

Friday, March 3, 1989

Committee head decries system of long-term refugee detention

WASHINGTON (AP) — Large-scale, long-term detention of Central Americans seeking asylum in the United States will not solve the refugee crisis confronting South Texas, the chairman of the House immigration committee said Thursday.

Rep. Bruce A. Morrison, D-Conn., said he will search for solutions to the thorny problems posed by the recent flood of Central American refugees crossing into Texas at Brownsville when he spends two days in the Rio Grande Valley next week.

The new chairman of the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law, Morrison said he has no "preconceived notions" on the eve of his "fact-finding" trip to South Texas.

He is, however, concerned whether it is humane to detain Central American refugees pending adjudication of their petitions for political asylum. He also wants to determine how long and how many will be held, and whether word that refugee seekers are being detained is prompting many to go underground as they attempt to reach final destinations such as Miami or Houston.

The number of refugees slowed to a trickle last week after the Immigration and Naturalization Service an-

nounced that amnesty-seekers would be detained while their applications are processed.

"Large-scale detention for any significant period of time is never going to be a very good answer for people whose only crime is to cross the border illegally in search of sanctuary from either political persecution or economic deprivation," Morrison said.

"These people are doing what has been done for a long time in this country — people coming looking for opportunity. We cannot be a refuge for every person in Central America who would like a better life . . . but putting those people in detention for significant periods of time is not going to solve the problem either."

Morrison said he also wants to assess the impact the refugees have had on local communities, the cause of the influx, and what can be done about illegal trafficking in aliens — the smuggling of asylum-seekers along the long route from Central America to their final U.S. destination.

"The profit-making system of delivering people to our doorstep and beyond is a serious concern and has to be part of the equation," Morrison said. "We're talking about a bunch of criminals that violate the laws of countries all the way through (the region)."

Years later, student still pursues dream of college

44-year-old sophomore doesn't regret the wait

By Sherri Roberts

STAFF WRITER

College is just another piece of the all-American dream for many students. For Margarita Ramirez, a 44-year-old sophomore elementary education major, the dream was postponed, but never forgotten.

When her son enrolled at Texas A&M in the fall, Ramirez decided to come with him, joining him and his sister as students at A&M.

"Once my kids were born, I knew what my priorities were — to focus in and make sure they were going to get to college someday," Ramirez said. "Somewhere along the line, I kept saying, 'I'm on the backburner, but somehow I'm going to get in there myself.'"

At the age of 18, Ramirez had priorities other than college in mind — she wanted to marry, settle down and have a family.

"There was a trend taking place in the '60s," she said. "Women's roles were changing. I was going through a transitional time."

While living in Chicago in the early 1970s, Ramirez's interest in elementary education was sparked when she began volunteering as a teacher's aide at the nursery school her two children attended. The director of the school, impressed with Ramirez's natural talent in working with children, offered to have the school pay her way through college to pursue a degree in the field. Ramirez declined the offer, a decision she now regrets, because she wanted to focus on raising her children.

However, lack of a teaching certificate did not prevent Ramirez from being behind the teacher's desk in a classroom.

After moving back to her hometown of San Antonio in 1977, she began working at Saint Leo's School as a student teacher, taking on a junior high science class that had been through three teachers that year.

"When I went in there, I think my class must have been a group similar to the Sweathogs (delinquent group of students on the television show "Welcome Back Kotter")," she said. "I got the classes that no other teacher wanted."

With her freckled face and a stature of less than 5-foot-3, Ramirez does not convey a threatening appearance. However, her firm manner of dealing with students, which caused some of them to question whether she had been in the military, and her willingness to listen to them, earned their respect.

"That's the bottom line — to listen them," she said. "No matter the age, as long as you are willing to listen and meet them halfway, you can communicate."

She went on to teach third grade at the school, turning what could have been average school days into a cultural experience. Students would hear recordings of classical music as they did their math lessons in her class, and would take part in various projects throughout the year, such as coordinating talent shows and a St. Patrick's Day buffet titled "A Taste of Green."

Ramirez's love for creative expression was apparent early in her life at the age of eight, when she began designing and selling costume jewelry. Inspired by a woman living in her neighborhood who owned her own business, Ramirez constructed the jewelry out of her father's fishing wire and remnants of her sisters' old jewelry.

"A lot of the initiative was rooted there from my parents," she said. "It was always instilled in us to go as high as we can. My dad would always say 'Hey you can do it, but you're going to have to work hard for it.'"

As a student at A&M, Ramirez has brought one of her innovative ideas to campus. This spring, she started the group "Aggies Over 25" to serve as a support group to meet the needs of older-than-average students.

Ramirez said that despite the age difference between her and many of her classmates, she is not treated differently.

"I don't want to come in with a motherly image," she said. "I try to keep a low profile as much as possible. I want to relate to that age group because it gives me a better understanding of my own two kids."

Ramirez speaks often and adoringly of her children, Laurajane, a senior animal science major, and Doug, a freshman business administration major.

Their support, along with a lot of praying, help her to balance her schedule of attending classes and substituting in schools throughout Bryan, Ramirez said.

Her daughter said, "I think it's great that she's returning to school. Her perception of things is changing as she's learning more."

Doug said his mother's experience of attending A&M has not only made her more independent, but has helped her to better understand the pressures of being a student.

Margarita said she hopes to cross the stage of G. Rollie White Coliseum to receive her diploma with her son in 1992, the year he is scheduled to graduate.

After receiving her certification to teach, she hopes to teach in various regions throughout the country and possibly overseas.

"I would love to teach on an Indian reservation in the United States," she said.

Wherever she teaches, Ramirez plans to bring her style of blending academia and culture into the classroom.

