

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks at a Hispanic Heritage Month Reception

September 27, 2019

The President. That's very nice. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. A lot of spirit. A lot of spirit. How are you?

Well, thank you all for being here today. And I'm delighted to once again celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with you at the White House. Right?

This evening we come together to honor the devotion, and the drive, and the faith, and genius, and exceptional achievements of our incredible Hispanic American community, right?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Everybody here Hispanic and/or Hispanic American? Who isn't? Do we have anybody? Do we have anybody who isn't? I don't think so. *[Laughter]* How are you? Great man of faith. Great.

Hispanic Americans have been a big part of our national story from the very, very beginning of our country. You work hard. You raise your strong and beautiful families. You care for your neighbors. You start businesses, you create jobs, and you teach your children to love our country and to cherish our God-given freedom. Right?

Hispanic Americans enrich America in countless ways, and we will always honor this solemn commitment to you. I will always be with you, and I think you know that maybe better than anybody knows it. All of our citizens, every single day, we're fighting for you. We're putting your needs, your families, and your futures first. We're putting America first. We're putting the people in this room, we're putting you first. All right?

And we're delighted to be joined for this special occasion by Vice President Mike Pence, who is doing a fantastic job. Here, say a couple of words, Mike. Say a couple of words. Come on.

Vice President Michael R. Pence. Well, thank you, Mr. President. And it is wonderful to be here just a few short days before we kick off Hispanic Heritage Month. The Americans gathered in this room—and all you represent—stand for everything that's great about this country and everything that this President and this administration fight for every day: faith and family and freedom.

Thank you for being here at the White House, and God bless you.

The President. Thank you, Mike.

We have some very powerful, important people that have been doing a fantastic job on the Cabinet. Andrew Wheeler—where's Andrew? Where is Andrew? Thank you. Whoa, Andrew. I thought you were taller than that. I thought you were taller than that, Andrew. *[Laughter]* Deputy Secretary Patrick Pizzella. Patrick? Thank you. Thank you, Patrick. Good job, Patrick. U.S. Treasurer—who everybody knows—Jovita Carranza. *[Inaudible.]* Thank you, Jovita.

A great football player at Ohio State—fantastic. He went into the NFL and he was tough as can be. A lot of people don't know that. He's a tough cookie, and he's a friend of mine: Representative Anthony Gonzalez. Thank you.

Along with a lot of other political people and State and local leaders, and a lot of diplomats. All the diplomats, thank you very much. We always love diplomats in the White House because we can use diplomats sometimes. [Laughter]

I also want to thank Christine D'Clario for her beautiful rendition of our national anthem. Thank you, Christine. Great job.

Last week, I had the privilege of awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom to another phenomenal member of the Hispanic American community: the legendary pitcher for the New York Yankees—I think one of the great pitchers of all time; certainly, the greatest reliever of all time—Mariano Rivera.

He was something. Boy, his record—you know, he was up—and he's been a friend of mine for a long time, and—as a Yankee fan. But there's never been any human being that broke more bats. I said, "What do you do?" [Laughter] He threw a heavy ball. I said, "Mariano, how do you do that?" He said: "I don't know. God just gave me this ability."

But you'd have people up there, and those bats were breaking left and right. It was a heavy ball, and his record was incredible. He—his earned run average in all of the playoffs—and I think he has a record for games played. But his record was—his earned run average was less than one run a game. And they won many, many World Series and many games. So he's a special person and a really nice person too.

Mariano is one of millions of the outstanding men and women of Hispanic heritage who has excelled in every dimension of American society, and helped to build our community into the greatest nation the world has ever seen.

Today, thanks to our pro-American economic policies—you all know this—Hispanic Americans are thriving like they have never thrived before. We've created more than 6 million new jobs since my election. More than 1 million Latinas have entered the workforce. And, as you probably heard me say on occasion, Hispanic American unemployment right now is at the lowest level in the history of our country.

How do they beat us in a debate? When they say, "We're going to get Hispanic vote . . ." And I say, "Really?" The lowest level in the history—I mean, it's the lowest in the history of our country. So that's something special.

