

UPF Pennsylvania, USA: US Panelists Discuss Media's Portrayal of Immigration

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IMMIGRATION IN AMERICA: WELCOMED OR UNWANTED

Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024: 2 PM EDT

Joy Garratt
New Mexico State Representative,
District 29, Bernalillo

Dr. Marivir Montebon
President of Awesome Media Ltd., OSM Online

Ray Lipowcan
Moderator, UPF Executive Director,
Western

United States, IMAP – Immigrant communities in the United States often face misunderstanding, isolation and even persecution as they try to establish their families in a new land. UPF-USA and the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) sponsored a webinar on October 22, 2024 on the theme, "Immigration in America: Welcomed or Unwanted." **Mr. Ray Lipowcan** served as moderator, as speakers discussed how these newcomers can be perceived as either a threat or a welcome addition to America, based on the media's portrayal of immigration.

The two panelists had firsthand experience dealing with this issue. The first was **Dr. Marivir Montebon**, a New York-based journalist, whose doctoral thesis at the HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership was titled "Bridging the Political Divide of US Immigration Reporting Through Transformative Journalism." She gave an overview of the history of immigration in the United States, including her own family story. She suggested that journalists should dig deeper and provide unbiased context to help people understand the complexities of immigration. She said that she will continue to report on immigration issues through her website, online magazine and podcasts.

The second panelist was New Mexico State Representative **Mrs. Joy Garratt**, who shared personal experiences from her 28-year teaching career and from her position as a state legislator for the past five years. Mrs. Garratt discussed the media's role in shaping public perceptions of immigration, underscoring the need for journalists to grasp the complicated context surrounding the issue, including the exploitation of immigrants by cartels and the challenges facing those seeking a better life. She stressed the importance of addressing these issues through law enforcement and legislative efforts, as well as the need for accurate media reporting.

Both speakers emphasized the need for balanced reporting, rather than just focusing on one side of the story. They both also emphasized positive aspects of immigration, one being the economic contributions of immigrants. Also, they both emphasized the human side of immigration, which is often overlooked by media and policy makers.

UPF International President **Dr. Michael Jenkins** joined the discussion by mentioning that more bipartisan legislative efforts could be made to help ease the tensions surrounding the immigration issue.

A consensus reached by the participants was that more balanced media reporting is needed to give Americans an accurate perspective on immigration in their country.