"I really believe, as far as Shakespeare is concerned, you introduce it in third and second grade — that's where you start rooting it," she said. "By the time they get to high school, they understand and appreciate it."

Ford official: Statistics need critical thinking

By Melissa Naumann

REPORTER

Numbers don't mean anything. That is, they don't unless critical thinking is correctly applied to them. Dr. Stephen Zayac from Ford Motor Co. said Thursday at the Texas Fo-

rum on Quantitative Literacy. Because quantitative literacy involves understanding what statistics actually mean, critical thinking is essential for sorting through numbers and finding the pertinent information, he said.

Zayac outlined four steps to teach valuable statistics: ask questions, examine data, turn that data into information, and take action.

"The whole purpose of doing analysis and doing statistics is to answer a question," he said. "Mathematics can't exist as a solitary function."

Quantitative literacy, or being able to communicate what the statistics mean, is useless if the wrong issue is addressed.

Zayac said another problem crops up when data is misunderstood.

"One myth is that the more data there is, the better," he said. "The real question is, 'How can you reduce that pile of numbers to something you can make some sense out of? We can't just focus on one number. We need to know its meaning.'"

Zayac, who works with manufacturing operations and design engineering, told the group of high-school statistics teachers and mathematical science experts that a strong link between the schools and industry is vital for teaching the kind of statistical methodology industries actually use.

The statistical concepts used in industry are virtually the same as those taught in kindergarten through 12th grade, he said.

"The only difference between Ford operations and K-12 work is the sophistication of the material," Zayac said. "We train the same concepts but not the same data."

The future is at stake if the industry-school link is ignored, he said.

"We underestimate children," he said. "We're not doing a good job of giving them concepts and the tools to work with those concepts. Will we be the first generation of Americans to leave our children more limited horizons than those opened by our parents?"

Correction

A story in Thursday's *Battalion* erroneously reported that scholarship money used for tuition, fees, books, supplies and equipment is taxable. The text should have indicated that money used for these education-related expenses is NOT taxable and can be excluded from taxable income as "qualified expenses." *The Battalion* regrets the error.

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1.78	4,965	10,000
1.61	5,325	11,000
1.51	3,875	9,000
1.43	5,550	11,500
1.33	2,475	5,000
1.21 Antique Mine Cut	1,175	2,400
1.18	2,325	4,600
1.17	2,750	5,200
1.11	2,350	4,650
1.03	3,595	8,500
1.06	1,975	4,000
1.03	2,195	4,200
1.03	3,875	9,000
1.00	2,750	5,200
1.00	1,650	3,300
.95	2,395	4,700
.93	1,595	3,200
.92	1,650	3,300
.91	3,195	6,400
.90	1,750	3,500
.89	1,350	2,700
.88	1,340	2,700
.85	1,685	3,300
.84	2,150	4,200
.83	1,595	3,200
.81	2,250	2,250
.76	1,360	2,700
.72	1,275	2,600
.70	1,235	2,500
.64	895	1,700
.64	1,325	2,700
.62	795	1,500
.60	795	1,500
.57	895	1,700
.56	695	1,300
.55	695	1,300
.53	795	1,500
.52	895	1,700
.52	795	1,500
.51	1,250	2,500
.51	795	1,500
.50	695	1,300
.50	795	1,500
.47	750	1,450
.46	650	1,250
.46	495	900
.30	335	700
.22	185	400

Carat	ROUND Our price	Compare at
.21	\$165	\$300
.21	215	450
.19	165	300
.18	155	290
.16	118	250
.15	111	240
.14	95	200

Carat	EMERALD Our price	Compare at
2.16	\$8,500	\$17,000
1.37	4,850	9,000
.73	1,850	3,200
.47	695	1,350

Carat	PRINCESS/RADIANT Our price	Compare at
1.11	\$2,750	\$5,000
1.02	1,650	3,200
.99	2,570	5,000
.81	2,385	4,500
.62	1,475	2,800
.52	1,250	2,400
.33	395	800
.28	385	800
.25	325	600

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Carat	HEART Our price	Compare at
.90	\$1,890	\$3,600
.75	1,590	3,000
.58	1,375	2,600

Carat	OVAL Our price	Compare at
1.61	\$5,875	\$11,000
1.21	2,890	6,500
1.11	2,750	6,400
1.03	2,575	5,000
1.01	1,150	2,300
.99	2,375	4,500
.71	1,450	3,000
.70	1,395	2,950
.62	1,275	2,500
.58	1,195	2,300
.58	995	2,000
.53	1,225	2,500
.51	1,095	2,000
.50	1,050	2,000
.10	105	200

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2.14	\$5,850	\$11,700
1.75	5,425	11,000
1.67	4,950	10,000
.43	3,780	7,000
1.24	4,285	8,000
1.21	2,375	4,600
1.21	3,475	6,500
1.01	2,675	4,900
.64	1,295	2,600
.60	1,150	2,300
.58	995	1,900
.52	665	1,300
.45	325	600
.10	95	200

Carat	MARQUISE Our price	Compare at
2.04	\$11,875	\$25,000
1.67	4,975	10,000
1.56	4,775	9,000
1.35	2,650	5,200
1.23	3,350	6,700
1.17	3,650	6,800
1.04	2,585	6,000
.92	2,875	5,800
.90	2,275	4,600
.83 w/GIA report	2,575	6,000
.79	1,895	3,200
.72	2,130	5,000
.71	2,095	4,100
.70	1,795	3,100
.70	2,250	4,500
.64	1,385	2,600
.62	795	1,600
.55	850	1,700
.47	625	1,300
.45	795	1,400
.41	650	1,300
.39	795	1,400
.35	495	900
.25	250	500
.23	275	550
.18	195	400
.11	110	200

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