happens to me. What's important is what I do with my life. It's, as I told Mr. Conyers --

REP. GOHMERT: So that's what your -- you want your loved ones to know -- if you go back to my question, it was -- but you want me to say it doesn't matter --

MR. RUMBAUT: It would be in the United States.

REP. GOHMERT: Okay, well, there we go. We got to the answer eventually. Thank you.

But, you know, I appreciate -- Dr. Gerstle you had indicated about ***immigration*** in the last century or so. How many of the individuals back 100 years ago -- I know my great-grandfather would be in this group. He put his stake down

in Texas, and despite nearly all of his family being in Europe, he had no intention of going back there. Do you know how many, in those days, asked to be buried or have their remains sent back to their country of origin?

MR. GERSTLE: No, I don't think we have that kind of data. In fact, it's tremendously hard simply to find out who went back and how many. We have historians looking at ship registers to find out when they came and then other ship registers in the subsequent five, 10, 15 years to find out when they went back. So it's incredibly hard to do that.

Not every group who came here looked to go back. It's just among the majority of Eastern and Southern Europeans who came for the first 10 or 15 years ago, probably a majority were thinking of going back. Some went back, some didn't make it.

REP. GOHMERT: Well, just in conclusion, if I could -- as a history major and a fan of history, I can't help but wonder as nations throughout world history rose and fell, often they were becoming more fractured from more widespread dissimilation and I can't help but wonder if there weren't experts back in those days saying, "It's not happening and if it is, it's a good thing." So --

REP. LOFGREN: The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentlelady from Texas.

REP. SHEILA JACKSON LEE (D-TX): I thank the chairwoman and I certainly thank the indulgence of the ranking member. I thank the witnesses for their very thoughtful testimony. The lack of questions to any of you does not suggest the importance (sic) of your testimony.

But this is a very emotional roller coaster that we're on. It's a chicken and egg, Dr. Rumbaut, frankly. If we don't have comprehensive ***immigration reform***, we'll never get to where our colleagues are wanting us to go. Many of us have legislative initiatives that really speak to some of their concerns.

If we could get out of the start gate, our language in Save America comprehensive ***immigration*** bill that I have, the STRIVE Act, all talk about -- and the earned access to legalization talks about an English requirement, talks about -- in particular, my bill talks about community service. And in fact, it has the word "Americanization," words that we're not really running away from and words that you're speaking to.

So I want to ask -- first of all, I'd like you to just say yes or no. These are elements that populations would not run away from if we had comprehensive ***immigration reform***. People are not running away from learning English, they're not running away from if you wanted to do community service. Our chairman of the full committee already said the first person that lost their life (in Iraq) was an undocumented person.

When I traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan and I see the array, the potpourri of faces that represent the United Nations that are Americans, I've never seen any diminishing of patriotism among those young Hispanic soldiers, young Asian soldiers, young African-American soldiers. So I guess -- just a yes or no: Do you think the immigrant community, if a comprehensive ***immigration reform*** bill -- would run away from the concepts of English, Americanization, community service?

MR. RUMBAUT: Absolutely not.

REP. JACKSON LEE: And let me probe you a little bit more, because this is an important question, and I wish the honorable Barbara Jordan that preceded me some few years back was here to speak for herself, because one thing that I knew her as in life was a person who grew, who looked at the landscape and would not stand for denying due process or fairness to anyone. So she's not here to speak for herself. And the word "Americanization" and all of her language, I guess they don't remember the words in this committee that said "We the People will not be denied constitutional rights."

But moving forward, I raised teenagers. I raised them in an integrated high school, so call it, in Houston, Texas. There was the Latino Hispanic table; there was the African-American table, the Caucasian table, the Asian table. And if anybody saw the movie "Freedom Writers," that really captures what our young people are going through and they achieve this identity.

If you remember the Black Power movement, if you remember the movement where I was in in college, all of us were going back to Africa. And we were citizens, but we were all going back. We were going to the motherland. There's this emotional draw to your ethnicity. But I tell you, as somewhat of an adult, over 21, in the tragedy of 9/11, I didn't see one dry eye, no matter what color you were.

