

# National Council of La Raza

Raul Yzaguirre  
National Director

## National Office

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April 3, 1978

The Honorable Augustus F. Hawkins  
House of Representatives  
United States Congress  
Rayburn House Office Bldg., Room 2350  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

Tomorrow the House Committee on Education and Labor will be addressing an issue of urgent concern to the 16 million Hispanic citizens of the United States. Renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including protection and expansion of Title VII Bilingual Education programs, will be followed with great interest and concern.

Bilingual, bicultural education is the cornerstone of Hispanics' quest for equal educational opportunity in the United States. Although Hispanics are the nation's second largest minority group, and will be the largest before the turn of the century, our average educational attainment continues to be the lowest of all the major minority groups of our nation. I ask your help in defending the gains represented by Title VII against weakening amendments:

1. Please reject the new provision passed by the Subcommittee which will encourage discrimination against Spanish speaking teacher aides, classroom assistants, instructors and others by local school boards. It is essential to the success of the program that persons competent in the children's native language be employed. Please reject the provision that "nothing in the Act shall be interpreted as encouraging or requiring hiring of personnel who are not as proficient in English as personnel employed to carry out regular program."

2. I urge you to protect the increased authorizations for Title VII approved by the Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education. We seek an FY 1979 authorization of at least \$200,000,000, with an increase to \$400,000,000 by FY 1983.

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3. I urge you to remove the five-year funding limit for Title VII grantees passed by the Subcommittee. The new five-year limit threatens to discourage local school districts from implementing badly needed bilingual and bicultural education programs. However, we could support declining federal support for grantees following a full five years of funding.

4. Biculturalism is an essential aspect of the strategy of using the child's native resources for instructional purposes. I urge you to defend Title VII against persons who would exclude bicultural curricula and teaching techniques from the program.

5. The National Council of La Raza supports proposals that schools serving Native Americans be allowed to apply for Title VII grants directly from the U.S. Office of Education, instead of having to apply through the intermediary Bureau of Indian Affairs.

6. We oppose attempts to give priority for Title VII funds to schools with a history of discriminating against language minorities. Districts under court order to comply with the Lau decision should not be rewarded for their discriminatory behavior by being given priority for Title VII funding.

I urge you to bear your Hispanic constituents in mind, along with language minorities throughout the United States, when mark-up of ESEA renewal legislation begins tomorrow.

The National Council of La Raza would be pleased to provide you with further information on our position on Title VII renewal and amendments. Please feel free to have your office contact me or Michael Cortes of my staff at (202) 659-1251.

Yours very truly,

  
Raul Yzaguirre,  
National Director

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National Council of La Raza

MICHAEL CORTÉS, M.P.P., M.S.W.  
*Director of Legislative Analysis*



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