



Hispanic Congressman Tears into Trump: « You're a Racist, Take Your Border Wall and Shove It Up Your Ass »

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The political outcry from Trump's ongoing back and forth with Gonzalo Curiel, the judge overseeing the class-action lawsuits against Trump University, escalated today when following accusations of racism from democrats, as well as many top GOP leaders such as Mitch McConnell, Paul Ryan, [Newt Gingrich](#) and [Sen. Ben Sasse](#) distancing themselves from Trump's comments, a Hispanic House Democrat who represents a Texas district bordering Mexico tore into Donald Trump's attacks on the Mexican-American judge, calling them blatantly racist.

Texas Democratic Congressman Filemon Vela didn't mince words in a lengthy open letter to the presumptive GOP presidential nominee on Monday.

« Mr. Trump, you're a racist and you can take your border wall and shove it up your ass. » Vela wrote.

Vela begins the letter noting that he agrees with Trump that Mexico should do more to deter violence from drug cartels and that felons in the U.S. illegally should be deported. But, [as The Hill summarizes](#), he then excoriates the real estate mogul over his rhetoric about Hispanics, including Trump's assertion that an American-born federal judge of Mexican descent won't be impartial in a lawsuit against Trump University.



Texas Democratic Rep. Filemon Vela

« [Y]our ignorant anti-immigrant opinions, your border wall rhetoric, and your recent bigoted attack on an American jurist are just plain despicable, » Vela wrote.

Your position with respect to the millions of undocumented Mexican workers who now live in this country is hateful, dehumanizing, and frankly shameful.

The second-term lawmaker noted his own Mexican roots and pointed out that his family immigrated to the U.S. before Trump's grandfather did from Germany.

« Before you dismiss me as just another 'Mexican,' let me point out that my great-great grandfather came to this country in 1857, well before your own grandfather. His

grandchildren (my grandfather and his brothers) all served our country in World War I and World War II. His great-grandson, my father, served in the U.S. Army and, coincidentally, was one of the first 'Mexican' federal judges ever appointed to the federal bench, » Vela wrote.

Trump on Sunday doubled down on his stance that Gonzalo Curiel, the judge overseeing class-action lawsuits against Trump University, would be biased due to the billionaire's campaign pledge to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. The candidate similarly said that a Muslim judge « absolutely » might treat him unfairly because of his proposal to ban Muslims from entering the U.S.

Here is the full text of the letter:

June 6, 2016

Donald Trump
725 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mr. Trump,

As the United States Representative for the 34th Congressional District of Texas, I do not disagree with everything you say. I agree that the United States Government has largely failed our veterans, and those of us who represent the people in Congress have the obligation to rectify the Veterans Administration's deficiencies. I also believe that the Mexican government and our own State Department must be much more aggressive in addressing cartel violence and corruption in Mexico, especially in the Mexican border state of Tamaulipas. And clearly, criminal felons who are here illegally should be immediately deported. There might even be a few other things on which we can agree

However, your ignorant anti-immigrant opinions, your border wall rhetoric, and your recent bigoted attack on an American jurist are just plain despicable

Your position with respect to the millions of undocumented Mexican workers who now live in this country is hateful, dehumanizing, and frankly shameful. The vast number of these individuals work in hotels, restaurants, construction sites, and agricultural fields across the United States. If I had to guess, your own business enterprises either directly or indirectly employ more of these workers than most other businesses in our country. Thousands of our businesses would come to a grinding halt if we invoked a policy that would require « mass deportation » as you and many of your supporters would suggest. That is precisely why the Republican-leaning U.S. Chamber of Commerce agrees that these workers deserve a national immigration policy that would give them a pathway to citizenship.

While you would build more and bigger walls on the U.S.-Mexico border, I would tear the existing wall to pieces. No doubt Mexico has its problems, but it is also our third-largest trading partner. U.S. Chamber of Commerce has documented that this trade relationship is responsible for six million jobs in the United States. In 2015, the U.S. imported \$296 billion in goods from Mexico while exporting \$235 billion in products manufactured in this country to Mexico. The Great Wall of China is historically obsolete, and President Ronald Reagan famously declared, « Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall ... » while urging the Soviet Union to destroy the barrier that divided West and East Berlin. Why any modern-thinking person would ever believe that building a wall along the border of a neighboring country, which is both our ally and one of our

largest trading partners, is frankly astounding and asinine.