I don't know why we're struggling and caught in the quagmire of people's identity when identities gives pride, are valuable for America.

So could you just respond to this -- I think you did talk about it, teenagers' identity is completely different from rejecting becoming Americanized, completely different. And if there are others -- panelists, Mr. Kerwin, you want to speak to -- and Mr. -- Dr. Fonte -- completely different from this concept of never learning English and never becoming American.

I'll start with you Dr. Rumbaut.

DR. RUMBAUT: I would say very briefly --

REP. JACKSON LEE: Do you remember the Black Power movement and all of us -- many of us, of my culture going to the motherland? We still do want to go. (Laughs.)

DR. RUMBAUT: I understand completely. I remember Barbara Jordan very, very well. You resemble her in many ways. And I would say simply, very briefly, that part of the problem is framing all these issues in either/or terms. There's no contradiction in being proud of one's heritage and being proud of one's roots, in wanting to go back to Africa at the time that you were -- the "golden days," and at the same time being an American citizen concerned with the best interests of this country and wanting to give it all, including, as you mention, and as Chairman Conyers mentioned, even one's very life, among -- there is simply no contradiction between the two. And we need to frame it in larger terms.

So let me just stop there. I mean, I could say many other things, but there are other members of the panel that you want to respond --

REP. JACKSON LEE: Go ahead, Dr. Kerwin, please.

MR. KERWIN: Just to repeat, I think that it's absolutely true that the foreign-born want to learn English. The average wait for ESL classes by professional credentialed people is now six months.

REP. LEE: It's a crisis, really.

MR. KERWIN: It is a crisis. And I don't think people dispute the need for patriotic ***assimilation***. You know, there may be some out there that do, but I think in general that it's understood that that's necessary. It's also true what you say, that legal status is crucial to integration. There's no doubt about that.

REP. LOFGREN: The gentlelady's time has expired.

REP. JACKSON LEE: I thank you.

Sorry, Dr. Fonte.

MR. FONTE: Was I supposed to speak or --

REP. LOFGREN: Well, the gentlelady's time is expired, but, without objection, we'll extend her time for one minute. So, Dr. Fonte --

MR. FONTE: Okay, as I said to Chairman Conyers and we agreed, that ethnic subcultures have always been an important part of American life. But what's -- the ***key*** factor in ***immigration*** is when the new citizen takes the oath of allegiance. I absolutely and entirely renounce all allegiance to my foreign state or country, and so on.

This is -- in other words, it's a political transfer of allegiance. Someone is transferring political allegiance from the birth nation to the United States. So that is either/or. You're either an American -- you're either loyal to the United States, as Theodore Roosevelt said, and no other country. That's different from a pride and ethnicity that which we all have.

REP. JACKSON LEE: Reclaiming my time -- I just -- just one minute. I've never seen the two mixed together, apples and oranges, taking the oath and a denial of your culture being -- let me just say this: taking the oath and having to reject your culture and having your culture being nonpatriotic. I don't think that makes sense at all.

MR. FONTE: Right, we're not -- you don't --

REP. LEE: They take the oath and they still believe in singing the songs and understanding that culture. Believe me, they're still Americans. That's what Americans --

REP. LOFGREN: The gentlelady's time has expired.

The gentlelady from California.

REP. LINDA T. SANCHEZ (D-CA): Thank you, Madame Chair.

I do have questions, but I do have comments first, because I've been listening very intently to the conversation and to your testimony.

I want to tell you a story. It's about two immigrants that came from Mexico, probably would have been considered without skills: one who worked himself from a factory shop floor to being a successful small-business owner; the other who raised seven children who all went to college and then in her mid-40s went back to school to get her GED, her AA, her B.A., her teaching credential and still teaches today in the public school system. Of the seven children that they raised that went to college, two of them are now serving in Congress and we are the first women of any relation to serve in Congress.

