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Monday, May 22, 2006

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Where Hispanic Senators Stand

May 22, 2006

As the Senate debates how to deal with illegal immigration, much of it from Mexico and Central America, there are three senators of Hispanic heritage. A Republican and two Democrats, they take similar stands on the issue.

MEL MARTINEZ (R-Fla.)

> Age: 59

> Elected: 2004

> Hispanic heritage: Born in Cuba, immigrated to the United States as a teenager in 1962

> Stand on illegal immigration: Formerly President Bush's housing secretary, Martinez is author with Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) of the current Senate bill, which would tighten border security but provide a path to eventual citizenship for some illegal immigrants who have been in the United States for a period of years and who pay fines and meet other requirements. It would also establish a guest worker program and an electronic network that employers would be required to use to verify the residency status of the workers they hire. Martinez and Hagel's bill is opposed by many conservatives, especially in the House.

ROBERT MENENDEZ (D-N.J.)

> Age: 52

> Elected: To House in 1993 and served until this year. Appointed senator in January to replace Jon Corzine, who resigned from the Senate after being elected governor.

> Hispanic heritage: Born in United States to Cuban immigrant parents.

> Stand on illegal immigration: Menendez has said he opposes a general amnesty for illegal immigrants and favors tougher border security. He supports the Martinez-Hagel immigration bill.

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KEN SALAZAR (D-Colo.)

> Age: 51



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business owners without needed workers. Alarmed by what he said were racist, anti-immigrant messages his office received, he went to the Senate floor in April to call for more civility in debate on the issue.

Sources: Denver Post, Associated Press, Newsday, The Press of Atlantic City, New York Times, Washington Post

Source: Copyright 2006 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

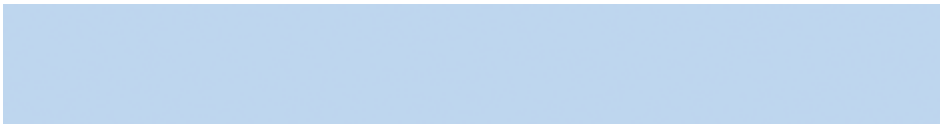
> Elected: 2004

> Hispanic heritage: Fifth-generation Coloradan descended from Spanish immigrants who originally settled in New Mexico.

> Stand on illegal immigration: Salazar supports the Martinez-Hagel immigration bill and has expressed concern that the mass deportation of illegal immigrants --- of which another Colorado lawmaker, U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo, a Republican, is a vocal advocate --- would leave many farmers and

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