

# The Anti-Hate Resolution Excludes Latinos

By Julio Noboa Polanco

A very fascinating and revealing series of events led to the Anti-Hate resolution and to its eventual wording. It is important to remember that for decades and, until quite recently, members of the GOP as well as the President himself have intentionally made clearly and unmistakably racist remarks against immigrants, Latinos, Blacks, Muslims, Native Americans, etc. and none of this has generated a resolution condemning these statements. Meanwhile Rep. Steve King, who voted "present" on the resolution, who has made repeated racist and White nationalist comments, rightfully condemned by some, but not enough to generate any anti-racist or anti-White Supremacist resolution from the House.

But now enter new congresswoman Rep. Ilhan Omar, an African naturalized citizen who happens to be Muslim, wears a hijab and who has in the past made legitimate critiques of Israel's inhumane treatment of Palestinians. She makes reference to the influence of AIPAC money on US policy towards Israel, it is immediately condemned as being anti-Semitic, regardless of her intent.

If that were not enough to illustrate the powerful influence of AIPAC money and lobbyists, even more so was the fact that the reaction to her words and even to her apology was to demand her removal from the House, or from the Foreign Affairs Committee or to sanction or punish her for speaking truth to power.

That same powerful AIPAC influence also help generate that incredible first draft of a resolution that mentioned and targeted only anti-Semitism. This is a curious and revealing fact considering that many other racial, ethnic and religious groups in our nation have long been targeted for discrimination as well as enslavement, exploitation or genocide, as in the case of Native Americans and African Americans.

Despite the obvious limitations of the first draft, thanks to the alert brilliance of AOC and other progressives the wording of the original was expanded to include a condemnation of Islamophobia and racist discrimination against African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, and other people of color as well as against members of minority religions.

Despite these changes, I still reserve some serious critiques of the final draft of the resolution. It is interesting though disappointing to note that in the entire draft of this wide-ranging resolution, which details numerous attacks against Jews, Muslims and African Americans, not once does the term Latino, Hispanic, or Mexican American even appear. Some would contend that Latinos are subsumed under the category of "immigrant" and "people

of color" which we indeed are, but that does not consider three very key realities about the Latinx experience here in the United States that are often ignored.

The first is that since the 2000 Census it has been clearly documented that Hispanics are the largest ethnic minority group in the nation, and continue to be so. Their economic activity alone rivals that of entire nations, and in the U.S. they represent a wide diversity of nationalities, social classes and racial blendings.

The second fact is that the term "immigrant," which is appropriately included in this resolution, can apply to any number of racial, ethnic or religious groups, not only Latinos. Moreover, not all Latinos are or were immigrants to the United States. Most notably Mexican

Americans who were here before the European Americans. It was the Anglo settler who was the "immigrant" coming into the West that had already been settled by Mexicans for generations who had established farms, ranches, vineyards, towns, cities, churches, schools, and even courts.

There was an entire Hispanic American civilization that existed in what the Anglos called the "western frontier" and it was the Mexican vaqueros and charros who taught the Great American Cowboy everything he knows about mustangs, corrals, chaps, lassos and rodeos. Ask yourself why is it that all of these terms as well as some of the most characteristic geographical features of the American Southwest, including arroyo, chaparral, mesa and canyon, are all in Spanish. It was the Norteño Mexican ranching lifestyle that was the foundation of what we now refer to as "Western Living" which encompasses not only fundamental features of the cattle industry but also architectural characteristics with patios, verandas, plazas and all kinds of vistas. Thus in conclusion, many Latinos have long been here and are not just immigrants to our nation.

The third fact has to do with the widespread confusion about Latinos and race. Regarding us being "people of color" a label that is problematic at best, it simply ignores the fact that Hispanic, Latinos, Latin Americans are "people of many colors." Not only can we be of any race, as official documents often remind us, but more importantly the vast majority of us are of mixed race. Biracial may be a relatively new concept in contemporary United States, but Latinos have been biracial and multiracial for five centuries!



The House of Representatives passed a resolution broadly condemning hate and in-tolerance in the wake of controversy over Democratic freshman Rep. Ilhan Omar's remarks on the State of Israel.