I'm talking about my family and my parents here. So you can call it integration or ***assimilation*** or Americanization, or any other damn thing you want to call it, but it is an American success story that begins with immigrants.

Dr. Fonte, I take great issue with your assertion that English- only laws with respect to elections are necessary. My mother, who came to this country and became a teacher -- she's a public school teacher, she teaches other people's children English -- sometimes finds it easier to understand the nuances of complex ballot initiatives if they're provided in the first language that she ever learned, which is Spanish.

This does not mean she's not fluent in English, because she teaches it. But she understands and is a more informed voter sometimes when she receives those materials in her native language. So I don't think that takes anything away from her loyalty to this country, her love of this country, her desire to continue teaching English in this country. And I really, really take issue with the idea that if we make English-only laws for voting that that's somehow going to create a more informed citizenry or a more desirous citizenry for voting, because my mother already has that desire.

Dr. Rumbaut, you mentioned telenovela. I am a big fan of telenovela. But even our telenovelas are linguistically ***assimilated*** because I used to watch "Betty la fea" in Spanish and we now have the English counterpart, "Ugly

Betty," which is a huge successful show. In fact, America Ferrera, who stars in the telenovela, the U.S. version, won a Golden Globe for her performance.

But I do want to get down to some of the questions.

Professor Rumbaut, I know that you have been studying immigrant integration and linguistical ***assimilation*** for approximately 30 years. Based on your research, do you believe that there is a danger that English is going to stop being the common language of the United States? Is there a real threat of that?

MR. RUMBAUT: No. We'll, as I mentioned, no. If anything, English is the official language of the Milky Way galaxy already. And its headquarters are right here in the United States and -- with a quarter of a billion English monolinguals, it has absolutely nothing to worry about.

However, as I mentioned, if there's something that I think might be -- one might worry about, it's the fate of the immigrant languages that immigrants bring free of charge to the United States. This is a human capital asset in a global economy. It's a national asset. It is even a national security asset. The Iraq Study Group mentioned that only six out of 1,000 American embassy personnel in Iraq knew -- are fluent in Arabic. There's no contradiction in trying to be bilingual and at the same time, as your mother, being fluent in English.

REP. SANCHEZ: And I understand that, and I think it's interesting that in this country we don't want bilingual education, yet we require four years of a foreign language in order to get into college. I think that's a contradiction that I've never quite been able to understand.

I'm interested in knowing a little bit more about how linguistic ***assimilation*** occurs. You mentioned that the way to encourage it is not to force somebody to speak in English only but -- can you talk a little bit about linguistic ***assimilation***?

MR. RUMBAUT: Let me -- yes. The final way -- the number one determinant of becoming fluent in English and the acquisition of English fluency is -- among immigrants, is age at arrival. There's a biology and a neurology of language acquisition. That is why children pick it up so quickly. That is why if you don't learn it after puberty, you will -- you may be able to learn English, but not without a telltale accent, and the older you are at arrival, the thicker your accent. You'll sound like Desi Arnaz.

But -- so that alone will insure the acquisition of English and speaking and sounding like a native. With the media, the pressure of peers and so on, that is going to take its way and English is going to triumph no matter what. If you arrive here as an elderly person, however, there's no way, no matter how interested you are in learning English, that you will be able to command it and -- let alone speak it like a native.

REP. SANCHEZ: May I ask the chairwoman for unanimous consent for an additional 30 seconds to ask a very simple yes or no question?

REP. LOFGREN: Without objection.

REP. SANCHEZ: Thank you.

And, Professor Rumbaut, last question: Is there any reason to believe that the immigrants that we have seen of today -- today's era, the last couple decades -- are any less desirous of learning English than were the immigrants of the '20s and '30s?

MR. RUMBAUT: If anything, I would say that ***immigration*** is the sincerest form of flattery. (Laughter.)

