

An Oral History of Senator Richard Polanco

Recorded Oct. 24, 2022 at the offices of Telacu in Los Angeles

Interviewer: Dan Morain (DM)

Subject: Richard Polanco (RP)

Section III

Integrating the Third House

After leaving office, Polanco uses his clout to bring more Latino voices into the powerful California lobbying industry.

Dan Morain: Okay. So one of the issues that you dealt with... Tried to deal with was the third house, the lobby corps. Which I believe you...

Richard Polanco: Did not look like me.

DM: You started to insist on [chuckle] a little diversity.

RP: Absolutely.

DM: And so how'd that work?

RP: So it became clear that Latinos did not have a presence in outside the building. We had institutionalized our presence both in membership as well as in the staff level, in the staffing. And so what was happening is all the... All the big players, the lobby groups, would come in and I would say, "Where's your – and I'd be very specific – 'where are the Latinos?' We don't have one. Okay, well there's plenty of good folks out there and so I look today and there's a strong presence now institutionalizing. And why is that important? It was important to institutionalize it in the halls of Sacramento because our experience matters. My experience matters. It's different from yours and yours and yours. And we should all be able to have our experience at the table, so that when the public policy comes out, it's more inclusive. And I see that more and more. And that was the whole intention.

DM: So would you refuse to meet with lobbyists who were, who didn't have diversity in their...

RP: I think on a couple of occasions I did. I said, "Yeah."

DM: Come back and see me another day?

RP: Yeah. Politely, "Come back and see me."

DM: How polite were you?

RP: I could be polite. Come on.

[laughter]

DM: You did a similar thing with the Metropolitan Water District.

RP: Oh boy.

DM: Oh boy.

RP: So the Metropolitan Water District...

DM: So you remember your speech?

RP: I remember my... I was trying to look for it, but I remember... The Metropolitan Water District is a wholesaler, and it had I think like 57 members at one point in time, and the average age was like 70 years old. They had two nurses at all the board meetings, and... Predominantly all Anglo men.

DM: So I found this was [a story that my colleague and I wrote at the *LA Times*](#), Ted Rohrlich. He quoted you. He wrote it, I helped report it. “‘Good afternoon,’ he began his speech to the small sea of white heads. ‘I am here to talk about sweetheart contracts, shadow lobbying, and the general underhanded way this agency operates.’ Then I think it downhill from there.

[laughter]

RP: I remember it. And I remember holding... And literally, it was like in the lion’s room, in the lion’s den. And I did not speak that lightly. We basically did our own research and we found that contributions were being made and not reported and reimbursed. And this agency was just a buffalo water agency. They were old water buffaloes, as they refer to them. And so I saw the need to reform. One, it was too large and unbeknownst to me, the way the voting and the composition is made is based on property values, and so if you have higher property value, you’re going to have more seats at the table.

RP: Well, you look at the city of LA and you look at Orange County and a couple of other cities, and you realize very quickly who controls the water agency. And so, I felt that... And worked out, one, we need to reduce that, number one. Which we did. We brought it down to its current form. I engaged to the point where we put a strategy together to assist with Ron Gastelum, who became general manager, Adán Ortega, who was the assistant, and Phil Pace, who was the chairman. And so we began to make some inroads and began to change, and they began to not be as sweetheart deal-making and contribution. Political contribution. I think we have, I think that was the beginning of a change there.

DM: Well, it’s become less exclusive, more inclusive, a little more diverse.

RP: A lot more diverse, not just in the composition, but when you look at the contracting that goes out in the water arena, there’s a lot of contracting that goes out, and it’s always going out to the good old boy network. And so, enough. There are qualified minority firms, women firms,

given the opportunity to compete, will not only compete but will outperform. And the 209s of the world and all those who hide behind that, it's a disservice because when you can diversify from economic trickle-down, you're diversifying in communities that would not otherwise be beneficiaries to that.

