

## Congressman Lowenthal's Remarks (as written)

Thank you, Clare, for serving as moderator, and to my fellow Representatives Norma Torres, Albio Sires, and Jim McGovern for supporting this important event.

Thank you, particularly, to our Group of Experts. Claudia it is good to see you and the other experts today. I also want to welcome Mr. Aguirre, who is representing the families of the victims.

Finally, thank you ladies and gentlemen in the audience, for joining us today. Last June, I and 80 other Members of Congress signed a letter to Secretary of State Kerry asking him to advocate with the Government of Mexico to thoroughly investigate the disappearance in September 2014 of 43 student teachers from Ayotzinapa.

Last October, I hosted the experts, who provided an interim report on progress of the investigation. For today's event, I wanted to include a representative of the victims' families.

I am a passionate advocate for human rights. This unexplained tragedy – where 43 young students simply disappeared – is outrageous and demands our scrutiny. Let's also remember that beyond the loss of life, countless other lives have been affected -- family members, friends, neighbors -- people who will forever mourn the loss.

I am glad that Mr. Aguirre is here today, and I welcome his thoughts on how the families have been affected.

Unfortunately, the disappearance of these students in September 2014 is just the tip of the iceberg, with tens of thousands of other Mexicans "disappeared" without explanation.

The vast majority of these cases remain unresolved. I applauded the Mexican Government's initial acceptance of assistance from the Group of Experts. However, I have several serious concerns.

I am deeply troubled by reports that the Experts may not have received full support for their implementation of their recommendations.

I am also disappointed that the Mexican Government has opposed the renewal of the Experts' mandate.

I want to personally thank the Experts for their final report. It is critical to understanding why after two years we still have no one being held accountable for the disappearance of these students

The only conclusion that one can draw from the report is that the Mexican justice system, beyond these 43 cases, needs a systematic overhaul.

It is beyond frustrating that the Mexican Government has not acknowledged the recommendations in this report that could lead to a more effective, successful, and equitable criminal justice system in Mexico

I now welcome other Members to make brief remarks.