Since 2016, Hispanic American median household income has risen by \$1,500, and is now the highest level in the history of our country. How about that? Not doing bad, right? Half a million more Hispanic Americans now own a home, and we've never seen these kind of numbers before. So I'm very proud to report that more Latinas own small businesses than ever before. And you know, great businesspeople. When I was out on that business market, I hated competing with you. [Laughter] Smart and tough and vicious, but I won't say that tonight. [Laughter]

We have one of these amazing entrepreneurs with us tonight. Maria Rios is the President and CEO of Nation Waste, Inc. And she's got an incredible story to tell. Maria, please come forward. Please. Come on.

Nation Waste, Inc., President and Chief Executive Officer Maria Rios. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, darling.

Ms. Rios. What an honor, my goodness.

The President. It's my honor.

Ms. Rios. My honor. Thank you very much.

The President. My honor. Thank you.

Ms. Rios. Thank you.

The President. Please.

Ms. Rios. Wow. What an opportunity this is. Thank you so much for this opportunity. My name is Maria Rios, and I'm the president and CEO for Nation Waste.

I came to America when I was 13, without knowing English, with my parents, because of a civil war from El Salvador. And through education and perseverance and also hard work and work ethic, I am now the owner of Nation Waste, a fully certified company in America.

I love creating jobs for more Americans. And, to me, this is just a dream come true. And I just cannot thank you enough for all the work that you are doing to help us small-business owners to grow our businesses across the United States.

I also want to say—thank Ivanka for what she's doing—her leadership that she's doing, as well. And the Vice President as well—for all the hard work that they're doing.

And I just want to say—you know, Nation Waste—who would have thought that this little girl, who came to America from El Salvador, not knowing English, went to school—through education—now owned a—not only—I'm the first Latina in the waste management industry in the country, and the largest multimillion-dollar company in the State of Texas.

I love creating jobs for more Americans, and I just thank God; and my parents—my mother, my father, and of course, my husband and all my family; and my employees; and everyone that made this possible.

So, Mr. President, thank you for all that you're doing for this great country. Thank you, sir. Thank you, sir. Thank you so much.

The President. Well, thank you, Maria. That's a fantastic job. I was going to say maybe you should run for office, you did so well. But after seeing how well she's done, I think you should just continue to do what you're doing. *[Laughter]* You're doing very well. Thank you, Maria.

As we empower women in our own economy, last month, my daughter Ivanka traveled to South America—including Colombia, Paraguay, and Argentina—to highlight the W-GDP initiative, the critical role women play in creating economic opportunity, and the administration's commitment to empowering women all around the world. It was really something.

And Ivanka has worked so hard for jobs and for women. And gets no credit for it, but she doesn't even care, I tell you. Well, she gets credit with the people that count. You know that. That's the people that we all know. She has done, really, a fantastic job for women and also for jobs, 13 million additional jobs. And she'll go around and see all of these big companies, and they'll hire and really empower. It's something very special to watch.

Every day, my administration is working to deliver a more prosperous future. America is winning again, and America is being respected again like it hasn't been respected in a long, long time.

Our country right now is more powerful than ever before. We have achieved record funding for the U.S. military, \$2½ trillion dollars over the last 3 years. We've rebuilt it. When I was just coming into office, our military was totally depleted. It was depleted like you wouldn't want to even hear about, and it's been rebuilt. And it's bigger, better, stronger. We have an amazing military. Two and half trillion dollars.

And we'll work on the budgets. But before we do the budgets, we have to rebuild our military. I think you understand. Otherwise—[*applause*]. Otherwise, budgets don't matter, right? Otherwise, budgets don't matter.

And we delivered a beautiful pay raise also for every soldier, sailor, airman, coastguardsman, and marine. So they're very happy. More than a quarter of a million Hispanic Americans bravely serve in our Armed Forces. That's a lot of people. And we're profoundly grateful to each and every one of them. Great.

And we're also incredibly thankful for the thousands of Hispanic Americans serving on the frontlines, protecting our borders.

Audience member. Build the wall!

The President. And you know better than any people how important borders are.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. You know better than anybody. You know, my poll numbers with Hispanics went way up. And they said: "I wonder how that is? You want strong borders." Well, the Hispanics know better than anyone. You don't want people coming into our country that are going to do harm to you. And frankly, you don't want people coming into our country that are going to take your jobs. It's very simple.