DM: So in politics, you ran some tough campaigns, one of which was Richard Katz. Katz had butted heads with Cruz Bustamante in the speakership fight. And you supported Richard Alarcon for a state Senate seat. Alarcon won. It was a pretty brutal campaign mailer sent against Katz, which equated him with poll watchers and people, so it was a pretty tough thing. And he sued you for libel. Talk about that if you can, if you would.

RP: So it was a race that Alarcon won by 29 votes, after 30 days or 40 days of recount. The letter that was sent was factually correct. The letter that was sent. Richard wanted to make it anti-Semitic and I shared it with my friends, who were my friends, Jewish supporters, and there was nothing there that was anti-Semitic. He did sue, he lost. He sued not only me, he sued Richie Ross.

DM: Richie Ross was often your campaign consultant.

RP: That's right.

DM: Yeah.

RP: And so him having lost, I was entitled to attorney fees, right? John Vasconcellos comes over and he says, "Hey, can you work it out? Can you just like forget?" Fine, let it go. Richie, however...

1:59:32.4 DM: Richie Ross.

RP: Richie Ross, however, said, "No fucking way. He's... He's going to write me a check every month for what he owes me." So, that was a different story. At least that's how he shared the story with me.

DM: I see.

RP: Yeah, that's what Richie... So yeah, it was again breaking the glass ceiling in San Fernando Valley, a community that continued to grow and a community that we had every right to engage in. And he hit us hard, he did a dirty hands piece. Hey, that's politics. As long as it's factually correct, and then... Okay.

DM: Well, so you made powerful enemies. You're running for, you're getting near to being termed out. You're clearly the frontrunner to be city councilman. You announced your candidacy for city councilman, and a month later you pull out and then a month after that, lo and behold, there's opposition research that surfaces about a child you've fathered out of wedlock to a woman not your wife. So, talk about that or don't talk about it, but I wanted to ask you about it. What is...was that the reason you pulled out of that race?

RP: So, the reason for pulling out of the race...I always gave advice and looked to see whether you as a candidate had the fire in the belly. And I would ask, "How hungry are you?" And the fire that I had when I first ran, it was not there. And I made the decision to get out of the race and build more financial security for my family. That was a difficult period of my life and I'll leave it at that.

DM: Okay. All right. I did read that you provided child support...

RP: Yeah. And college.

DM: And college and that child is an adult. Okay. Alright. So how do you view your legacy? How do you view it?

RP: Well, I believe I made a difference. I believe I made a difference, not just in the halls of Sacramento, but more importantly in the lives of people. And that's why I got into politics. Whether it's water, a little ahead of my time with desalination legislation and a bond authority. Here we are with drought continuing. I remember watching Santa Barbara burn, which is how I got the idea and water from the hydrogens, right? I said, how could that be? And then they pan the ocean. And so, I was successful moving it. But again, the governor vetoed the bill. When it comes to, you walk into a pharmacy, the pharmacy technician position and duties is a bill that I carry, that created a lot of opportunity. When I saw in the area of eye care, equal access to ophthalmologists, they didn't exist in my community. They don't exist in low-income communities for all intent and purpose. And so I worked with the Optometrist Association to allow for certain kinds of prepackaged prescriptions on glaucoma.

RP: And so my legacy, I wanna say, from a political perspective, made a difference. My legacy on the policy perspective, that's just as important, also made a difference. Once I termed out of office, I created a non-profit institute, the Latino Caucus Institute for Public Policy. I continued to give back to the community that was pro bono. In 10 years we graduated 10 fellows. My last year in the legislature, we created a five-year strategic plan. One of the items there was to do the Institute a Fellows program. And then we created an academy where we train newly elected officials on how to govern. After 10 years, we folded the tent. It's time to let others move on or to carry on, I should say. And so, I'm still engaged in some good public policy area. Broadband Internet for all, affordability of these broadbands. I'm engaged in that policy discussion. And so I may have retired from the political arena, but I continue to engage in wanting to make a difference.

