

## Laredo mayor blasts talk show host Beck

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LAREDO, November 12 - Mayor Raul Salinas will send a heated letter to *CNN* host Glenn Beck tomorrow, berating him for portraying Laredo as a violence-infested war zone.

"I am ashamed of Mr. Beck because he is nothing but a sensational journalist and the way he misrepresented the city of Laredo is not acceptable," said Salinas. "It wasn't acceptable yesterday, it is not acceptable today and it will not be acceptable tomorrow. He will be hearing from the people of Laredo and I guarantee it."

Salinas announced his discontent with Beck on Monday morning at the veterans health care program announcement. The audience responded with a thunderous applause and cheers for the mayor's resolve.

"We have honorable men and women who have stood up for this great country of ours and for someone to go on national television and portray Laredo the way they did is not acceptable and I will not stand for it, I guarantee you that," said Salinas.

On Thursday night, Webb County Sheriff Rick Flores and Congressman Henry Cuellar, D-Laredo, appeared on Beck's political show to talk about Laredo's missing Americans. The topic shifted from Laredo's missing to border violence and security, and to what many say became an attack on Laredo and on its citizens.

Beck, who hails from Washington State, claims to care about the U.S.-Mexico border and is an armchair critic of border security programs. He is a big supporter of the proposed border wall between Mexico and the United States. His discussions on Mexican and Latin-American immigrants, immigration and border security are seen by many border leaders as belittling at best.

One Laredoan who is also standing up for Laredo is Cuellar, who came under direct attack from Beck and received little air time to reply to his comments. Throughout the show, Beck emphasized Laredo's high percentage of Mexican-American population, which Cuellar said was part of a subtle attack.

"My whole thing is why keep saying Laredo is 90 percent Hispanic? He was wrong, its actually 95 percent," said Cuellar. "But why emphasize that it's Mexican-Americans, and at the same time you're attacking Mexico, and at the same time you're attacking the corruption in Mexico. There were just so many subtle, indirect attacks on our border community."

Cuellar said national media coverage on U.S.-Mexico border issues is generally not fair to border communities.

"I really don't think they're being fair. When you look at people being killed in urban areas, they match the numbers over here. Go to New York, look at Chicago, look at Houston, look at New Orleans. To put it in such a sensational way for people that don't understand the border and just taint it, its a disservice."

Cuellar also said a congressman in Washington asked him about border violence, including whether or not he has to carry a gun to protect himself. He said that the national media have generally portrayed the border in a negative manner because of an anti-immigrant position certain people are taking.



Laredo Mayor Raul Salinas

“Its easy to create an evil. Its easy to create a monster. Its easy to create an enemy out there, but you have to make sure that its real,” said Cuellar. “Don't create an enemy out there of good, hard working people, and don't paint everybody with the same paintbrush. Unfortunately that's what some of the national media have been doing.”

*The Glenn Beck Show* called Cuellar's office requesting another participation. Mindy Casso, Cuellar's communication's director, responded to the request.

“Not in his lifetime.”

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