

In 1862, France, Spain, and England dispatched their fleets to Mexican shores pursuing not only money but also land and rights as payment for their loans.

A government representative greeted them and explained that Mexico acknowledged its debts, but had no funds to pay them.

They were offered payment warrants in exchange.

The Spaniards and the British decided to accept the warrants and withdrew from the scene.

But the French government's representative did not accept the offer and ordered his troops to invade the country and head toward Mexico City, the nation's capital.

They had to cross through the state of Puebla to get to the capital.

Mexican President Benito Juarez, reacted immediately and prepared the defense.

He commanded Ignacio Zaragoza, a young and brave General, to fortify the City of Puebla and repel the French invaders.

The battle was by no means even.

France, under Louis Napoleon's rule, had the most world's powerful army, and sent more than six thousand men to invade Mexico.

But the courage and the love of freedom impelled the Mexican people to fight back.

General Ignacio Zaragoza led 5,000 ill-equipped Mestizo and Zapotec Indians called Zacapoaxtlas.

On the 5th of May 1862, the forts of Loreto and Guadalupe, in the city of Puebla, became the scene of the historical defeat of the great European army.

Against overwhelming odds, they managed to drive back the French army, achieving a total victory over soldiers deemed among the best trained and equipped in the world and embarking on the end of the European domination in America.

For Mexico, this day has come to represent a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism in the history of Mexico.

In our country, Cinco de Mayo is also a celebration of the rich cultural heritage Mexican Americans have brought to the United States.

Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States.

According to the most recent data available, the estimated Hispanic population in the U.S. is 42.7 million—constituting 14 percent of our nation's population.

Hispanics now own a record number of small businesses—1.6 million, with annual revenues of more than \$221 billion.

Small businesses create two-thirds of American jobs, and the fastest-growing small business sector is Latino-owned firms.

Today, there are 32 Hispanic Members in the United States Congress, including 3 Senators and 29 House Members, many of whom are Mexican-American, representing constituencies in all regions of the country, from California to New York, from Arizona to Illinois, from Colorado to Florida.

These gains and numbers tell us that Hispanics are a driving force in our country—economically, socially and politically.

Hispanics share the common goals with all other Americans of freedom, opportunity, and a chance to build a better life.

In pursuing these aspirations, Hispanics have made important contributions to life in the United States in the fields of culture, sports, entertainment, business enterprise, science, politics and others.

Today, millions of Americans will join our neighbors to the south in celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

On this day, we are reminded that all people—regardless of their race, color, or gender—have enriched cultures and are worthy of respect and self-determination.

I am happy to be here today to celebrate this momentous day and to recognize the values, traditions, and positive contributions of the Mexican culture.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR OPPORTUNITY
AND RESULTS REAUTHORIZATION
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK DeSAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 29, 2016

Mr. DESAULNIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Reauthorization Act.

Plenty of members have raised legitimate concerns with this bill, not the least of which is that students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community in D.C. did not ask for this system to be forced on them.

A specific concern: The lack of protections for students with disabilities, arguably those who need protections the most.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—colloquially known as IDEA—has ensured for decades that children with disabilities throughout the nation receive the services and accommodations they need. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Voucher schools should not get a free pass because of accounting gimmicks allowed under the voucher program.

When IDEA was passed, it did not have a clause that said “protect all students with disabilities except those students who choose to go to voucher schools.” I urge my colleagues to reject this bill and stand up for the civil rights that we all agreed every student deserves.