




# FUNDACION

Message of the Governor of  
Puerto Rico, the Honorable  
Rafael Hernández Colón, on  
the occasion of the Testimonial  
Dinner in honor of Congress-  
man Herman Badillo, in the  
Americana Hotel, on Friday,  
March 9th, 1973, at 9:00 p.m.



\* \* \* \* \*

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You know, Herman  
was down in Puerto  
Rico the other day,  
gathering strength  
from his native soil,  
I suppose, and girding  
up his loins for future  
battles, to use a  
Biblical phrase.

If that was  
Herman's idea, he  
gave it up right away  
and I don't blame  
him.

Right now in  
Puerto Rico we are  
enduring a taxi  
strike, the bakers  
are refusing to bake  
bread, we have a

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substantial budgetary deficit and we're in danger of losing several million dollars of federal aid. So I can see why he might want to turn tail and get back to the serenity of New York.

But now here we are together, he and I, and I want to tell you that the pleasure of being with him is only partly due to the fact that I can get a taxi and a slice of bread here in the City. Quite seriously I'm delighted to be here tonight because Herman is the kind of man you

can praise and know that every word that you say about him is true. He's the kind of man I'm proud to have as a friend and I think that every one in this distinguished gathering would agree with that!

It's hard to talk about Herman without talking about Puerto Rico. He is truly an authentic representative of the Puerto Rico reality of today. The transitory inconvenience of taxi strikes, budget deficits and the like, while serious problems,

cannot obscure the immensely hopeful nature of this new reality, of which Herman is so much a part.

This Puerto Rican reality is something of which we can all be proud, as we are of Herman Badillo and all the other young and vigorous and compassionate men and women who are part of the new Puerto Rico.

In the space of a single generation we have lifted ourselves by our own bootstraps from the status of one

of the world's most underdeveloped countries to being one of its most developed ones. And we are winning the struggle to realize our solemn commitment to a life of dignity, well-being and self-fulfillment for all Puerto Ricans.

This is the Puerto Rican accomplishment and the Puerto Rican reality. It is and should be a source of immense pride to us all. It is a message which is being broadcast, every day more clearly, to the four corners of the nation.

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But this new  
and positive Puerto  
Rican reality is also  
bringing home, by  
contrast, the  
problems and the needs  
of our brothers in the  
rest of Latin America.

We in Puerto  
Rico, due to the efforts  
of people cut from the  
same mold as Herman  
Badillo and in conjunc-  
tion with the people  
of the United States have  
emerged from the vicious  
circle of poverty and  
hopelessness that is  
still characteristic  
of much of Latin  
America. So I think  
we all, American  
citizens in Puerto

Rico and the States,  
should extend a help-  
ing hand to the rest  
of the hemisphere.

I believe we need to  
give the kind of help  
that respects their  
rights and their dignity,  
without requiring any-  
thing in return except  
their willingness to  
work hard for them-  
selves.

The experience  
of Puerto Rico has  
shown that develop-  
ment can succeed  
in an underdeveloped  
area when there is  
determination and  
self-reliance, coupled  
with the generosity  
and good will of the



the people and government of the United States.

It has also shown that the people of the United States and a Latin community can join in mutually fruitful and brotherly ties, and that therefore American-hemispheric-solidarity is not an unattainable ideal.

I am convinced that an awareness of mutual interest between the United States and Latin peoples is growing, due in great measure to the Puerto Rican example. Several administrations have helped to nurture this

awareness and I believe the present administration will continue in the tradition. Even more, I am sure that President Nixon will shape this awareness into new and creative approaches toward Latin America, approaches which will undoubtedly revitalize and give rise to a fresh dynamic in U. S. - Latin relations.

The President has had the opportunity to see at first hand such a dynamic in operation in Puerto Rico, where he was a welcomed guest during his Vice-Presidency; and so we anticipate great

things from him as he develops a new policy for Latin America.

