



# DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

*Over Twenty Years of Service to America's Diverse Communities*

## NEWS ADVISORY

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IMMIGRATION COLLOQUIUM AT RAYBURN GOLD ROOM

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 24 – Dialogue on Diversity presented its sixth annual colloquium on domestic violence awareness and immigration, *The Newcomers, The Insulted, the Injured: Ethics for an Age of Reparation*, on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Rayburn House Office Building's "Gold Room". The agenda dealt, among other topics, with trafficking, the unaccompanied minors, the Dreamers, teen dating mishaps, elderly abuse, and the economics of immigration.

**ROYCE MURRAY** of the **National Immigrant Justice Center** led off with an overview of both the domestic violence scene and immigration, and the links between them. She discussed the influx, in sharply increased numbers, of "unaccompanied minors", and the difficult procedural steps the minors that must be taken to obtain their release from detention. The domestic violence scene nationally was the topic for **ANNA MARTÍNEZ**, Senior Counsel in the Department of Justice for Domestic Violence enforcement matters, who is now detailed to the **White House office of the Vice President on Domestic Violence**. That office seeks to organize concerted action in both advocacy and enforcement in this field together with a network of local bodies, official and private, making grants to many of these to advance the enterprise.

**JULIETA GARIBAY**, a founder of **United We Dream**, a nationwide advocacy group pushing for the persuasive but legislatively stalled measure legalizing and bringing into citizenship status the young persons who have discovered they were never properly legalized and thus remain eligible for detention and removal. Ms. Garibay has become an emblem of this fear, and at once of the outrage felt throughout the country over the perilous situation of these persons. She invites public support through advocacy and appeals to legislators.

A colloquium highlight was the appearance of **FOUZIA SAEED**, a noted women's rights advocate in Pakistan, now working as Pakistan Scholar at the **Woodrow Wilson Center** in Washington. She recounts an especially ugly sex discrimination encounter in her own experience when acting in a project located in a Pakistan U.N. outpost. After that bitter experience she and other like-minded women joined forces seeking political traction, and in fact managed to procure enactment of a series of laws dealing with diverse forms of discrimination and abuse.

**MEGAN CHALLENGER** of the **Break the Cycle**, a leading force in combatting teen-dating violence, brought in review the most current ideas and tactics in the ongoing campaign targeting teen-agers, warning them to be wary of falling into unforeseen, often extreme abuse at the hands of initially affectionate age mates. She relates development of an "app" allowing users to punch in data on their potential relationships to obtain a rating of the dating dangers. Adults responsible for teens are advised to remain alert for the tell-tale signs of developing abusive relationships. The most serious form of violence, however is the province of the **D.C. Rape Crisis Center**, whose very dynamic Executive Director, **SHERELLE HESSELL-GORDON**, brought hearers a crash course in the essence of the sexual assault problem, the genesis and the motives – the driving force in most such assaults is not, she noted, the erotic but a raw assertion of extreme power over a weaker female party. She emphasized the necessary variety of skills in a well-staffed and managed crisis center – the D.C. office is a prime example.

**Shared Hope** is a leading national organization formed to combat still another, perhaps more virulent form of abuse, that of human trafficking. **JOCELYN BELL**, Programs Administrator for the Washington office, reviewed the trafficking activities operating widely in all regions of the country. Trafficking is a "commodification" of human beings, recruited by force, fraud, or coercion. Vulnerability is the constant characteristic in the targets of the trafficking recruiters. The victims, coerced into commercial sex work or unpaid labor, are detained or intimidated into remaining by threats of harm to self or family, and are sometimes held physically captive. While trafficking rings work in the shadows, citizens aware that someone is not being paid, or that young persons are wandering about late at night should be suspicious and call Shared Hope for guidance.

Full Colloquium Report to Follow. The 2014 Colloquium benefited from support by the D.C. Office on Latino Affairs and Southwest Airlines, along with other collaborating and partnering organizations.

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