DM: So we're recording this in the offices of TELACU, the East Los Angeles Community Union, which has a fascinating history in Los Angeles. When the history of Los Angeles is written, I would assume TELACU is going to play a really significant role in that, it played a significant role in your career and your life, I think, maybe talk a little about TELACU.

RP: Sure.

DM: It was pretty controversial at one time.

RP: So TELACU was created by virtue of Congress having these chartered called Community Development Corporations. And these development corporations were chartered in East Los Angeles, along with the Watts Neighborhood Labor Council with the other in this area. And the concept of TELACU was to look at how a union operates. Walter Reuther, Esteban Torres comes out of the UAW, who was the founder of the TELACU organization. And so if you look at TELACU, it has on its board members of community service groups. When Esteban left to run for Congress and was successful, David Lizarraga assumed, or David was elected the CEO of TELACU, and I met David when David was organizing, in East LA, under the Teen Post Program. Teen Post Program was a war on poverty, Lyndon Johnson component that created these youth centers called team posts for purposes of developing leadership. I was in my teens when I met David and...

DM: He's a little older than you?

RP: Yeah. But that's when I first met him. His father was a minister of Presbyterian church over at Cleveland House, where I used to go as a kid as well. And so, David decides to go into the housing projects of Maravilla and there's a DMV building that is vacated in Montebello. And his vision is to move the building over to Maravilla in the heart of the housing projects and have it rehabbed, so he is able to accomplish that. That becomes Casa Maravilla, right. Now David and his wife, Priscilla, at that point in time, do a lot of the fundraising by having concerts, basically going out and then soliciting foundations. That is my first place of employment, obviously. So David becomes the executive director of TELACU and takes it to a whole new economic level of empowerment, in housing, senior housing. This industrial park was one of the very first projects that was done with Ed Roski, in partnership. And when I married Libby, David was in my wedding. Priscilla, his wife, and Michael, their son and only son, played several songs at our wedding. And so, it's been a long...

DM: Good buddies.

RP: We're real good friends, real good friends. And so TELACU continued to grow, had some issues that were identified by the LA Times. Corrective plan of action, continues to make a difference in the quality of life for a lot of folks. From that CDC, very early on...

DM: CDC is Community Development Corporation, right?

RP: Yes.

DM: So, the point of TELACU is to help.

RP: That's their mission.

DM: Finance development.

RP: Economic development, that includes housing, health, senior. Back then they had a kitchen to feed, Hot Meals on Wheels. I think today they're like 2000 units that they manage of senior

housing. It's a \$200 million operation. It employs from the neighborhood. It gives I think over a million dollars annually in scholarships to students who want to advance their education, and has done just a tremendous... This is a big asset to the community. And so, that's my history with David and TELACU. With Esteban, I was coordinating his second race against Danielson back then, not successful. And then went to Washington, worked for Jimmy Carter, I believe, and then was an ambassador to UNESCO. So there's a lot of good history from those who have been affiliated with TELACU.

DM: Well, so I need to ask you, you've talked about recruitment of candidates, you've talked about asking, insisting that public agencies become more inclusive. You've talked about diversity on the third house, within the Third House Lobby Corps. But one of the ways to, you needed fuel for this engine, part of it was Indian tribes that run casinos. They became major donors to you and to others obviously. And, but why don't you talk about the beginnings of the California Indian Casino business.

RP: So they began first as a bingo operators and they had no political influence whatsoever at the time. They were operating as Bingo operators. I had the opportunity to engage the Native Americans at the time that the Cabazon decision...

DM: The Cabazon tribe, out near Palm Springs, operated a Bingo facility. And then Attorney General Dan Lungren was trying to shut it down as I recall.

RP: That's right. Yeah. I was visited by several of the tribal chairs. Back then there was a woman, a lobbyist who passed, Latina, who introduced me to the Chumash. She was representing them. The Chumash introduced me to the, what is it... I wanna say Tule River, up on in Northern California and introduced me to several and I would do legislative sessions on how the legislation works, yadi, yadi. And then what occurred was there was a move to have gaming compacts. Pete Wilson felt that he had the only authority to sign the compacts and that they not needed to be ratified. And so, I did an amicus brief in support of having the legislature ratify the compact... Introduce and ratify the... Which was a big victory for the Native Americans.

