



CITY HALL
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 8, 2008

CONTACT: Reyes/ Tony Perez (213)761-2281
Huizar/George I. Gonzalez (213) 200-9974

THOUSANDS MARCH FOR 40th ANNIVERSARY OF EAST L.A. WALKOUTS –*Electeds commemorate historic march leaders and legacy at Lincoln High School*

LOS ANGELES—About 2,500 people—including dozens of the original student activists—marched today from Lincoln High School on the 40th anniversary of the 1968 East Los Angeles High School Walkouts, or “blowouts,” of local schools protesting educational inequity.

The march, which recreated the 1.5-mile route of the 1968 march, began at Lincoln High School and ended at Hazard Park in Boyle Heights.

“Today’s event celebrates the 40th anniversary of one of the nation’s largest high school demonstrations,” said Councilmember Ed P. Reyes, who celebrated the original student activists during a press conference today before the march. “Tragically, many of the issues that prompted the East L.A. walkouts--such as low Latino student graduation rates and limited education resources -- still exist. Fortunately, the *ganans*, or drive, that prompted the 1968 march is still alive in our youth and leaders, as evident today.”

On March 6, 7, and 8 in 1968, more than 20,000 students and teachers, mostly from Greater Los Angeles Area, stood up and walked out of their schools protesting overcrowded classrooms, poor teaching quality and discrimination. Their activism was pivotal in public education reform and led to changes including increased college enrollment among Latinos, greater political representation, and inclusion of Chicano history courses.

In addition to Reyes, Councilmember José Huizar, Los Angeles Unified School Board President Monica Garcia and LAUSD Vice-President Yolie Flores also commemorated the historic march.

“In 1968, when these brave students organized the walkouts, they were confronted with a country that was highly divided by race and the civil rights movement. It is because of these brave student leaders that many young Latinos, including me, had an opportunity to attend college and create better lives for ourselves and our families,” said Councilmember José Huizar. “The efforts of these students 40 years ago really have impacted million of Latino students throughout the U.S. I

believe that education is the key to success; and when young people are given an opportunity to better themselves, to educate themselves, and give something back, the whole community benefits.”

Sal Castro, who taught at Lincoln High School during the walkouts, said college enrollment and political leadership improved significantly after the 1968 walkouts.

“The student activism of 1968 really focused on education,” said Castro. “This is relevant today because the college doors were blasted open. In 1967, we counted about 67 students at UCLA with Spanish surnames. In 1969, a year after the walkouts, there were more than 1,900 students at UCLA with Spanish surnames. The explosion was evident, not just in Los Angeles but throughout the United States. That really is the legacy of the walkouts -- the huge advancement of the Latino community in higher education and in political leadership.”

#