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\* \* \* PRESS RELEASE \* \* \*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Council Adopts Huizar Resolution Declaring 'International Braceros Day'**

*City Council votes unanimously to support workers who filled void during and after WWII, also asks U.S. to work with Mexico to help workers recoup wages withheld during program*

**LOS ANGELES (Sept. 25, 2009)** – The Los Angeles City Council voted 12-0 to support Councilmember Jose Huizar's resolution – which was co-presented by Councilmembers Reyes, Cardenas, Alarcon, Rosendahl and Garcetti – to mark Sept. 29 as "International Braceros Day."

The Bracero program was initiated by the United State government and brought in workers from other countries to replace U.S. servicemen and women fighting during WWII. It began on Sept. 29, 1942, when 1,500 braceros (Spanish for "strong arms") arrived in California from Mexico City. The bracero program continued through 1967 and included hundreds of thousands of predominately Mexican workers, but also included Canadians, Jamaicans and Puerto Ricans.

Many of those workers had 10 percent of their wages deducted that were never repaid. A U.S. District Court brought justice to the Braceros in February with a negotiated settlement with businesses and banks that held their unpaid earnings, which will result in a payout of \$3,500 per Bracero or their surviving spouse or child.

The City's resolution asks the U.S. government to lobby the Mexican government to expedite payment of unpaid wages owed thousands of Braceros.

"The workers in the Bracero program, which included my own father, gave tremendous service to this great country in its time of need," Councilmember Huizar said. "They often worked in deplorable conditions and it is right that the City of Los Angeles pays homage to their efforts and seeks justice on their behalf."

(more)

## **Council Supports Braceros Day**

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Councilmember Huizar also invited people to “Reflections Yesterday and Today of Ex-Braceros,” a photo exhibit at El Pueblo Historical Monument (Olvera Street) on Saturday, Sept. 26, at 6 p.m. at The Mexican Cultural Institute Art Gallery.

That event will also include music, speakers and a short play in hopes of raising awareness of the Braceros’ plight.

The photo exhibit includes a photo of Councilmember Huizar’s father, the late Simon Huizar Banuelos, who worked in the Bracero program in 1959.

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