



**Remarks by
The Honorable Julián Castro
Latino Leaders Luncheon Series**

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The Crystal Tea Room
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Julián Castro: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you so much first of all to Antonio. You know, the first time that Antonio and I spoke was on June 7th 2005. I remember that day because that was the day of my first mayoral election in San Antonio and it was 10 days before he became the mayor of Los Angeles. And as you can imagine, it was Election Day in San Antonio and so we were busy doing a million things and I'm sure that it was 10 days away and he was busy doing a million things in LA, but he took the time that afternoon to reach out and to say to me, "Good luck. I hope that you win in San Antonio. If you win, it's going to mean a lot not just for the people of San Antonio but for the nation." I'll always remember that Antonio. I lost that night but you won 10 days later and Los Angeles won and California won and the entire community won because of that. Thank you for your leadership.

I also of course want to profoundly thank Henry and Mary Alice, his lovely wife, who I served on the city council with. You know, when Joaquin and I were growing up in San Antonio in the 1980s, as Henry mentioned, my mother worked at city hall, but Henry was a trailblazer, a groundbreaker, the first Hispanic mayor of a major American city, someone who was showing what could be done at the local level and getting national attention, and really served as a role model to so many of us who when we looked for leaders that we could see some of ourselves in, we looked at Henry and his leadership has continued. And through the years, he's never hesitated to offer his advice as a friend. For that, I want to thank you, Henry. You've made a lot of difference. Thank you for your leadership.

There are so many folks that make us so proud in the Latino community that are here and I know that if I say start trying to go through everybody, I'm going to miss folks and offend them. But let me just thank Dolores Huerta because Dolores is a living legend that it's true that without her, so many of us in this generation wouldn't have nearly the opportunity that we have in this country. Thank you, Dolores, for all of your leadership and every door that you have opened over the years.

I also of course want to thank Eva and I want to thank Javier Palomares and Brent Wilkes and all of the folks who are making a difference maybe not in public service but in the nonprofit sector, in the private sector.

And of course I want to thank Mickey and the Latino Leaders Network. Mickey reached out to me before I was a mayor, when I was on city council; I think 26 or 27 years old. Because, Mickey, you have always concerned yourself with making sure that the next generation has the kind of opportunity that you have had. Muchisimas gracias. Thank you so much.

And of course, I want to acknowledge my brother, Joaquin, who is here today. You know, earlier we were on the CBS's morning show and Charlie Rose asked us, "Which one of you is going to run against Ted Cruz in 2018?" And the first thing I said was, "Well, probably zero of us." And he shot right back, "Well, he's speaking for himself." So, I think he's living up to the reputation of the more outgoing, extroverted twin today. But I'm convinced that I wouldn't be nearly where I am in life if it weren't for Joaquin and the fact that we have been best friends ever since before we were born. And so, thank you, Joaquin, for being here as well and for your great leadership. I like to kid folks that Joaquin goes around telling people that the way to tell us apart is that I am a minute uglier than he is. And I like to remind folks that, you know, we both live in Washington but I'm the only one who actually works in Washington.

So, I want to thank you all for this recognition. As Antonio said, I am proud to be an American and I am proud of my Mexican heritage as well. Joaquin and I grew up like Henry did on the west side of San Antonio. We grew up with our grandmother who had come over from Mexico when she was six years old as an orphan. She worked her entire life as a maid, a cook, and a babysitter because she got taken out of school by the relatives that she lived with when she was young. Because of that, she

never made a lot of money in life but she raised a daughter, our mother, to graduate from high school and then go on to college.

When we were growing up with her and with my mom, my mother was a bit of a hell-raiser in her youth. She was active in the Chicano Movement, in the Raza Unida Party. She ran for city council in San Antonio when she was 23 years old and it was a time in 1971 before very many women and very many minorities actually got elected in big cities before Henry broke through in 1981 and became mayor.

And you know, I remember a couple of things about my mom that really shaped who we are. The first was attending our sixth grade orientation. We showed up to sixth grade orientation at one of the schools, the neighborhood school, we were about to start middle school, and at some point in the orientation, one of the administrators stood up and they asked us to look around the room. You know, we were there, a whole bunch of other students and the parents, and my mom was there, and this administrator asked us to look around the room and said that that chances were that by the time we were supposed to leave the eighth grade that maybe up to half of us wouldn't be there anymore. And, you know, that didn't mean that much to us at the age of 11 or 12 but later that day my mother pulled us out of that school and she put us in another one, a little bit further down, and she told us later that she would never keep her sons anywhere where they didn't believe that they could at least finish the eighth grade.

The other thing that I remember in her city hall office in the basement she used to have her office where part of the time was that she had this little cartoon placard that said, "God is coming, and boy, is she pissed." So, we grew up with a mother who instilled in us this sense that we had value, that we could achieve, that we should dream big, and that people of all different backgrounds had something to contribute to the forward progress of our nation.

We grew up and eventually decided to go into public service ourselves. I decided to go into public service because when I went away to college, it was the first time that I'd ever really been away from home. And I could see in the Bay Area around Stanford that there was a community that had a higher income level, a higher education level that was more innovative and entrepreneurial. At the same time, I came to value even more what I loved about San Antonio, that it was such a culturally rich city, that it was a wonderful place to raise a family, that

it was somewhere that when two people pass each other on the street, that they still looked each other in the eye, that there was still a sense of connection, a sense of community that existed. And my interest in public service came out of the question of how could you combine the best of two of those two things, create a community that was a ready for the future, that was innovative, had a good education level, and at the same time had a wonderful, fundamental character and a cultural richness to it. And it was the thrill of my life to get to succeed Henry eventually as mayor and to serve San Antonio. And I know that in this room, whether through public service or through business or education or the arts, that you feel blessed as I do with opportunity as well and that's why you do what you do.

I want to thank the so many people who are here who are making a difference in expanding opportunity in your own right. It's also I think right at the heart of why we gathered this week to ensure that this election produces an outcome that will expand opportunity in our country and not take it away.

A few years ago, I had the chance to visit Israel and I sat down for about an hour with President Shimon Peres, and I'll never forget that one of the things he told me back then was that that we used mirrors like a physical mirror to look at ourselves and based on how we look in the mirror, we make improvements, you know, comb our hair or shave. We make physical improvements. And then he asked, "What is the mirror for the soul?" I believe that November is all about what is the mirror of this nation's soul, what is it that we can reach for that will ensure that we stay on course, that as a nation, we are who we're supposed to be, who we always have been, and the answer of course is that those are our values. Our values are a kind of mirror. It's my hope that through your work in all of those different sectors, through your life's accomplishments, through your effort, that we will remain true as a nation that expands opportunity, expands equality, and expands liberty. I know that it's been the thrill of my life to get to do and play a small part in that and I know in the years to come that we'll continue to celebrate so many of the accomplishments of the folks in this room who are also making us proud.

So, Mickey, thank you very much for the recognition. I Appreciate it. And let's win in November. Thank you.