So, at first, I was even a little surprised to see those numbers. Mike and I were discussing it. And then, all of the sudden, it made a lot of sense. It made a lot of sense.

But we—right now Mexico has been a tremendous help to us—the President of Mexico. We have 27,000 Mexican soldiers on our southern border. They've never had any. We've literally never had virtually any Mexican soldiers, and we have 27,000 now. We can't get the Democrats to do what they're supposed to do with the loopholes or with asylum. No, they're not doing their job. We call them the—they're not doing their job. The "do-nothings," right? The do-nothings.

Audience member. They're not patriots!

The President. They're not—well——

Audience members. They hate America!

The President. You can—[*laughter*].

Audience members. They don't love us! We love you! You love us!

The President. You're better off saying it. You're better off saying it. You people are really out there.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. So we're really doing a job with borders. We're really doing a job with the economy, number-one economy. We're at number one at everything. We have the strongest military—by the way, strongest military by far, anywhere in the world. And we're going to keep it that way, if not make it even stronger. More than——

And hopefully, by the way—hopefully, we don't have to use it. Hopefully—and you know, interestingly, the stronger it gets, the less likely it is that we have to use it, you know? That's sort of the way it goes in life, unfortunately.

More than half of our Border Patrol agents are Hispanic, and more than a quarter of our ICE agents—and those ICE agents are incredible, and they are Hispanic. And they are tough. They are tough. They're patriots. And we're moving MS-13 gang members and some of these horrible people—boom. They're being brought out. They're being brought out of our country by the thousands—by the thousands.

Audience members. Bad hombres.

The President. And they are bad. As you say, bad—they're bad hombres. So you'd better believe it. [Laughter] He's—he said—[laughter]. I used that word once, and nobody has let me forget it, right? [Laughter]

Many of these agents are themselves immigrants or the children of immigrants. And they're incredible people, extraordinary patriots who uphold our laws and safeguard our communities.

We're honored to have with us one of our finest: Patrol Agent Jose Avina. And, Jose, if you could come up. Come on up, Jose. Say a few words. Thank you.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Chaplain and Patrol Agent Jose L. Avina. Thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Vice President, for inviting my family and I. We're grateful and honored to be here with you tonight, celebrating our Hispanic Heritage Month with these amazing people here. I want to praise God for this opportunity to salute the brave men and women of the United States Border Patrol, who are out there working tirelessly, keeping America safe.

As chaplains, we have the honor to be by the side of agents' families who are injured, who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. We pray for them. We walk with them through their journey of grief. And we, step by step, continue with their lives.

We have the honor to be with those agents whose children are battling cancer, like the Reyna family. The opportunity to accompany the death of a spouse, a parent, or a child—like the Gomez and Morales family—I had the honor to serve with both of these families at Police Week.

I have the daily privilege of working with some of the most compassionate men and women who render aid to the injured, rescue people who have been walking for days or were drowning. These agents who volunteer after—as coaches, mentors in our communities.

Finally, I want to thank my parents: my mother, who worked so hard after my dad was injured and could no longer work. She's an example of a tough, hard-working Latina who never gives up. I also want to thank my beautiful wife Amy, my daughter Brianna, and my two babies, Jose-Luis and Bella, for always supporting me and allowing me to serve country as a Border Patrol agent and as a chaplain.

To my brothers and sisters in green, keep the great work honor first. "Honor first." *Y Dios la bendiga*, President Trump.

The President. Great job. Wow. Jose, you come from an incredible group of people, I'll tell you what. They're brave, they're strong, they love our country. We appreciate the work you do. And I don't think anyone how much we appreciate it. You don't get the credit you deserve, but the people appreciate it, more than anybody would know.

And I want you to know that we will always stand with the heroes of Border Patrol, ICE, and all of law enforcement. They have done just incredible work.

To ensure a safe and prosperous future, we also are advancing the cause of human liberty in our hemisphere. We are also, by the way, advancing the cause of religious liberty. Right? We just talked about that at the United Nations.

