TEXAS
MAJORITY LEADER

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C. 20515

June 16, 1986

Mr. Robert Rivera League of United Latin American Citizens P.O. Box 5135 Corpus Christi, Texas 78415

Dear Mr. Rivera:

Ever been slapped in the face by a good friend?

If you have, you perhaps can understand how I felt when I got your letter of June 3, accusing me of making "callous and insensitive" remarks about Hispanics at last month's Independent Action roast in Washington.

At first I thought your letter itself surely must have been intended as a good-natured joke. I thought maybe you were spoofing me in the spirit of good fun in which I spoofed myself and others during the roast.

But then, after re-reading your letter, it dawned on me that you were actually serious — that you honestly thought I had in some way maligned the untold thousands of Hispanics that I have known, worked with and respected all my adult life.

I was especially stunned by your declaration that "the Hispanic community is not the doormat of any politician."

Great Scott.

Mr. Rivera, do you honestly think that I would deliberately set out to insult some of the very people who, through thick years and thin, have been some of my truest friends? Do you think that I have enjoyed the trust of Dr. Hector Garcia all these years just because he likes people with bushy eyebrows?

Come on now, Mr. Rivera. Let's be frank. In the untold thousands of speeches I have made over the years, I frequently drop in a joke or two -- jokes about just about every conceivable kind of person who has come to make up this great melting pot of ours -- Irishmen and Chinamen, Catholics, Jews and Baptists, Aggies and Tea-sippers, blacks -- and yes, even Hispanics. But I we muve

Aggies and Tea-sippers, blacks — and yes, even Hispanics. But S've never said amphing "derogatory" about any of these groups—

I don't blame you for being proud of America's Hispanics. I'm proud of them, too. They have made a tremendous contribution to American life and culture. They are part of America. But they are a healthy, vibrant part. They are not

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so delicate or so fragile that they must be placed, all by themselves, in some protected antiseptic container, to be referred to very gingerly, and only within certain prescribed, approved guidelines.

Winston Churchill once said the "British people have not come across the prairies, across the mountains, across the centuries, because they are made of sugar candy."

I don't think Hispanics are made of sugar candy, Mr. Rivera. And I can't really believe that you do, either.

Warm personal regards.

Jim Wr*i*ght

cc: Dr. Hector Garcia

Mr. Jose De Lara

Mr. Ruben Bonilla