

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 000275)

RESOLUTION

Commending Attorney General Janet Reno for confirming the country's commitment to family values by reuniting Elian Gonzalez with his father.

WHEREAS, On Thanksgiving day, 1999, five-year-old Elian Gonzalez was pulled out of the Straits of Florida by a fisherman as he was clinging to an inner tube. Elian was the lone survivor of a doomed raft escape from Cuba in which he witnessed the drowning of his mother; and

WHEREAS, From Thanksgiving until April 23, 2000, the day before Easter, Elian Gonzalez remained with relatives from Miami, Florida, namely his Great-uncle Lazaro Gonzalez and his 21-year old cousin Marisleysis Gonzalez; and

WHEREAS, In Cuba, Elians parents shared custody of him after their divorce. Elian lived in both their houses and saw each of them as well as both sets of grandparents on a regular, if not daily, basis; and

WHEREAS, The law in this country, as elsewhere, is that a surviving parent has custody of, and speaks for, a young child unless the parent is unfit; and no one has produced evidence that Elian's father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, anything but a loving father; and

WHEREAS, The relationship between Elian and his father was compromised by Elian's Miami relatives refusal to allow effective communication such as telephone calls from Elian's father in Cuba to his son; and

WHEREAS, It was the Miami relatives, not the federal government, who acted outside the law by ignoring an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) order to deliver Elian to federal authorities so that they could reunite him with his Cuba father; and

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WHEREAS, While legally, United States Attorney General Janet Reno could have seized Elian weeks ago, she judiciously decided to exhaust all reasonable options to accommodate the Miami relatives in order to assure a peaceful transition; and

WHEREAS, When it was clear that the negotiations had broke down, Attorney General Janet Reno implemented an efficient and swift plan which resulted in the safe transfer of Elian to his father with no loss of life; and

WHEREAS, The smiling faces of Elian and his father as they embraced each other confirm not only the sanctity of the bond between father and son but also the rightness of what Attorney General Janet Reno did; now therefore

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby commends Attorney General Janet Reno for confirming this country's commitment to family values by reuniting Elian Gonzalez with his father.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to Attorney General Janet Reno, President Clinton, and all members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-seventh of April, 2000.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Ortiz, Cohen, Reynolds Brown and Goode

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Ortiz, Cohen, Reynolds Brown, Goode, Tasco, Council President Verna, Blackwell, Miller, Mariano, DiCicco, O'Neill, Rizzo, Longstreth and Clarke