

one step back. But it's always possible to bring about the change we hope for as long as good people are willing to work together and remain committed, willing to march and organize and vote and educate our friends and our families and our neighbors, and tell the stories of all the incredible people who have contributed to this great Nation of ours who are immigrants, who came from some other places, but ended up weaving their stories together with people from all around the globe to make this unique country we call America.

Change is possible because of people like you. It's because of people like Efrain Escobedo. I want to tell his story, because Efrain was born in Los Angeles to two immigrants from Mexico. As an oldest child, Efrain took on the role as his parents' advocate, translating for them in school and at the doctor's office. And when he turned 18, eager to exercise his new right to vote, he realized that his parents couldn't vote. He said, I had these two parents who raised me to love this country and worked so hard to be there, and yet, in a very important way, they weren't a part of this democracy.

The more Efrain learned about the power of his vote, the more he threw himself into the work of turning whole neighborhoods of people like him into active and engaged citizens. And through the organization where he works, the California Community Foundation, he's worked tirelessly to encourage people to apply for citizenship and become involved in their communities and to vote and to consider running for office themselves.

In 2007, with other Latino leaders, he helped lead a campaign to encourage people to become U.S. citizens, and he joined the citizenship campaign I launched last September. And since Efrain's campaign was launched, millions of people have become U.S. citizens and active participants in our democracy. And that just shows you the difference that one person can make. If we use our democracy, he says, it does work, and every vote really does count.

Throughout this room, all across this land, we're blessed with people like Efrain. And that's what makes strong communities. That's what makes for a strong country. People working to push this country forward, even just a little bit, and then handing it off in better shape for future generations. And that's really what we celebrate here today.

And for that, I want to thank you. For that, I think you've all earned a few margaritas. [Laughter]

So thank you, everybody. God bless you. God bless America. *Viva Mexico.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Denver, CO, resident Yanelly Gonzalez; Maria del Rosario Castro and Jesse Guzman, parents of Rep. Joaquin Castro; and Efrain Escobedo, vice president of civic engagement and public policy, California Community Foundation, and his parents Efrain Escobedo, Sr., and Rosa M. Escobedo.

Statement on the Death of Former Senator Robert F. Bennett

May 5, 2016

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of former Senator Bob Bennett. For 18 years, Bob worked tirelessly in the United States Senate for his fellow Utahns. His commitment to his constituents transcended partisanship, and he often reached across the aisle to get things done. He was a dedicated

public servant, and his work—like efforts to save the country from economic collapse—is exemplary of what we can accomplish when we put aside our differences and focus on our common goals. Michelle and I offer our deepest condolences to Bob's wife Joyce and their children and grandchildren.