And so the Native Americans now have the issue of whether they're allowed to do gaming in California. Well, the court's rule that because the device of the lottery machine is no different than the device in the slot machine, therefore, you can engage in gaming.

DM: That was the Cabazon decision?

RP: That was the Cabazon decision. And so what happens then is, they come up to Sacramento and...

DM: They being the leaders of various tribes that have bingo halls?

RP: Leaders that have bingo halls. Yes. Yes. And we sit down and we meet. And there comes a time when...

DM: In your office.

RP: In my office.

DM: The majority leaders.

RP: That's correct.

DM: Yeah.

RP: Yeah, and I'm talking to folks at that point in time, Richard Milanovich of Agua Caliente, Ramirez from San Manuel, you name them.

DM: Was Mark Macarro part?

RP: Yeah. Way back, before him it was, I think Lyons. Barbara Lyons.

DM: Anthony Viejas [CORRECTION: Anthony Pico] was...

RP: Oh man. Anthony came to my very first fundraiser in Chinatown and gave me a check for \$5,000 on a rainy day. I'll never forget Anthony. Anyways, there comes a time where we're not going to be able to get this issue on the ballot via the legislature.

DM: Because people oppose it or what?

RP: Well, back then, several things. One, the unions, the card clubs, the race tracks, and mutual and others, including probably the administration. And so I end up...

DM: And the ballot measure you envisioned would be one that would allow them to operate slot machines as...

RP: On their reservations.

DM: On their reservations, correct.

RP: That's correct. And so I advised them, I said, "Look, we're not going to be... I'm not going to be able to move this constitutional amendment. I recommend that you all go back, pick a date, close down your casinos, have your protests downtown in LA, get all the media together and know that when you do that, you lounge your initiative, and you go to the people because you will win. We have a horrible history, a chapter of our history that is ugly and it gets to be corrected." And so they did that. They got the permit, they went to the federal courthouse. They held, it must have been 3,000-4,000 people. And they're coming out of the US attorney's office because they had been subpoenaed and they had their press conference. I'm the only elected that is there to... And allowed to speak on their behalf. And I'd basically shared with them that the time has come, take it to the vote of the people, the people will support you.

DM: And this becomes the initiative...

RP: This becomes the initiative.

DM: 1998.

RP: That's right.

DM: And it passes overwhelmingly, they spend a boatload of money. Las Vegas interests are against them. The union Unite HERE were opposed to it.

RP: Right.

DM: Certainly, the racetracks and card clubs opposed it, it was a massive spending campaign.

RP: It was huge.

DM: And they won pretty easily.

RP: Well...

DM: But then it got struck down by the courts.

RP: That's right and then they came back with proposition 1A or something to that effect.

DM: They had a new governor, Governor Davis.

RP: That's right.

DM: Alright.

RP: And so, all the compacts were signed under Davis. But in terms of the question, the relationship, I remember going out and making speeches about how the Latino community and the Native Americans need to have a marriage, because we can work together, you have economic engine, you have economic clout, we have the political clout. We have the numbers, we can work together and lo and behold, the story that Dean Florez tells me, Dean Florez is running...

DM: Another one who you recruited, who represented, as you described it at the time, Buck Owens.

RP: That's right.

DM: Up in...

RP: But.

DM: Shafter.

RP: There you go.

DM: Kern County.

RP: His mom is the treasurer, so she's doing all the recording and handling all the campaign financing, and Dean calls me and I give a number and the name to the Morongo chairman at the time. And Dean calls and makes a request for a contribution, and I think that a couple of days later, the contribution comes and it's like \$100,000, \$50,000 to \$100,000 I wanna say \$100,000 because that's what... I think what I remember Dean telling me. And his mom says, "Hey Mijo come over here, I think we have an error."

