



# News Release

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **YZAGUIRRE TO STEP DOWN AS NCLR PRESIDENT AND CEO; MURGUÍA NAMED AS HIS SUCESSOR**

**Washington, DC** – The Board of Directors of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) announced today that, after 30 years as President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Raul Yzaguirre will retire as head of NCLR, effective December 31, 2004.

“I am a very fortunate man. I have had the singular honor of fighting for our people for half a century. I have been blessed with a loving and supportive family. I have followed my passion as an advocate for my community. These things have given meaning to my life, and for that I am eternally grateful,” said Yzaguirre.

The Board also announced that, in a unanimous vote, it has selected NCLR Executive Director and COO Janet Murguía to succeed Yzaguirre as NCLR’s President and CEO, effective January 1, 2005. A lawyer and prominent community leader, Murguía previously worked on Capitol Hill, in the Clinton White House and as Deputy Campaign Manager for the Gore-Lieberman campaign, and most recently was Executive Vice Chancellor at the University of Kansas, her alma mater.

“I am honored and humbled that the Board of Directors has selected me to succeed a man for whom I have the utmost respect, admiration, and affection. I look forward to building on his great legacy in the years to come as we continue the critically important work of NCLR,” stated Murguía.

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## **The Legacy of Raul Yzaguirre**

Yzaguirre's retirement will bring to a close a remarkable 30-year period in which he transformed a fledgling organization into the nation's most important Hispanic institution and turned his vision of pan-Hispanic unity among Latino groups into a reality. He played a key role in expanding the economic and political power of Hispanics, spearheaded a significant campaign to change how movies and television portray Hispanics, and stood by his principles even in the face of retaliation that sometimes threatened the organization's very existence.

Throughout his career, Yzaguirre has sought to help create a society and government that promote educational opportunity; freedom from discrimination in employment, housing, health care, and the criminal justice system; a just and humane immigration policy; and economic mobility to ensure good jobs, fair credit, access to financial services, and business opportunities for Hispanics from New York to California. He has sought to build strong institutions, help Latinos become producers (not just consumers) of services, and empower Hispanics to implement their own solutions through community-based organizations.

When Yzaguirre first arrived at NCLR in the mid-1970s, the organization had a budget of less than \$500,000, a staff of 13, essentially no assets, and just 17 affiliates. Today, NCLR has a budget of \$28 million, a staff of 125, \$90+ million in assets, 35,000 individual donors, 300+ affiliates, a permanent headquarters that it has purchased and will occupy in early 2005, and three operating subsidiaries that promote justice for farmworkers and economic development and job training for Hispanics throughout America.

Yzaguirre succeeded in making NCLR a political powerhouse in Washington. Its Annual Conference, which once attracted no political figures of note, now is a routine stop for presidents and presidential candidates alike. Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton spoke there, as did 2000 presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore, and 2004 candidate John Kerry. The Conference has also served as a forum for international figures such as author Carlos Fuentes, Mexican President Vicente Fox, and El Salvadoran President Francisco Flores.

Beyond his work to establish a flagship institution representing the Latino community, Yzaguirre changed the very way Latinos think of themselves, mobilizing them to engage in deeper levels of civic participation and harnessing their growing political power to bring about real change.

In the mid-1970s, Hispanic groups operated and advocated separately – Mexican Americans for Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans for Puerto Ricans, Cubans for Cubans, and so on. Yzaguirre argued for a pan-Hispanic vision in which these groups would work together, pooling their power to create the political “critical mass” that could bring about real change. The idea seems obvious today, but in the 1970s it was revolutionary. He argued for it relentlessly, however, and the results are clear in the increased political and economic power on the part of the more than 40 million Hispanics who live in America today.

With institutional strength, growing “pan-Hispanic” unity, and Yzaguirre’s personal influence, NCLR played a key role on some of the most important legislation of the last two decades. Among many accomplishments, he helped to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for working families in the 1990s, create a partially refundable child tax credit for low-income workers in the 2001 Bush tax cuts, restore benefits for legal immigrants which were eliminated in the 1996 welfare reform law, extend federal civil rights laws, expand Hispanics’ access to federal early childhood, elementary, and secondary education programs, shape and push through an historic Executive Order on Hispanic Educational Excellence, and shape the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Yzaguirre’s advocacy on economic and social legislation has been enhanced by direct-service programs that NCLR has developed from coast to coast which have made a real difference in the lives of millions of Latinos.

Today, for instance, NCLR is an industry leader in homeownership counseling, operating programs in 40 sites throughout the country. Its Charter School Development Initiative has helped create more than 40 new schools and strengthen over 40 others. Its Raza Development Fund, one of the nation’s largest and most successful community development banks, has approved more than 117 loans totaling \$54.6 million, leveraging more than \$267 million in financing to community-based housing projects, schools, health clinics, day care centers, and other investments.

Yzaguirre helped advance media and cultural issues of importance to Hispanics. In the 1980s, NCLR produced *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, which aired on PBS and was released as a feature film, and it produced the original screenplay for *The Milagro Beanfield War*. These two films were among the first English language, Latino-themed, wide-distribution feature films. Earlier this year, SíTV, the nation’s first English-language, Hispanic-themed cable and satellite television channel, was launched with NCLR’s assistance.