MR. GERSTLE: Can I add something brief to that? If -- I want to emphasize how important longitudinal studies are of the sort that Dr. Rumbaut is doing. If you look at population at any point in time, it may appear to you that everyone is speaking Spanish or some other language. But if you break that population down for age and generation, you get a very different picture.

In 1918 or 1915 or 1910, if you did an impression walking down the street of any major American city in the Northeast, Midwest or West Coast, you might be overwhelmed by the degree to which people did not seem to be able to speak English. But if you were to do the kind of longitudinal study that Dr. Rumbaut and his colleagues are doing for the present moment, you would see a similar kind of progress --

REP. LOFGREN: The gentlelady's time has expired and we will grant an additional 30 seconds so Dr. Fonte --

MR. FONTE: Just a word about 1918, 1920: One thing we're forgetting is one of the reasons there was a great success in the ***immigration*** was there was a cutoff bill in 1924 that -- I wouldn't have been for it -- kept my relatives literally out of the country. But there was an ***immigration*** cutoff bill in 1924, so we've actually had a pause from 1924 to 1965. We had low numbers of ***immigration*** that certainly helped the Americanization, ***assimilation*** process.

REP. LOFGREN: The gentleman -- Mr. Ellison.

REP. KEITH ELLISON (D-MN): Thank you, Madame Chair.

My question, Dr. Fonte, is this: What year was the highest year of ***immigration*** in American recorded history?

MR. FONTE: I think --

REP. ELLISON: It's not a trick question.

MR. FONTE: It was around, I think early 20th century.

REP. ELLISON: And in that year, what percentage of people living in America spoke a language other than English as their first language?

MR. FONTE: There was a very large percentage who did not speak English.

REP. ELLISON: And America did okay, didn't it?

MR. FONTE: It did okay, yes. I just said that the ***immigration*** cutoff of 1924 had a lot to do with it.

REP. ELLISON: Right, well, I mean -- what do you think about that Dr. Rumbaut? Is the -- was 1924 a year that sort of saved "Americanism" due to ***immigration***?

MR. RUMBAUT: In the first place, the 1924 laws were not fully implemented until 1929. That's when the market crashed. It was the Great Depression that was most responsible for not allowing -- for not letting people come into this country. You can pass all sorts of ***immigration*** laws and undocumented ***immigration*** might follow because of the demand by the American economy, et cetera.

If the issue is about language, however, then the passing of a law in 1924 is not what determined whether Italian-Americans became fluent in English or not. What determined that, first and foremost, as I said, was age at arrival and generation. The second generation at best, their Italian would be Italianish in -- it's like English and -- like Spanglish; it would be that kind of a version.

By the grandchildren, regardless of whether you passed a law or not, they would be speaking English only because of the assimilative forces in American society with respect to language and the issue that I mentioned before, about the biology of language acquisition, the schools, the pressure from peers, the media and all of that.

REP. ELLISON: Well, Dr. Gerstle.

MR. GERSTLE: I think -- I agree with that. I think the cessation of ***immigration*** in 1924 in terms of the East and Southern Europeans, it did not affect any peoples from the Western Hemisphere, so we should be very clear about

that, who continued to come in large numbers unless they were not allowed to come by other means. I think it was a factor if only in terms of accelerating the transition demographically from the first to the second generation.

And it also reminds us that the present day is never -- can never be precisely like the past. There are other elements of that history that are also different: the World War I Army, even more importantly the World War II Army, which took 16 million young men and a few women out of their homes everywhere across America, put them together with each other in a way that was also probably important in terms of their Americanization and integration.

My point is that we're unlikely to reproduce a 16-million-person conscription army in 2007, 2008, 2009, but we have to think hard about those institutions that will perform the kind of service that these other institutions did 30, 40, 50 years ago.

REP. ELLISON: You know, just an observation: I mean, part of what we seem to be debating today is what does it mean to be an American, and what impact does a language have on that identity? And, you know, I think that our -- the fact that we have at least a chance to have those assets that Dr. Rumbaut talked about, which is the multiplicity of languages that people bring here when the emigrate is -- doesn't diminish American identity and actually may add to it.