[laughter]

RP: He goes, "This is a \$100,000 where... I think that's an error." And he goes "Oh my God." He came from the tribe. And so we have built and supported one another.

DM: And why did this matter to you?

RP: Well, it mattered to me because there... We had candidates that... Some couldn't raise a nickel, but they were great candidates, other than the inability to raise money, and that's still the case with many. And so...

DM: Well you're representing districts that don't have a lot...

RP: That don't have a lot of resources, and so the other thing that I was able to do effectively is I would put together the list of candidates that we were supporting, the opponents, and then there were at least five third house groups that I would go and convince, "This is who you should support, this is why, this is who they are and this is the opponent." And so I remember meeting with Tommy Ross, this snow. Tommy lives... There were a couple of other...

DM: So, this was with the...

RP: The Dental Association.

DM: Right, and tell me who Tom was with?

RP: Edison.

DM: Edison, okay.

RP: And Hernandez before he got elected.

DM: Yeah, yes.

RP: The Optometrist, Dr. Ed (Hernandez). Yeah. And so, yeah I mean...

DM: So, this was how you helped... I mean you can't... You need money to win.

RP: Of course.

DM: So, you brought a few papers here, which I find pretty interesting, so...

[background conversation]

DM: Okay, go ahead, go ahead. So, I feel like we're pretty close to wrapping up, but I seriously could go on for many more hours. Is there anything else you... Is there anything that I'm not asking? That I need to ask.

RP: I think you're hitting them all Dan, I'm glad you brought up the Indians.

DM: Yeah, let me just... Oh, I didn't ask you about Alfred Villalobos. Probably not your high point, he was...

RP: Yeah, he took his life, yeah.

DM: Yeah. So, the way it was, the way the Times wrote it... I didn't write it, so I don't know if it's true. When I write it, I know it's true, you see.

RP: There you go.

DM: Let's see, when Alfred R. Villalobos, a Republican associated with TELACU? Is that true?

RP: I think he gets a consulting work...

DM: Yeah, tried to get a contract worth \$750,000 for persuading the state pension board to make a certain \$100 million investment, Polanco touted the investment to the Board and lobbied individual members hard and then of course, he was caught up in that and he was involved in a corruption scandal, bribery scandal.

RP: Who was the reporter?

DM: Oh, that was Ted Rohrlich.

RP: Ted didn't like me very much, I think Ted had a tendency to...

DM: No, Ted actually liked you a lot, he thought you were pretty... He thought you were okay.

RP: So, (George) Ramos and (Frank) Del Olmo?

DM: Oh yeah, yeah.

RP: Well, you know, my first encounter with Frank Del Olmo. TELACU, before they were here, they were on Atlantic. Okay? A small building, two story. And we were holding meetings on the incorporation, tried to incorporate East LA, and all of a sudden, our parking... Our cars started getting ticketed, never before. So, we think it's a news story, we invited him to come out. I'm young, man, I'm young. [chuckle] And he's at... And we begin the claim of, "Hey, tickets are being", da, da da, da. Well, what proof do you have? And I'm very... He's sarcastic. Like, that's stupid, right? I said, "Well, isn't that your job to go and investigate and maybe ask the sheriff's department as to what..."

[laughter]

DM: It went downhill from there.

RP: It went downhill, I'm sure. I never saw him since or anything of that sort, but anyways, yeah.

DM: Okay. So, one of your legacies, one of the things you helped bring about was Chavez Day. It's a state holiday, right? You carried that bill?

RP: I carried the bill. I carried the bill. It was after like, two attempts, as well as, a couple of other attempts by Art Torres. But we were successful. And it's not so much really about the holiday, per say. It's about the whole community service, being of service. And when we announced and had the signing ceremony of the bill...

DM: Gray Davis.

