Linda Chavez-Christopher Gersten Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2015

Contact information: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2011085595

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms015024

Prepared by Melinda K. Friend
Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2015
Collection Summary

Title: Linda Chavez and Christopher Gersten Papers

Span Dates: 1889-2011
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1983-2001)
ID No.: MSS85595
Creator: Chavez, Linda
Creator: Gersten, Christopher, 1947-
Extent: 2,000 items
Extent: 11 containers plus 1 classified and 1 oversize
Extent: 4.4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2011085595

Summary: Author, news commentator, and government official (Linda Chavez). Government official (Christopher Gersten). Photographs, clippings, scrapbooks, memoranda, notebooks, appointment calendars, correspondence, speeches and writings, and printed matter relating primarily to Chavez’s career as an author, news commentator, and government official including her service in the presidential administration of Ronald Reagan.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Chavez, Linda. An unlikely conservative: the transformation of an ex-liberal, or, how I became the most hated Hispanic in America. 2002.
Reagan, Ronald.

Organizations
United States Commission on Civil Rights.

Subjects
Cabinet officers--Selection and appointment--United States.
Civil rights--United States.
Hispanic American politicians--United States.
Hispanic American women--United States.

Places
Maryland--Politics and government--1951-

Titles
Christopher Gersten papers
Linda Chavez papers

Occupations
Authors.
Journalists.
Public officials.
Provenance

The papers of Linda Chavez, author, news commentator, and government official, and Christopher Gersten, government official, were given to the Library of Congress by Chavez and Gersten in 2011.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Cartoons have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. Videotapes, audiotapes, film, and CD-Roms have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Linda Chavez and Christopher Gersten Papers.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Linda Chavez and Christopher Gersten in these papers and in other collections in the custody of the Library of Congress is reserved. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for further information.

Access and Restrictions

Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions. In addition, many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Security Classified Documents

Government regulations control the use of security classified material in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified materials.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Linda Chavez and Christopher Gersten Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Linda Chavez

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Married Christopher Gersten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1972</td>
<td>Attended graduate school and lectured, University of California, Los Angeles, Calif.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Worked for Office of Spanish Speaking, Democratic National Committee, Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-1974</td>
<td>Clerk and later legislative staff member, House Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights</td>
</tr>
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</table>
1983-1985 Member and later staff director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
1984-1986 Member, Administrative Conference of the United States
1985 Changed political affiliation from Democratic Party to Republican Party
1985-1986 Deputy assistant to president and director of the Office of Public Liaison, White House, Washington, D.C.
1986 Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in Maryland
1987-1988 President, U.S. English, a private organization devoted to making English the official national language
1988-1992 Chairman, U.S. Commission on Migrant Education
1995- Founder and president, Center for Equal Opportunity, Washington, D.C., a conservative think tank devoted to issues of race and ethnicity
2000 Headed task force on immigration, presidential campaign of George W. Bush
2001 Awarded Library of Congress’ “Living Legend” award
2002 Nominated as secretary of labor by George W. Bush, but withdrew from consideration

Christopher Gersten

Date Event
1947, Nov. 22 Born, Rochester, Minn.
1967 Married Linda Chavez
1970 Graduated, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo.
circa 1980-1983 Special assistant to the general president, International Union of Operating Engineers
1984-? Political director, American Israel Public Affairs Committee
1985-1986 Executive director, National Jewish Coalition
1989-1993 Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.
1997 Founded Institute for Religious Values, Washington, D.C.
2000-2005 Principal deputy assistant secretary, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.
2005- Founder and chair, Fatherhood and Marriage Leadership Institute, Washington, D.C.
2007 Published Lasting Love: Skills to a Better Relationship. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Linda Lou Chavez (1947- ) and Christopher Carl Gersten (1947- ) span the years 1889-2011, with the bulk of the material dating from 1983 to 2001. Their papers are organized separately and arranged by type of material within.
their respective files. A majority of the material relates to Chavez and largely consists of photographs, clippings, and her newspaper columns.

The professional file of Chavez's papers covers four areas of her career. The largest group of material relates to her service at the White House during the administration of Ronald Reagan. Chavez’s notebooks include entries for staff meetings, meetings with individuals and organizations, and lists of things to do. There is a gap from June 18 to September 23, 1985. Staffing memoranda contain presidential remarks and material relating to the Economic Policy Council and Domestic Policy Council. Her scrapbook contains photographs of White House events and meetings, memorabilia, and the later addition of items from the funeral of Reagan in 2004. Chavez resigned her White House position to seek the United States Senate seat from Maryland. She won the Republican nomination, but lost the 1986 election to Democrat Barbara Mikulski. Related items include her campaign prospectus, correspondence, photographs from a fund raiser attended by Reagan, and a scrapbook containing clippings, memorabilia, and photographs of other fund-raising events. Material relating to her earlier work at the United States Commission on Civil Rights is mostly comprised of clippings with a small amount of correspondence. In 2001, President George W. Bush nominated Chavez for secretary of labor. She later withdrew after a controversy arose over the supposed employment at her home of an illegal alien. A confirmation packet, questionnaire, and a large amount of clippings document her nomination and withdrawal. Items supplementing the professional file include her appointment calendars, although many are overlapping and have gaps, a personnel file kept by Chavez, a file compiled on her by Federal Bureau of Investigation, and a photograph file chronicling her career.

Chavez's speeches consist mostly of background material and printouts of testimony given by her before congressional committees. A majority of her writings consist of photocopies and printouts of her newspaper columns. Background material, contracts, publicity, and the draft of a chapter relate to her book, *An Unlikely Conservative: The Transformation of an Ex-Liberal*.

The papers of Christopher Gersten are mostly comprised of two photograph albums probably related to his tenure as director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the Department of Health and Human Services. The albums document a Tet celebration in Orange County, California, and a dinner and awards ceremony of the Unified Vietnamese Community Council.

**Arrangement of the Papers**

This collection is arranged according to separate files for Chavez and Gersten and thereunder alphabetically by type of material or topic.
## Container List

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<th>Contents</th>
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<td>Biographical material</td>
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<td>General, 1978-2011, undated</td>
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<td>American Educator magazine, 1978-1982</td>
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<td>BOX 3</td>
<td>Freedom Foundation and Hispanic Coalition for a Free Central America, circa 1983</td>
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<td>BOX 3</td>
<td>Youth Coalition for Balanced Arms Reduction, circa 1983</td>
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<td>Scheduling and notes, 2001</td>
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