



Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr with Dr. Gilberto A. Zelaya, II, recipient of the Exemplary Government Employee Award

Exemplary Government Employee Award Dr. Gilberto A. Zelaya, II

Nominated by Mr. Alex Ortiz-Canas

Mr. Alex Ortiz-Canas wrote:

Through strategic and coordinated efforts, Dr. Gilberto A. Zelaya, II, has been empowering Latinos of the current and future voting rights. “An uninformed Latino, is misinformed Latino”, Dr. Zelaya replies. Opportunities to learning and access to information is not dependent on immigration status. Dr. Zelaya has recruited over 5000 Latinos over the past 10 months. This includes new voter registrations, name, address and/or party affiliation changes. In addition, Dr. Zelaya has recruited over 750 Spanish speaking Election Judges to facilitate Latinos casting their vote on Election Day. During the 2002 Governatorial Elections, only 50 existed.

The son of undocumented Salvadorian immigrants, he is living proof of what hard work a community dedication can accomplish. Empowering Latinos at neighborhood barber shops, bodegas, libraries, community centers, churches and /or clinics is not unusual. He has literally turned over every leaf and stone to ensure that every single registered and non-registered Latino knows their Voting Rights are able to exercise their voice through their vote November.

Prior to joining the Board of Elections, Dr. Zelaya was the Community Director of the Montgomery County Public Libraries. As director, he informed Latinos of the valuable resources public libraries had to offer by integrating over 7500 new library

users into the public library in Montgomery County. Through his capacities at the Montgomery County Government, Dr. Zelaya has also empowered Latinos across Latin America. His professional and personal resume is a true reflection of his commitment to his community. He has developed, and implemented HIV/AIDS, Cholera Toxin and Poverty prevention programs on behalf of recognized National and International organizations. His travels have taken him into the depths of the Amazon and the inner slums of Central and South America. His acquired insights to community mobilization have been reinforced by the harshness of life, poverty and death. Recognizing Dr. Zelaya's efforts will be an acknowledgement to Latinos who have lost loved ones to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, teen mothers who have escaped the grips of poverty, and/or Latinos voting for the first time in Maryland. His compassion and resiliency has touched, educated and empowered Latinos across Latin America, Maryland and Montgomery County.