I should also point out that thousands of Americans of Mexican descent that you mistakenly refer to as “Mexicans” have valiantly served the United States in every conflict since the Civil War. While too numerous to list, let me educate you about a few of these brave Medal of Honor recipients:

Master Sergeant Jose Lopez, from my own hometown of Brownsville, Texas, fought in World War II. Lopez was awarded the United States’ highest military decoration for valor in combat – the Medal of Honor – for his heroic actions during the Battle of the Bulge, in which he single handedly repulsed a German infantry attack, killing at least 100 enemy troops. If you ever run into Kris Kristofferson, ask him about Jose Lopez because as a young man Mr. Kristofferson recalls the 1945 parade honoring Sergeant Lopez as an event he will never forget.

In 1981, President Reagan presented Master Sergeant Roy Benavides with the Medal of Honor for fighting in what has been described as “6 hours in hell.” In Vietnam, Sergeant Benavides suffered 37 separate bullet, bayonet and shrapnel wounds to his face, leg, head and stomach while saving the lives of eight men. In fact, when awarding the honor to Benavides, President Reagan, turned to the media and said, “if the story of his heroism were a movie script, you would not believe it.”

You have now descended to a new low in your racist attack of an American jurist, U.S. District Court Judge Gonzalo Curiel, by calling him a “Mexican” simply because he ruled against you in a case in which you are being accused of fraud, among other accusations. Judge Curiel is one of 124 Americans of Hispanic descent who have served this country with honor and distinction as federal district judges. In fact, the first Hispanic American ever named to the federal bench in the United States, Judge Reynaldo G. Garza, was also from Brownsville, Texas, and was appointed by President John F. Kennedy in 1961.

Before you dismiss me as just another “Mexican,” let me point out that my great-great grandfather came to this country in 1857, well before your own grandfather. His grandchildren (my grandfather and his brothers) all served our country in World War I and World War II. His great-grandson, my father, served in the U.S. Army and, coincidentally, was one of the first “Mexican” federal judges ever appointed to the federal bench.

I would like to end this letter in a more diplomatic fashion, but I think that you, of all people, understand why I cannot. I will not presume to speak on behalf of every American of Mexican descent, for every undocumented worker born in Mexico who is contributing to our country every day or, for that matter, every decent citizen in Mexico. But, I am sure that many of these individuals would agree with me when I say: ‘Mr. Trump, you’re a racist and you can take your border wall and shove it up your ass.’

Sincerely,
Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

But while the condemnation of Trump’s statement has been largely uniform among the political elite, one person who has so far voiced a supporting tone and said that « Trump has a right to ask if Judge Gonzalo Curiel is fair », was Alberto Gonzales, who served as White House counsel and U.S. attorney general in the George W. Bush administration. Here is an [excerpt of what he said in a WaPo oped](#):

Certainly, Curiel’s Mexican heritage alone would not be enough to raise a

question of bias (for all we know, the judge supports Trump's pledge to better secure our borders and enforce the rule of law). As someone whose own ancestors came to the United States from Mexico, I know ethnicity alone cannot pose a conflict of interest.

But there may be other factors to consider in determining whether Trump's concerns about getting an impartial trial are reasonable. Curiel is, reportedly, a member of a group called La Raza Lawyers of San Diego. Trump's aides, meanwhile, have indicated that they believe Curiel is a member of the National Council of La Raza, a vocal advocacy organization that has vigorously condemned Trump and his views on immigration. The two groups are unaffiliated, and Curiel is not a member of NCLR. But Trump may be concerned that the lawyers' association or its members represent or support the other advocacy organization. Coupled with that question is the fact that in 2014, when he certified the class-action lawsuit against Trump, Curiel appointed the Robbins Geller law firm to represent plaintiffs. Robbins Geller has paid \$675,000 in speaking fees since 2009 to Trump's likely opponent, Hillary Clinton, and to her husband, former president Bill Clinton. Curiel appointed the firm in the case before Trump entered the presidential race, but again, it might not be unreasonable for a defendant in Trump's position to wonder who Curiel favors in the presidential election. These circumstances, while not necessarily conclusive, at least raise a legitimate question to be considered. Regardless of the way Trump has gone about raising his concerns over whether he's getting a fair trial, none of us should dismiss those concerns out of hand without carefully examining how a defendant in his position might perceive them — and we certainly should not dismiss them for partisan political reasons.

Finally, some have said that Trump's criticism of the judge reflects on his qualifications to be president. If the criticism is solely based on Curiel's race, that is something voters will take into account in deciding whether he is fit to be president. If, however, Trump is acting from a sincere motivation to protect his constitutional right to a fair trial, his willingness to exercise his rights as an American citizen and raising the issue even in the face of severe criticism is surely also something for voters to consider.

In any event, this issue is not going away any time soon, and it remains to be seen how it will impact Trump's popularity in the coming days, especially if Trump continue to engage in a back and forth over what is ultimately a private matter, instead of refocusing his supporters' attention on the escalating feud with Hillary Clinton.

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