

## Letter to Los Cerritos Community News - October 21, 2005

### OPINIONS

#### Breakfast With Hillary

BY LARRY CABALLERO

Several years ago, my wife and I had the opportunity to meet Neil Diamond. I remember how excited we were. We talked about it for months after. I also remember how excited we were when we had the opportunity to meet President Clinton at a private reception at the Pickfair Mansion in Beverly Hills. It was a fundraiser for a gun control group headed by Reagan's press secretary Jim Brady.

All of it was great, including the Secret Service agents and their dogs. Clinton, ever the eloquent speaker, was a big hit.

I felt the same excitement again when I was lucky enough to have breakfast with Senator Hillary Clinton at a venue near the Los Angeles Airport on Friday.

It all started when Artesia councilmember, and state Assembly candidate, Tony Mendoza invited me to be his guest at a gala at our alma mater - Cal State University, Long Beach. I was really impressed with the event, which was to celebrate the opening of a Center for Indo-American Studies at the campus, but I was even more excited when I met the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi.

He was such a genuine and sincere

man whose love of humanity was quite apparent. It was obvious that his grandfather had left a lasting impression on him.

At the gala, Mendoza told me that he had been asked by an Indo-American host to be his guest at a breakfast for Hillary. Unfortunately, he would not be able to attend because he had a prior commitment.

I told him that I thought he was dumb for not wanting to meet the senator until he told me that he had suggested that I go in his place. Then I told him what a genius he was!

Of course, Hillary was great, and made a point of greeting each one of us. We had the opportunity to have a picture taken with her before breakfast. She spoke passionately about the issues facing America today, and how disappointing some of the administration's decisions have been concerning the war in Iraq and the hurricane Katrina.

She was asked if she was planning to run for president in 2008, and she said, "It's too early to think about anything else other than my Senate race in 2006."

She did say, however, that "I do admire South Asian countries who are ahead of America when it comes to placing women in high positions of leadership!"

She also was asked why, during the Clinton administration, the Republicans were relentless with their attacks, but now the Democrats have little to say about "the current problems of indictments, cronyism and incompetence."

Hillary replied that "Americans didn't seem to be ready to hear about the problems in Washington, but now they seem to be. So you will be hearing a lot more from Democrats as the 2006 elections draw near."

In attendance were representatives from Congresswoman Linda Sanchez's office as well as an appearance by Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi and State Board of Equalization member John Chiang.

Overall, it was an experience I will always remember.

## **Text of Letter**

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