And if American identity means anything, hopefully it means a respect for law -- respect for the First Amendment, to allow people to express themselves. So, I mean, we're the only country that I know of that is bound together by a constitution as opposed to a long tradition, history and culture. And maybe that's what we need to be focusing on and maybe you don't need to speak English to do that.

So, I mean, the founders of this country, did they say that we needed to speak English? And did they consider it?

Dr. Rumbaut, do you know if Washington and Jefferson and Franklin thought about the need to have a national language?

MR. RUMBAUT: Thomas Jefferson spoke fluent Spanish.

MR. FONTE: I can give you -- I've written on this. The founders did definitely support English and a common culture. They've written on it extensively.

REP. ELLISON: Well, why didn't they put it in the Constitution? I mean, they could have, but they didn't.

MR. FONTE: It wasn't necessary to put it in the Constitution.

REP. ELLISON: Well, why not? I mean, they knew that --

MR. FONTE: They wanted a minimal Constitution, limited government. There wasn't -- they didn't --

REP. ELLISON: But Doctor, they put the things in there that needed to be there. Why didn't they put English? Would anybody else like to venture a view? No?

MR. FORTE: There's no need to do so.

REP. ELLISON: Maybe they considered it and rejected it because they thought that English was not a sine qua non of American identity. Perhaps that's true.

MR. GERSTLE: I think they also did feel, though, that the freedom of the new world would be so intoxicating that people would want to learn English.

MR. FONTE: Congressman King just quoted a letter from George Washington to John Adams in which he said he wants -- the immigrant should be ***assimilated*** to our ways, our customs, our way of life, would become one people. Obviously, knowing English would be part of that.

REP. ELLISON: Didn't put it in the Constitution.

REP. LOFGREN: The gentleman's time has expired.

And we have come to the conclusion of this hearing. I want to thank all the witnesses for their testimony today. And without objection, members will have five legislative days to submit additional written questions to you, which we will forward. And we ask that you answer as promptly as you can so that we can make your answers part of the record. Without objection, the record will remain open for five legislative days for the submission of any other materials.

You know, Dr. Rumbaut, you mentioned as you started your testimony what a country, really, that you came here as a young man, never expecting to be a witness here before the Congress. Ms. Hong, the counsel for the subcommittee wrote me a little note saying she came as an immigrant at age 12 never dreaming that she would be the counsel to the ***Immigration*** Subcommittee in the United States Congress. So we have much to be proud of in our wonderful country, and your testimony has been very helpful to us today.

I would like to extend an invitation to everyone here today to attend our next hearing on comprehensive ***immigration reform***. We will have one tomorrow afternoon at 3:00 p.m. in this very same room, during which we will explore the impacts of ***immigration*** on state and local communities. Then, on Friday morning at 9:00 a.m., we will focus again on comprehensive ***immigration reform*** as it relates to the future of undocumented students and ***reform***. With that, this hearing is adjourned.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Transcript

Subject: ***IMMIGRATION*** (95%); BORDER CONTROL (94%); ***IMMIGRATION*** LAW (92%); CITIZENSHIP (91%); TERRITORIAL & NATIONAL BORDERS (91%); NATIONAL SECURITY (90%); ***IMMIGRATION*** REGULATION & POLICY (90%); INTERNATIONAL LAW (90%); REFUGEES (90%); CENSUS (87%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (79%); NATURALIZATION (79%); SOCIOLOGY (76%); HISTORY (76%); HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCE (76%); DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS (71%); COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (71%); GRANDCHILDREN (64%); POLLS & SURVEYS (62%)

Organization: VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY (91%); HUDSON INSTITUTE (91%); UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (91%)

Industry: COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS (71%)

Person: ZOE LOFGREN (73%)

Geographic: NASHVILLE, TN, USA (79%); CALIFORNIA, USA (92%); DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (99%)

Load-Date: May 18, 2007

End of Document