



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein
On the Death of Former Congressman Edward R. Roybal

October 26, 2005

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) made the following floor statement today in memory of former Congressman Ed Roybal:

“Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American, former Congressman Edward Roybal, who passed away on October 24, 2005, at the age of 89.

My heartfelt sympathy goes out to his family, especially to his daughter, my friend and colleague, Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard.

As his friends and family gather to pay tribute and celebrate Ed’s remarkable life, I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in paying tribute to memory of this outstanding public servant.

Ed Roybal devoted over fifty years of his life to public service, thirty of those years as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1962 to 1992. During that time, Ed was a steadfast advocate on behalf of those without a voice.

His long and distinguished career in public service began in 1942. Having returned to Los Angeles, upon completion of military service, he became a director of health education for the Los Angeles County Tuberculosis and Health Association.

In 1949, he established the Community Service Organization to advocate for the rights of minorities in the areas of housing, employment, and education. That same year, he was elected to the Los Angeles City Council where he served until 1962.

When Ed was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1962, he was the first Hispanic from California to serve in Congress since the 1879 election of Romualdo Pacheco.

During his three decades of service in the House, Ed worked tirelessly to protect the rights of minorities, the elderly, and the physically challenged.

Together with Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas, he championed the 1968 Bilingual Education Act to assist the Nation's schools in meeting the educational needs of children who come from non-English speaking homes. Later, he worked to establish a Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish-speaking people.

Ed Roybal was a national leader for the Latino Community. In 1976, he became one of the founding members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and served as its first Chairman.

Ed also played an important role in the passing of legislation to outlaw age discrimination, and he worked for numerous benefits and opportunities for those with handicaps.

Ed also continued to champion health-care issues throughout his career in Congress. He led efforts to fund America's first AIDS research and treatment programs, and was instrumental in renewing legislation to provide medical service to people with Alzheimer's disease. In recognition of his leadership on health care issues, the County of Los Angeles opened the Edward R. Roybal Clinic in East Los Angeles in 1976.

Over the course of his life, Ed co-founded several other organizations to increase civic participation of Hispanics, including the National Association of Latino Elected Officials and the Mexican American Political Association.

Ed Roybal was a true leader and pioneer for the City of Los Angeles, the State of California, and for the national Latino community. I feel very lucky to have known him. I know my colleagues join me in extending to his family our deepest sympathy and condolences. He will be greatly missed.”

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