

**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands**  
**Legislative Hearing**  
**1324 Longworth House Office Building**  
**October 29, 2019**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Legislative Hearing on**  
*H.R. 139, H.R. 486, H.R. 3250, H.R. 3824, and H.R. 4139*

**Congressman Juan Vargas' Opening Statement:**

- Good morning Madam Chair, and Ranking Member, and committee Members.
- And again, thank you very much for the privilege of being here. I want to thank you also for the privilege of inviting me and allowing me to introduce Ms. Josephine Talamantez.
- Josie, as we know her, is here today to testify on behalf of bill H.R. 485: The Chicano Park Preservation Act of 2019.
- Ms. Talamantez is the co-founder of the Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Steering Committee, she is the Founder and Chair of the Board of Directors of Chicano Park Museum and Cultural Center in San Diego, California.
- Ms. Talamantez has been involved in Chicano Park from the very beginning, almost 50 years ago.
- She has a B.A. in Sociology from the University of California, Berkeley and an M.A. in Public History from the California State University in Sacramento.
- You will be hearing from her hopefully later, but I want to say thank you for the introduction that you gave to my bill.
- The Chicano Park Murals and Chicano Park itself is very important to the Latino community in San Diego.
- It was created in a strife. What happened was that the Freeway 5 was built right through the heart of the largest Latino community in San Diego and split the community without the community having any say, literally right in half.
- Then they were going to build the San Diego Coronado Bay bridge and decided once again to destroy that community without any input from that community.

- And to add insult to injury they decided, when the bridge was going to be built, that on the Coronado side, they wouldn't put anything that they thought would be unsightly. Instead, they would place it all in the Barrio Logan side.
- That's when the community finally said, "enough is enough". They were promised a park, they got nothing.
- Instead they were going to get these utility areas, they were going to get all these other things that the community didn't want. So, they finally stood up and the community said, "we are not going to have this".
- So instead they took over and they started to build the park themselves and from that grew a movement. You will hear from Ms. Talamantez, she was there, involved in this movement.
- But they created these magnificent murals and these murals now have become a spiritual home for many of us.
- In fact, when our community has issues, we come together in Chicano Park and we've brought now the rest of the community together.
- That's why I'm very proud to have the support of the San Diego delegation that represents the area and the Mayor of San Diego and so many people because we think that this is such an important area.
- Again, it does need help because these murals are rather large and beautiful and at the same time for us, very very meaningful.
- I won't go on to describe the rest of the process. I know Ms. Talamantez will have an opportunity to do that.
- But again, I want to thank you for allowing me to be here. And again, I can't tell you how important this park is for our community, there is no other Latino or Chicano site in San Diego or in southern California that means more to us than this park.
- And because, again, it became in strife and it was a victory for the entire community, and it continues to be our spiritual home.
- Again, thank you for allowing me to be here. I appreciate it.