## Anti-Hate Resolution

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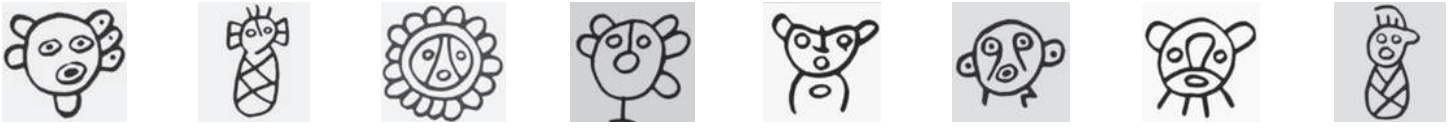
Puerto Ricans, for example, are a racial blend of indigenous Taíno Indians, various African nations and tribes, and Spanish settlers who also have Celtic, Arab and Jewish roots. Among Boricuas, there are those that look quite European like Carmen Yulín Cruz, Mayor of San Juan, and others that look very African like the late great baseball player and humanitarian, Roberto Clemente. Some of us even display distinct Amerindian features, yet the majority of us reveal a wide variety of aesthetic blending of our many racial roots.

Since neither of these categories of “immigrant” nor “people of color” refers specifically to us, it is quite discouraging and appalling that this resolution should fail to even mention Latinos or Hispanics by name. What this demonstrates again is what many enlightened Latinx thinkers have long recognized: that we are always considered the eternal foreigner, despite having been among the earliest European settlers of this vast land.

Nevertheless, we have contributed with our courage and lives

to every military conflict from the Civil War when we fought on both sides, right up to the most recent imperial forays in the Middle East. We have contributed our language, culture, cuisine, labor and brains to the growth and development of this nation. Yet, we have also suffered and continue to withstand the slings and arrows of racial and ethnic discrimination. Like all the other groups mentioned in the resolution, we also deserve our place in any document that purports to be a statement against the evils of racism and bigotry. As a nation, we should do no less for a people who have given so much and yet been recognized for so little.

*Bio:* Julio Noboa Polanco is a writer, columnist, and social justice activist who served as Chair of the Esperanza Board in the 90s. He was also a columnist at the *San Antonio Express-News* for nearly a decade. His writings continue to appear in Texas (*Houston Chronicle*) and in Costa Rica (*Semanario Universidad*) where he and his wife now live. Recently retired as Assistant Professor of Social Studies from UTEP, his focus is on Latino History, Mexican American Studies, critical pedagogy and multicultural education.



## Green New Deal

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(ii) take into account and be responsive to the historical and present-day experiences of low-income communities, communities of color, indigenous communities, rural and urban communities and the front-line communities most affected by climate change, pollution and other environmental harm;

(iii) mitigate deeply entrenched racial, regional and gender-based inequalities in income and wealth (including, without limitation, ensuring that federal and other investment will be equitably distributed to historically impoverished, low income, deindustrialized or other marginalized communities);

(iv) include additional measures such as **basic income programs, universal health care programs and any others as the select committee may deem appropriate to promote economic security**, labor market flexibility and entrepreneurship; and

(v) deeply involve national and local labor unions to take a leadership role in the process of job training and worker deployment.

**Then, there is the wonderful “rising up” of youth on climate change.** For many months the children of Europe have been leading the way with huge marches of children (one of 35,000 children and others over 10,000) and the remarkable leadership of Greta Thunberg – (access her exceptional UN speech here: [bit.ly/thunberg\\_un](https://bit.ly/thunberg_un)). They have established a rapidly growing movement in Europe. The children take Fridays off from school for climate action. And now, this movement is spreading in the U.S.—on

March 15<sup>th</sup> there were children’s rallies all over the US during school hours.

The Sunrise Movement, founded and directed by young adults in the U.S., is largely responsible for the Green New Deal. They’re now joined by our children demanding that we support them and help protect their futures. We hope that many of you join with them in Houston, Austin, San Antonio and Dallas for upcoming events.



Greta Thunberg: UN Climate Change Conference

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

The Texas Drought Project is organizing in nine Texas congressional districts bringing together strong and diverse coalitions to meet with their Congress members in hopes of gaining more Texas Congressional sponsors of the Green New Deal. As of now, the GND has been endorsed by 11 Senators, 6 Presidential candidates and 89 House members as we continue to work with local groups and individuals in four Houston congressional districts, three Metroplex districts and two districts in the Valley. We’ll also work to bring the GND to the attention of all presidential candidates that come to Texas.

Over 650 organizations are organizing to support the GND including 350.org, Earthworks, Food & Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Indigenous Environmental Network, National Family Farm Coalition, National Nurses United, Our Revolution, SEIU, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Progressive Democrats of America, Rainforest Action Network, Roots-Action.org, and Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

To learn more about the Green New Deal and how to get involved contact: Jere Locke at [jerelocke@yahoo.com](mailto:jerelocke@yahoo.com) or Alyssa Burgin at [Alyssa@texasdroughtproject.org](mailto:Alyssa@texasdroughtproject.org).