



William C. Velásquez Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

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Joint WCVI and SVREP Statement on Passing of Former US Representative Esteban Torres

(January 27, 2022 – Los Angeles, CA) The William C. Velásquez Institute (WCVI) and Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP) mourning the passing of former US Representative Esteban Torres.

The nation, California and Los Angeles lost a giant on January 25, 2022, with the passing of the former Congressman Esteban Torres two days before his 92nd birthday.

Congressman Esteban Torres set the path for others to follow an empowerment model and consummated very essences of service. He dedicated to life to public service, a labor leader, and lifelong champion of the civil and voting rights of the Latino community. He served a member of US Representatives for eight years, Ambassador to UNESCO, Special Assistant to President Jimmy Carter.

WCVI with the leadership of Congressman Esteban Torres, Antonio González, and Dr. Raul Hinojosa in partnership with Latino groups like MALDEF, worked on developed a Latino response to the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). WCVI, at the time name Southwest Voter Research Institute (SVRI) opposed the Fast Track Authority and developed a plan to mitigate the negative labor and environmental impact NAFTA would have on Latinos and the Latino community. Its plan included provide extensive briefing to Latinos and Mexican in Mexico about the negative impact NAFTA would have on the environment and displacement of works and create an entity that could fund projects to mitigate the negative impacts.

It took time to building Latino and Labor support to create the entity that would help provide solutions to the displacement of works and environmental negative impact in the US. In November of 1994, the North American Development Bank established and began operation with initial capital subscriptions of the United State Treasury and the Mexican Treasury.

The NADBank has invested over 10.5 billion dollars in sustainable infrastructure, such as water conservation, solar energy, and air quality in the US. NADBank created under the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994 with a mission to serve communities on both sides of the border.

Like many other Latino elected officials, before their ascent to public office served as volunteers and leadership to the SVREP Base Vote Project, modeled to empower the Latino community.

Mr. Torres was a friend, mentor, advisory, donor, and member of WCVI Board of Directors (1995 to 2007). Mr. Torres served on the WCVI Board of Directors during the leadership of Antonio González, (president 1994 to 2018 with his untimely passing).

In Congress, Torres fought to clean up one of the country's largest hazardous waste sites in his district; updated the country's consumer credit reporting systems; and collaborated with colleagues on both sides of the aisle on behalf of those most in need.

Mr. Torres is survived by his wife Arci and their children Carmen, Rena, Camille, Selina, and Steve; grandchildren Tanya, Kati, Bianca, Koby, Xavier, Nazaria, Diego, Steven, Carina Tobias, Heidi, Amber; and seven great grandchildren.

We thank Mr. Torres for his dedication to empowering the Latino community.

US Representative Esteban Torres Rest in Power!

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