Then, in 1994, NCLR released *Out of the Picture*, the first extensive content analysis of prime-time TV portrayals of Hispanics, documenting both the severe underrepresentation as well as the excessively negative portrayals of Latinos on network television. A year later, FOX aired *NCLR’s Bravo Awards* (later the *NCLR ALMA Awards*), the first primetime network Latino Awards show that highlighted new and emerging Latino talent, including Jennifer Lopez, Ricky Martin, and Cristina Aguilera.

In all of his efforts, Yzaguirre has sought to operate pragmatically while never sacrificing his integrity and deeply-held beliefs.

Pragmatically, he has worked patiently to make incremental improvements in public policy, understanding that compromise is inevitable in politics to achieve success of any kind. Nevertheless, he has stood firm behind his principles, no matter what the consequences. Lionel Castillo, his good friend and President Carter’s Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), fired him as Chair of the Hispanic Advisory Commission to the INS for publicly criticizing the administration’s immigration reform proposals. A few years later, after he criticized the Reagan

administration's stance on domestic policy issues, NCLR lost all of its federal funding – then 80% of its budget – putting its very survival at risk.

Nor did he soften his tone in the 1990s. He criticized President George H.W. Bush's affirmative action stance even after Bush agreed to be the first sitting president to appear at an NCLR Annual Conference. He resigned in protest as Chair of President Clinton's Advisory Commission on Hispanic Educational Excellence due to its inaction. Just last year, Yzaguirre blasted the current Bush Administration's record on Hispanic issues, which many believe has cost NCLR millions of dollars in federal funding.

Moreover, Yzaguirre has stood for principle beyond the political arena. Although banks, telecommunications firms, and media companies are among NCLR's largest funders, at Yzaguirre's direction NCLR has never supported a bank, telecommunications, or media merger due to the potential adverse impact on the Latino community. NCLR has also been a leader in a number of major corporate responsibility initiatives, including the formation of the Hispanic Association for Corporate Responsibility.

Yzaguirre has mentored countless persons who now hold positions of power and influence in government, academia, the nonprofit world, and corporate America. His influence – large and small, seen and unseen – has been profound and will be felt for years to come. That the presidential campaigns are locked in a fierce battle for the Latino vote, that business is spending billions to reach the Hispanic market, and that millions all over the country are proud to call themselves “Hispanics” and “Latinos” are in no small measure due to the work and career of Raul Yzaguirre.

### **Introducing Janet Murguía**

Named by *Hispanic Business* magazine as one of the 100 most influential Hispanics in the nation, Janet Murguía has emerged as a key figure among the next generation of leaders in the Latino community. In March 2004, she became the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights organization in the U.S.

Since its founding in 1968, NCLR has become the most influential and respected Hispanic organization in the country. NCLR is also the largest constituency-based national Hispanic organization with over 300 formal affiliates who together serve over four million Hispanics annually in 41 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. In its review of the influence of Latino advocates in Washington, *Hispanic Business* magazine concluded that NCLR is, “by all accounts the most effective Hispanic organization.”

Prior to joining NCLR, Janet Murguía was the Executive Vice Chancellor for University Relations at the University of Kansas, overseeing the university's internal and external relations with the public, including governmental and public affairs. Murguía coordinated the university's strategic planning and marketing efforts at the four KU campuses with those of the Alumni Association, the Athletics Corporation, and the Endowment Association.

Murguía began her career in Washington, DC as legislative counsel to former Kansas Congressman Jim Slattery, serving for seven years. She then worked at the White House in various capacities from 1994 to 2000, ultimately serving as deputy assistant to President Clinton and deputy director of legislative affairs, serving as a senior White House liaison to Congress. Murguía provided strategic and legislative advice to the president on key issues and managed the legislative staff.

Prior to joining KU in 2001, Murguía served as deputy campaign manager and director of constituency outreach for the Gore/Lieberman presidential campaign. In that role, she was the primary liaison between former Vice President Gore and national constituency groups. She also served as a spokesperson for the campaign, working with radio, print, and TV media outlets.

Murguía has served on the board of directors for the National Council of La Raza and the Kauffman Foundation Youth Development Board. She is currently on the board of trustees for YouthFriends, a nationally recognized school-based mentoring effort.

Murguía has been recognized for her work. In August 2003, she received the Ana Riojas Leadership Award at the annual Midwest Latina Conference, in Kansas City. *Hispanic* magazine recently selected her to its annual list of “100 Top Latinas” for the 2nd consecutive year and she was recently highlighted as one of the “100 Most Influential Hispanics” in *Hispanic Business* magazine. Additionally, in April of 2003, *Hispanic Business* named her as one of “80 Elite Hispanic Women.”

Murguía grew up in Kansas City, Kansas. She received three degrees from KU: a B.S. degree in journalism (1982), a B.A. degree in Spanish (1982), and a J.D. degree (1985) from the School of Law.

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