



Radically Helping Immigrants Needing Opportunities

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## **Subject: Clarification of Referenced Statement in Judiciary Hearing**

March 20, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

On March 18, 2026, during a hearing of the US House Judiciary Committee titled “*Immigration Policy by Court Order: The Adverse Effects of Plyler v. Doe.*”, US Congressman **Chip Roy** referenced me, **Dr. Marie Moreno, EdD**, by name as the former principal of Las Americas Newcomer Middle School, in Houston, Texas. Rep. Roy cited a quote I made on September 17, 2014, that was presented without the appropriate context leading one to believe that serving this population was extremely difficult and that it was more than one could handle.

He reported that I had said “It’s put a burden on me because I ran out of space” and “I can’t handle them.” I agree that this is what I said, however, the quote was presented without the proper context in which it was made, which resulted in someone hearing this, believing that there was a burden on me and that the students were difficult to handle.

Rep. Chip Roy failed to report that Las Americas had recently experienced a substantial increase in the number of students at the school, having increased from approximately 150 students to over 325 students. A student count of 325 students exceeded the design of Las Americas which created quite a problem.

Las Americas was specifically designed to support immigrant and refugee students through specialized newcomer programming, including language development and targeted academic support. The “burden” was not the students themselves, but rather the challenge of serving a rapidly increasing student population beyond Las Americas’ design capabilities, as well as the district’s refusal to allow me to expand and use additional classrooms at a nearby underutilized middle school.

My comment about “handling” the students was in reference to not being able to take in all 325 students as the resources to successfully educate 325 newcomer students was beyond Las Americas design capabilities. It was not, as Rep Roy’s quote would suggest, that the students were not well behaved and were out of control. Quite the contrary, the students knew that if they gained a US level education, that they would then have the tools needed to get a job and be successful, which is what I was saying when I

added, **“What’s better than having an educated child who can get a job and pay taxes?”**

In 2024, the Las Americas campus had been independently studied by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University. The [Research findings](https://kinder.rice.edu/research/newcomer-schools-houston-isd-examining-student-enrollment-and-outcomes-briefs-1-6) documented significant TELPAS growth, higher English proficiency reclassification rates, and a 29-percentage-point increase in the likelihood of reclassification by year four for students who attended the campus. The research can be found here: <https://kinder.rice.edu/research/newcomer-schools-houston-isd-examining-student-enrollment-and-outcomes-briefs-1-6>.

In closing, the students at Las Americas were eager to get an education, were not a burden nor were they difficult to handle. Many of these students go on to meet, and often exceed, the performance of their peers, including U.S.-born students, graduating at the top of their class and contributing meaningfully to their communities. I join many multilingual educators and advocates across the US that strongly support the Supreme Court’s ruling of *Plyler v. Doe*, as the education that these students received was preparing them to become a productive part of the US workforce which is reinforced by the Kinder Institute study referenced above.

Accordingly, I ask that the minutes from the meeting include this statement so that one reading the minutes will understand that because Rep. Roy left out the context of my comments, his use of my comments would lead one to interpret my quote as supportive of the reversal of *Plyler v. Doe*. On the contrary, if my comment had been presented accurately, it would show my strong support of *Plyler v. Doe*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marie Moreno".

Dr. Marie Moreno, EdD  
Former Principal Las Americas Newcomer Middle School