We've confronted the corrupt communist dictatorship in Cuba, canceling the last administration's one-sided deal with the Castro regime. It was a—just another bad deal, very one-sided, very unfair to the United States.

We're making good deals now for the United States. It's about time. Our deal with China, our deal with so many—they're all coming along very, very nicely. A little patience—to make them great, you need a little patience.

Our farmers, by the way, have been incredible. They've been incredible. And now China is back buying again. They're buying a lot of our agricultural products. A lot of things are happening.

The United States and our partners have also built a historic coalition of 55 countries dedicated to the future of democracy for the people of Venezuela. Right? Great people.

And this evening we are proud to welcome Ambassadors from many nations taking part in this incredible coalition. Please put up your hands. A lot of Ambassadors. We have some really great, great people. Thank you. Great people, a lot of very, very terrific, patriotic people. They love their country. They love our country. It's all working out really well. And the relationships have rarely been better and probably never been better.

On behalf of the American people, we want to thank you all, and thank you all for being here. Thank you very much.

And we will not allow the horrors of socialism and communism to be repeated in this century.

Audience members. Boo!

Audience member. Never.

The President. America stands with the brave people of Cuba and Nicaragua and Venezuela in their righteous struggle for freedom. Someday soon, the Western Hemisphere will be the first fully free hemisphere in human history. Did you know that? Human history. It's going to happen.

Hope it happens during my term—let's say over the next 16, 18, maybe 20 years. *[Laughter]* We have just driven the media crazy with that. *[Laughter]*

In this noble quest, we know that our cherished Hispanic American citizens are among the fiercest defenders of our shared American values. Together, we believe in freedom, we believe in justice, we believe in the rule of law, we trust in God, and we cherish the dignity of every human life.

This evening we are grateful to be joined by Martha Avila, the president of the Heartbeat of Miami Medical Clinics, doing an incredible job. Martha has helped thousands of mothers choose life. Martha, please come up and say a few words. Let us know about the great job you've done. I already know, but they don't.

Heartbeat of Miami Pregnancy Help Medical Clinics President and Cofounder Martha E. Avila. My name is Martha Avila, president and cofounder of Heartbeat of Miami Pregnancy Help Medical Clinics. Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, thank you for the honor of being here.

I am a Cuban American, and it saddens me that Cuban Americans and African Americans, even though we're a minority, we—I'm sorry, Hispanics and African Americans are the minority, yet we form the majority of abortions in our country. One out of two pregnancies of African Americans ends up in abortion, and one out of three Hispanic pregnancies ends up in abortions. And that saddens me.

And on behalf of Heartbeat of Miami and the pro-life movement, we want to thank you for what you do for life. Our President does stand for life, life of the unborn and all lives. And I just want to thank you for that, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Martha. That's beautiful.

Ms. Avila. We—over 3,000 pregnancy clinics throughout the Nation, with very limited resources, are doing this labor of love for those that don't know what to do. They're confused. They don't have a way out, and they think that abortion is the only solution. Yet we offer them the opportunity to parent their babies and the opportunity of a plan of adoption. That is what we do.

So pregnancy clinics are good for America. And one day, abortion will be unthinkable—unthinkable in our country. So God bless you all. God bless you both. Thank you so much.

The President. Thank you, Martha. Great job.

Well, thank you very much, Martha. And every day, millions of Hispanic Americans like Martha are making tremendous contributions, achieving extraordinary breakthroughs, and enriching every corner of this incredible country of ours.

There is no part of American society you have not made better—Hispanic Americans. There is no aspect of American life you have not made stronger. And I know that I speak for all Americans when I say that we could not be prouder of our Hispanic American community than we are today.

So to all of you here today: On behalf of Mike and myself and the Cabinet—this is a great Cabinet that we have, and I want to thank them for being here. But I want to thank you for your devotion to your country. Thank you for your contribution to our culture. And thank you for helping make America greater than ever before. It is greater than ever before. Remember that.

God bless you all, and God Bless America. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy Secretary of Labor Patrick Pizzella; Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump; President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico; and First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Raul Castro Ruz. Ms. Rios referred to her parents Reyna Romero and Juan Angel. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 28.

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