



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs
Commission

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Mr. John W. Miller
President of Central Connecticut
State University
1615 Stanley Street
New Britain, CT 06050-4010

Dear President Miller,

I am writing to express our outrage regarding the publishing and dissemination of an extremely offensive comic strip that appeared in the last number of The Recorder and was distributed on your campus. I am sure that by now, we are not alone in expressing our disappointment and dissatisfaction with this insensitive act. Mr. Mark Rowan, the Editor of your "so-called" newspaper, has recently expressed that in his opinion, this comic strip was not offensive. He furthermore stated that some of the Latina students on campus found no objection with this publication.

The depiction of someone urinating on any other human being is not only an insensitive act against humanity, but it lacks all the elements that will make it funny, even in the context of a comic strip. To add to the injury, this is making reference to a 14-year-old Latina girl who is tied up in a closet. The mere suggestion of violence against a minor or a female, regardless of nationality or ethnic background, is one of the worst statements anyone can make and it should be considered in the realm of a hate crime. The quote and disclaimer from the newspaper saying that "The Recorder does not support the kidnapping of (and subsequent urinating on) children of any age or ethnicity" is further evidence that Mr. Rowan and anyone who served in an editorial capacity, were conscious and discussed in detail the elements that constitute an aberration and a message of hate and extreme insensitivity to all the members of your community.

Mr. Rowan had defended himself and the institution that he represents, concluding that the paper had a right to print offensive material, but "should strive to be sensitive to minority groups who has different perspectives than the newspapers". In our opinion, this is a contradiction. On one hand, how can anyone say that they are concerned or sensitive to the opinion of minority groups, while glorifying the offensive materials that they believe they have a right to print and is directed precisely towards the same constituency. I do not want to lose perspective from what can be interpreted as a legitimate claim to the protections that are

covered under the First Amendment of the Constitution. Mr. Rowan has right to freedom of expression, but those protections are not unlimited. In our legal ordainment, the U. S. Supreme Court has ruled on many occasions in favor of the Freedom of Expression, but always within the parameters of a civilized society. We cannot stand idle in the face of insensitive acts like this one that instead of claiming space for communicating a point of view, are rather invitations to violence and to participate in the degradation of females in our society.

President Miller, I am acutely aware that you have dealt in the past with this newspaper and some previous insensitive and offensive remarks dealing with the printing of a controversial satire in which student editor, John Petrowski likened rape to a “magical experience” that has been a benefit to society for centuries. We are also aware that you convened a Special Task Force to deal with that particular situation. We are not aware of any recommendations or actions stemming from such a task force. What we do know is that the continuous publishing and dissemination of this mediocre type of communication is contributing to a negative image of the campus that you preside. We further understand that the University does not own this publication and that you might be limited into what kind of sanctions you can take against the students that engage in this virulent and obnoxious behavior. However, we understand that you have the authority to take immediate actions concerning the status of this entity as it pertains to an organization that says it is serving your community and that receive material support from the students and the community. It is incomprehensible that at a place of higher learning, where we are supposed to learn and develop the highest moral and ethical values our civilization has created, we can accept this type of orchestrated and systematic discrimination shared under a system of law.

For those that claim the right to a protection under positive law, we express our right to the protection of a higher and inalienable right under natural law to our dignity and humanity. I expect that you will take the time to respond to this message and that you find the time to convene a meeting of representatives of Connecticut’s Latino Community to address this issue immediately. Our community demands no less and expects from you a prompt response. We hope that you can send a clear message that tolerance and the development of a civil and just society are still the

preeminent values embodied by the University. Failure to attend to this outrage will send the wrong message to our society that New Britain's Central Connecticut State University is not the place where we can live by those values.

Sincerely,

Fernando Betancourt
Executive Director
LPRAC

FB:cjc

cc: David Carter, Chancellor
M. Jodi Rell, Governor
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