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America's Charters of Freedom in English and Spanish: Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, the Gettysburg Address. Second Editio

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To our knowledge, this is the first time that all four documents have been published together in a bilingual edition. It is not the first time, however, that they have been translated into Spanish but, except for a translation of the Constitution done in Seville, Spain, in the middle of the nineteenth century, all of the others, leave much to be desired in terms of their overall quality. Most are literal translations hastily done with no regard to the spirit and profound meaning of the originals, choosing hollow words and expressions that in no way convey what was meant to be a milestone of American history. They served to establish the greatest democratic republic the world has ever known, which to the amazement of all has endured uninterruptedly for over 200 years. However, we affirm and maintain that the ideals and principles they embodied, especially the Constitution, were forged and directed to a selected minority and not the society at large then in its infancy, a minority fully cognizant of the value and true meaning of liberty and freedom. It is but a miracle that given such circumstances it has survived this long, due, perhaps, to the homogenous nature of society, to a well- orchestrated educational system, and, yes, to economic prosperity. But, today's American society is rapidly becoming fragmented with powerful forces pulling not toward the center as in the past, but toward individual beliefs and pursuits based on a plethora of diverse ideologies that are tearing those ideals and principles apart. Today, we question their validity and cast a shadow on their effectiveness as the supreme laws of the land. And thus, there is the danger that one day those documents may become antiquated and break into little pieces plunging humanity into a dark and deep abyss. Granted, democracy is not perfect and the United States has had its share of ill-conceived policies and mistakes, but what's the alternative? History has shown that no nation, from time immemorial, has succeeded in the governing of men no matter how well intended or devised. In the first edition of this publication we referred to the United States as the "eternal land of dreams," committed to the pursuit of Happiness for all men as stated in its "Declaration of Independence." Let's hope that in these tumultuous times that flame will forever shine as man's last hope on earth. The book is, in part, directed to Hispanics here and abroad hoping that they embrace those ideals and principles in their long and arduous struggle for liberty and freedom as shared by their great patriots Simón Bolívar and José Martí, among others, for they too have an inherent right to the pursuit of Happiness and perhaps even more for their much suffering and sacrifices over many centuries. Their biggest mistake was, and still is, the fragmentation of a whole-as dreamed by Bolívar-into an amalgam of multiple nations with little or no consequence on the world stage. Had they remained united as one nation, as envisioned by some of their early leaders, they would be today one of the pillars of humanity and a force to be reckoned with. This is the second edition of a monumental first edition published on Independence Day, 1986, as a tribute to the United States by thousands of Hispanics from across the nation. A total of 3,500 numbered copies were printed and distributed free to organizations, schools, libraries and federal, state, and municipal offices nationwide with copies housed in the White House, U.S. Congress, National Archives, Library of Congress, National Constitution Center, Monticello, and many others. The book can be very useful as a complementary reading text in Spanish language courses, bilingual courses, English courses for Spanish-speakers, and of course in translation courses.

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