We are proud that the Puerto Rican reality is and will play an important role in its development.

This reality is becoming clearer every day and is creating an ever sharper awareness in the minds of our fellow-citizens on the mainland of a tremendous resource. That resource is the new Puerto Rican, not only as he is found on the Island itself, but also here in his second home in the United States. This

resource has barely begun to be tapped.

The undeniable accomplishments of Puerto Rico which have shaped the Puerto Rican reality have been possible only because they were achieved by many, many Puerto Rican individuals. So we are proud not only of our community as a whole, but also of its distinguished sons, who are carving out important roles for themselves in the world today. In the arts, in social contributions, in business and industry, and in

public service we  
are witnessing a  
tremendous renaissance  
of the creative Puerto  
Rican Spirit. This re-  
naissance, so hopeful  
for our common society,  
has been gathering  
momentum for a generation  
on the island. It is now  
strikingly evident on  
the mainland itself, where  
Puerto Ricans are aspiring  
to, and achieving, goals  
which seemed unreachable  
in the past. None of these  
Puerto Ricans is more  
distinguished or has done  
more to elevate the name  
of Puerto Rico in the  
United States than the  
man we are gathered  
together to honor on

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this occasion; my  
friend, HERMAN  
BADILLO.

Born and  
nurtured in the  
heart of the island,  
in the serene valley  
of Caguas, he immigrated  
with his family --like so  
many of our fellow  
countrymen-- to the  
continent, in search of a  
better life. He has risen  
above the hindrances  
of language, culture  
and prejudice to attain  
high goals, first as  
Borough President of  
the Bronx, and now  
as a United States  
Congressman. His  
devotion to the public

good and his dedication and success in carrying out the public business in administration and legislation are self-evident. In so doing he has intensified and projected onto the national scene the personal qualities which make him a good Puerto Rican: concern for the welfare of his countrymen and all peoples struggling for self-fulfillment; love of Puerto Rico; and pride in his Puerto Rico identity and our shared cultural idiosyncrasy.

Yes, Herman Badillo has helped to create a new



Puerto Rican image  
and a new example of  
aspiration for Puerto  
Ricans all over the  
Continent, but especially  
in New York City. This  
is a city which  
is sustained in large  
part by the labor, the  
brains, the dreams,  
and the cultural, artistic  
and social contributions  
of many hundreds of  
thousands of Puerto  
Ricans.

These many good  
people have brought  
with them to the  
continent human  
warmth and gaiety,  
along with a surging  
vitality and passion.



They can be justifiably proud of him, and of the fact that he is the symbol of their legitimate aspiration to be heeded, to take an active and important part in the affairs of their communities in the United States, wherever they may be.

How these affairs should be run and how directed, in what manner the problems that may exist should be formulated or solved, I would not presume to say. I do not intend to intervene in any way in the local, state or national politics of

the United States.

Politics are best left to the citizens who are an integral part of them, are directly concerned with them, and who lawfully must help to shape them.

But of one thing I am certain tonight; that there is a new Puerto Rican reality which is clamoring for and achieving recognition in the world today, and that Herman Badillo as a good and distinguished Puerto Rican, is very much a part of that reality. He is not only honored by being

called a good Puerto Rican, but himself adds lustre to the name. Not only I, but Puerto Ricans of all political persuasions, such as former Governor Luis A. Ferre, take great pride in him, as one of our most outstanding and dynamic fellow countrymen. For Puerto Ricans, honoring Herman Badillo is an entirely non-partisan, non-political matter.

We honor him as a distinguished Puerto Rican. Through him we honor our people as a whole.

And so tonight,

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I ask you to join  
me in bearing witness  
to the new Puerto  
Rican reality and to  
the man who has  
contributed so much  
to its realization:  
HERMAN BADILLO.

Herman, ¡adelante!  
¡en nombre de Puerto  
Rico!

Muchas gracias.