Dolores Huerta’s Opening Statement- Draft 2

Goodmorning. My name is Dolores Huerta. I am a labor leader and civil rights activist. I co-founded the National Farmworkers Association with Cesar Chavez and now run my own foundation, the Dolores Huerta Foundation. Today, we are gathered here to respond to President Barack Obama’s State of the Union address. As the leader of our nation, he has carefully reviewed several aspects of this country, and brought to us an analysis of our economy, education, technology, and civil rights. I am glad to say that there are several points in this address that bring me contentment and joy for the future.

To begin, I am glad that President Obama is working with the largest class in America: the working middle class. In today’s ever-changing economy, it’s important to many citizens that education, healthcare, and childcare are all accessible. In terms of education, I am incredibly grateful that there are more and more efforts to bring minorities to college. However, there is much work to be done in regards to educating and mobilizing young people in America, specifically in our political scene. The only way that we can bring a balanced and effective government to America is by educating our youth about the importance of voting and involvement in our political system. This, however, is impossible without first speaking to the fact that high school drop out rates are significantly higher among minorities in America. How can we expect to have a cohesive government if not all citizens are educated and empowered to make informed decisions? We must remind all citizens, “Tu voto es tu voz”.

I wholeheartedly agree with President Obama’s statement “I condemn the persecution of women, or religious minorities or people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. We do these things not only because they’re right, but because they make us safer”. Our nation is at a point in its development where persecution and prejudice are no longer acceptable.

I am disappointed that President Obama failed to address immigration reform in a way that amounts to it’s importance. It is obvious that congress has not been willing to pay enough attention to this issue, nor have they put in the right amount to work to improve the lives of countless men, women, and children in the United States, many of whom labor day in and day out to put food on our tables. These are human beings who we are carelessly marginalizing and oppressing. Again, the only way that we can be a unified, cohesive nation is by being unified in our communities and together working to elect congressmen and women that will work to reform our immigration laws.

I still hold the position that in order to really get the progressive agenda that we’re looking for, we’ve got to come together, and we have to really unite our forces. Until that happens, nothing will change, our government will remain stagnant, and we will not progress as a nation.

We have work to do, and we have changes to make. But as always, “Si se puede!”