

have a secure and modern border that speeds the legitimate flow of people and commerce and stop those who threaten our common safety and prosperity.

The United States respects rule of law. But in the debate on migration, I remind my fellow citizens that family values do not stop at the Rio Grande River, that there are decent, hard-working, honorable citizens of Mexico who want to make a living for their families. And so, Mr. President, my pledge to you and your Government—but more importantly, the people of Mexico—is I will work as hard as I possibly can to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

We support your plans to improve education and health care and housing for all your citizens. We will continue to work with you to expand opportunities for trade and investment. We will work together to facilitate a smooth transition to full trade, especially on sensitive issues like corn and beans. We recognize that the best hope to lift millions out of poverty is to spread prosperity through free and fair trade. The people of the United States understand that when we help our neighbors build a better life for themselves, we advance peace and prosperity for all of us.

Today, the most important ties between the United States and Mexico are not government to government, they are people to people. These ties include churches and faith-based institutions that serve people on

both sides of the *frontera*. These ties include our colleges and universities, which run important exchange programs for students and teachers. These ties include our businesses, which trade one another—trade with one another and invest in each other's countries. And these ties include the families who send an estimated \$20 billion in remittances each year to their relatives here in Mexico, one of the largest private economic initiatives in the world. These ties are vital, and they are growing.

Mr. President, geography has made our countries neighbors, but the choice we've made for each other is a choice for freedom. And that choice has made us friends. I'm honored to be in your country. I'm looking forward to our discussions over the next 2 days. You have set a very ambitious agenda that is going to require a lot of hard work. But I'm confident that by working together, we'll build a better life and a future of hope for our peoples.

Thank you for having me. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:04 a.m. at Hacienda Temozon. In his remarks, he referred to Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo, wife of President Calderon. President Calderon spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico in Merida, Mexico March 13, 2007

Senor Presidente, thank you very much for your gracious hospitality. I think you picked a perfect place to invite Laura and me and our delegation. It's a beautiful land. It is a spectacular day. And our meetings

were constructive. Thank you, First Lady, for your hospitality as well.

Relations between Mexico and the United States are *muy importante*. We've got a great history. We've got a strong tradition of working together. And my job,

Mr. President, is to do all I can to work with you to advance progress on both sides of the border.

There are issues, of course, issues that we discussed today and will continue to discuss in a manner of respect and dignity. Perhaps the biggest issue concerning your country is the issue of migration. America is a country of law; we'll respect law. But America is also a hospitable country, a country that recognizes the value of each human being. And as the President of your grand country, I know you're deeply concerned about how your citizens are treated within our country. And my pledge to you and the people of Mexico is, they'll be treated with respect and dignity.

The best way to do that is to pass a migration law that upholds the values of America and, at the same time, allows us to respect the rule of law. As I told you in private, as you expressed your deep concerns about whether or not America can pass such a law, that I will use all the

efforts I can, working with both Republicans and Democrats, to pass such a piece of legislation.

We spent a lot of time talking about Mexico's important role in the world, and I thank you for your leadership, Mr. President. You're President of a great country. You will use your influence to foster social justice and prosperity and peace. I look forward to your leadership on such issues; I look forward to helping you as best I can, as best as you request to do so.

And I, too, would like to offer a toast. I'd like to offer a toast to the great people of a great country, *nuestro amigo*, Mexico, and to your *salud*, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. at Hacienda Temozon. In his remarks, he referred to Margarita Esther Zavala Gomez del Campo, wife of President Calderon. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Calderon.

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico in Merida March 13, 2007

Mr. President, Mrs. Zavala, members of your government, Governor of Yucatan, the mayor of Merida, other government officials, distinguished guests: *Buenas noches, y gracias*. Laura and I are delighted to be back in Mexico. We're grateful for the warm hospitality of President Calderon and Mrs. Zavala. We appreciate the chance to dine in this beautiful setting, which calls to mind Mexico's rich history and its bright future.

For Laura and me, the connection to Mexico stretches back for decades. *Somos Tejanos*. We have come to admire your country, the people, and your culture. As Governor, I worked closely with my counterparts on this side of the border and

made a lot of friends in Mexico. As President, Mexico was the first country I visited and the first country whose leader I welcomed for a state dinner at the White House. Over the past 6 years, I've traveled all across your nation, from here in Merida to Monterrey to Los Cabos on the Pacific Coast. And this evening the relationship between Mexico and the United States is as strong and is as vibrant as it has ever been, and President Calderon and I intend to keep it that way.

The ties between our countries are deep and lasting. We are united by the bonds of family. We are united by the growing commerce that crosses our border each