

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 200

Recognizing Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez for ending segregation in schools in Orange County, California, and for setting the precedent for the historic Brown v. Board of Education case, which ended segregation in schools across the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 2003

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California (for herself, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. REYES, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Mr. FROST, Mr. CASE, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. PASTOR, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. KIND, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. FARR, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. HINCHEY, Ms. MAJETTE, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. SANDLIN, Mr. FORD, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez for ending segregation in schools in Orange County, California, and for setting the precedent for the historic Brown v. Board of Education case, which ended segregation in schools across the United States.

Whereas Gonzalo Mendez was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, on January 10, 1913, and immigrated to the United States in 1919;

Whereas Felicitas Mendez was born in Juncos, Puerto Rico, on February 5, 1916;

Whereas Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez moved to Westminster, California, in 1943 to tend a farm they were renting from the Munemitsu family, a Japanese family who had been sent to an internment camp during World War II;

Whereas, in 1945, Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez organized a group of parents to end the segregationist educational system in Orange County, California;

Whereas the Mendez family, along with 4 other families, filed a lawsuit against the Westminster, Anaheim, Santa Ana, and El Modena School Districts seeking an injunction ordering the integration of all schools in Orange County;

Whereas the case was entitled Mendez v. Westminster and was decided in favor of the Mendez family and the other plaintiffs on February 18, 1946;

Whereas the American Civil Liberties Union, American Jewish Congress, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Lawyer's Guild, and Japanese American Citizens League contributed amicus briefs to the appeal;

Whereas, on April 14, 1947, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Mendez family's case;

Whereas the Mendez case was the first case to convince a Federal court that the doctrine of "separate but equal" was unconstitutional;

Whereas 8 years after Mendez v. Westminster, Thurgood Marshall argued the Brown v. Board of Education case before the United States Supreme Court, relying in part on the Mendez case as legal precedent;

Whereas because of their bravery and dedication, Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez opened the doors for a better education for children of color throughout the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That Congress recognizes Gonzalo and
 3 Felicitas Mendez, and those who actively supported their
 4 efforts, for ending segregation in schools in Orange Coun-
 5 ty, California, and for setting the precedent for the his-
 6 toric Brown v. Board of Education case, which ended seg-
 7 regation in schools across the United States and declared
 8 the doctrine of “separate but equal” unconstitutional.

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