RP: Gray Davis signed the bill, and we did it here in Olvera Street. We began to see... Schools begin to have community projects, Senior centers were being given community service with cleanups. It was just the kind of thing that Cesar really was looking to have. I had introduced the bill, Paul Chavez called me. We had conversation. He wanted it to include the community service aspects and not just make it the holiday. And that's what we ended up...

DM: Well, but it's part... You go back to George Pla's book, *Power Shift*. It's part of a power shift in a sense. We're recognizing a Latino hero, right?

RP: Yes, yes.

DM: In what is that, a couple decades ago, we wouldn't have.

RP: And it's unfortunate that it took this long. I mean, here's a man who devoted his entire life, both as a military guy, part of his life, and then as a union organizer to the most disadvantaged group of folks in California, by far. And there is still a lot of injustice that continues to occur, even though we have books on the law... Laws on the books, that bring more protection. The fact that this governor just signed the last bill was very, very telling. I think it was the right thing to

do. Again, they're the people that put our food on the table, when we're inside our house, away from the rain or the heat, you drive through the fields of Coachella or Imperial Valley or Salinas, San Joaquin.

DM: So, we're recording this a couple weeks after the tape emerged, the tape recording, surreptitiously recorded, we don't know the details of how it came about, from the LA Labor Federation office from October of 2021. Nury Martinez has resigned. Ron Herrera, who's the head of the Labor Fed, has resigned. Kevin de León, as we speak today, remains in office, as does Gil Cedillo, although he lost re-election, so he will be out soon. What struck me... Well, many things struck me about the tape. It was that it was viewed as a... Redistricting was viewed as a zero sum game. In politics there are always winners and losers, but tell me how do you view politics? Do you view it as a zero sum game? Do you view the empowerment of Latinos in Fremont or San Diego or east Los Angeles as a zero sum game, does that mean that other people will lose? Does it mean that other people become disenfranchised? How did you view the tape. How did you view the tape why don't we...

RP: First of all, she did the right thing, to resign. Absolutely.

DM: She did the right thing by resigning.

RP: And it was horrible, you couldn't mitigate what she said at all. That cannot be mitigated. With Kevin, Kevin should step down, eventually either he is...

DM: He's a friend of yours.

RP: He's a good friend, so is Gil. I don't have as close a friendship with Nury, because I just didn't deal in City Hall that much, but I would consider her a friend and so... it's inevitable for Kevin and so he can... You look at the ordinance and if you wanna look at what causes someone to be removed, he's done those two items, none. Morally, absolutely wrong. But from the legal perspective in charter, doesn't allow for someone to be removed for having that kind of a conversation... Still didn't make it right. I think again, he should step down. A zero sum game. I don't understand that concept, I really don't. Now, if I think that a Latino presence takes away from others from a political perspective, I don't think it does, when you look at the, let's forget as the Deborah Ortizes, the majority of those districts were non-Latino districts, the population, the voters, so I can't quite get the zero sum game.

DM: Correct.

RP: Is representation and empowerment of one group taking away from others now? No.

DM: That's what I meant.

RP: Okay, no, no, not at all. I sat on the LA Redistricting Commission, there was no growth in the city of LA supposedly. However, where there was growth, it was out in the valley. And so when I heard the discussion about the lines, and it was really not about the lines per se, it was about, in my opinion, her need to accommodate certain council members to keep a leadership

position.

DM: I see.

RP: That's my political lens.

DM: Yeah, yeah okay alright. Well, you know, the reality is Latinos only have four of 15 seats on that council, and your numbers, the numbers would suggest that...

RP: More, yeah the numbers would suggest at least seven.

DM: At least seven.

RP: At least seven the numbers.

DM: Right.

RP: So current price, what does it say about current price, who has a 60% Latino district? It says that you don't have to be Latino to get the support of the Latino community. You have to engage, you have to deliver, you have to be a service, (Supervisor) Kenny Hahn, classic example, another one who represented African American community, not one African-American, could launch a successful campaign against Kenny Han, again, being able to represent and care and deliver.

