

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lisa Navarrete
Melissa Lazarin
(202) 785-1670

MEDIA ADVISORY

HILL BRIEFING TO DISCUSS THE EFFECTS OF HIGH-STAKES TESTING AND SOCIAL PROMOTION ON LATINO YOUTH

Washington, D.C. - In conjunction with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Hispanic Education Coalition, the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at the University of Texas at Austin will host a briefing with Texas education scholars on the effects that high-stakes testing and social promotion policies are having on Latino education. The briefing will take place on Friday, March 15 at 8:45 a.m. in Room HC-5 of the U.S. Capitol.

Moderated by Angela Valenzuela, Associate Director of CMAS, the briefing will address some implications of the new requirements in the recently reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was recently signed into law by President Bush. Specifically, the ESEA requires testing of every student in grades three through eight and includes increased accountability for student performance. While high-quality tests can serve as a good tool for improving schooling and holding school systems accountable for helping all children meet high standards, the inappropriate use of assessments poses a great threat to proper implementation of the ESEA and can, in fact, actually widen the educational achievement gap between Latino students and their non-Latino peers. Panelists will present evidence on the role that high-stakes testing and social promotion policies have played in the education of Latinos.

These scholars have recently completed an evaluation of Texas' accountability system, which has been in place for the past several

years. The results of the evaluation will be featured in a forthcoming scholarly volume edited by Dr. Valenzuela entitled *Assessment and Educational Equity: Why 'Texas-Style' Accountability Fails Latino Youth*. Among the briefing participants are: Belinda Flores, University of Texas, San Antonio; Elaine Hampton, University of Texas, El Paso; Linda McNeil, Rice University; Raymond Padilla, University of Texas, San Antonio; Deborah Palmer, University of California, Berkeley; Ellen Riojas-Clark, University of Texas, San Antonio; Kris Sloan, University of Texas, Austin; and Bruno Villarreal, University of Texas, Austin.

This event is sponsored in part by a grant from the Inter-University Program for Latino Research (headquartered at the University of Notre Dame). For more information or to attend the briefing, please contact Dolores García at the Center for Mexican American Studies, (512) 475-6973, or doloresg@mail.utexas.edu.