

## **Jennice Fuentes**

**Chief of Staff, Representative Luis Gutiérrez of Illinois**

### **Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

#### **Right Thing to Do**

Jennice Fuentes details what motivated her when working on immigration.

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It was not really what was easy. It really it was what was right. It was what was right by us as human beings. I mean, we would often work really long hours—we didn't get paid by hour here. And quite frankly salaries are low. So our staff—it's not like everybody was paid per hour and putting in overtime by staying in that workshop on a Saturday and a Sunday. But we did it with joy, because we knew the need for this community to be protected—rightfully so, because they qualified—and to be empowered. Because if you are afraid that you're going to get deported just because you don't have your papers—although you have a right to be a legal, permanent resident, because you came legally or because the process—now you find yourself with the opportunity—but it's either fear or it's that you were the victim of some scam that they took your papers, and now you, you don't know how to fix it. And that fear is going to keep you in a situation where you just are not participating fully in society, that's very wrong that you could not have the full American dream that you so deserve because that's why you came to this country. So, no, none of us from the caseworkers in the district office—which we had great, great staff—to, to Luis Gutiérrez, the Congressman himself, and all of us in between—none of us ever, ever, ever, ever waived. Ever thought that the fight we were fighting for immigrants was not the right call and the right thing to do.