DM: Yeah, okay. You brought a couple of things here. These are the campaign mailings you sent out, this takes some work on the part of voters to read through all this stuff, it's all about you and the work you did, you don't really see that so much today I don't think you'd see campaign newspapers put out. What does that say about politics today?

RP: The technology has taken away, I think a real opportunity to inform...

DM: To inform?

RP: To inform and to engage. The quick texts, ta-ta-ta-ta-ta, one or two sentences, and it's over. That's where we are at today. You'll get the mailers, they're going to be the traditional generic kinds of stuff. You want them to pick it up, so it's going to be big, but to really inform your record is a little different.

DM: Right. So you brought this calendar from your almost last year in office, which includes on every day somebody's birthday.

RP: Or holiday.

DM: And holiday it might be John Hancock's birthday, and it might be Fat Tuesday or Ash Wednesday, but each month has a blurb about something you did and it's pretty interesting politics. It's a lot of interesting icons and iconography, interesting. Sheriff's deputy ranger. You do some law and order stuff.

RP: Yeah. Look, to defund the police is the wrong message. And if you're a candidate on that road, forget it. Eventually, Eunisses [Hernandez], who defeated Gil Cedillo ran on that. And I am of the opinion that if she, when she attempts and begins to advocate that there's going to be a backlash from that same community. See, my analysis of that is Gilbert became too lazy. Too complacent. And many stayed home. You don't care about me, I don't have to care about you. They had fire in the belly and they were organized and they had money. They get funded. And so, that combination outweighed those who are who, who didn't come out and stayed home. Because there was definitely a drop. And the issue of cops? Who do we call when we're in need of something? So anyways, I think, yeah, I had no problem. I got elected with the support of law enforcement.

RP: I saw here the license plate. I sponsored two bills, and I'll give you the narrative on the arts. The arts came to me and said she has oversight of the [California] Arts Commission, but there's no money. They don't wanna allocate funding to the arts. And when they did, and you look where it went, the operas, the San Francisco's, all the elite truly goody-two-shoes kind of stuff. So we create a bill that generates the money and we create it to have murals, performing arts, theater as part of grant recipients. And we change that whole model. And hundreds of millions of dollars have gone out to community groups as a result of that particular bill.

DM: Interesting. So here's another one. Your old colleague, Tom Hayden, wrote this Op-ed, in which he criticized your position on schools. And it's a detailed op-ed this ran in the Los Angeles Times October 19th, 1999. But what's striking about it is this, political cartoon drawn by former LA Times cartoonist Michael Ramirez, which, depicts I guess an Aztec god, an Aztec, king or priest, a priest, I don't know, sacrificing a baby that says, and the words under it say racial politics. And it looks like you're about to cut out this baby's heart. I don't know, maybe eat it what does that cartoon tell you, Senator? It's pretty racial.

RP: Well, not just that pretty chickenshit to depict me holding a baby that is White, not colored. It's White baby. Holding a dagger as if I crucified White babies. I never got an apology. It's a hard, difficult cartoon to find. I've attempted to get a copy of the original. To have that today, I don't think would serve them well. And I think, that the *LA Times* cartoonist was commissioned and what was, portrayed here was pretty racist for LA cartoonists authorized by *the Los Angeles Times*.

DM: Well, he was a staffer. So this was among the stuff you dealt with when you're employed. In 1999 it's not that long ago.

RP: No, it's not and it's unfortunate that that's how I was portrayed. I was engaged in a lot of Latino political empowerment. I won't shy away from it, and...

DM: It wasn't just Latino. But you weren't just dealing with Latino issues.

RP: I wasn't.

DM: You were dealing with mental healthcare, you were dealing with gun control, you were

dealing with a lot of things.

RP: It was a real disservice and when I saw it, oh my God.

DM: You saw that in your morning paper?

RP: Yeah. I said, "Okay well life goes on, can't live in the past."

DM: Okay, alright anyway. Well, I'm out questions unless you have, unless you have something you want to cover.

End of Section III