On February 6th, the Colombian Student Association (COLSA) will be welcoming Senator of Minnesota, Patricia Torres Ray, to Norman. Not only highly active in forming United States policy on health, education and human services, environment, and economic development; Torres made history in November of 2006 by becoming the first Latin American woman elected to the Minnesota State Senate.

The Senator will be giving a lecture on "DREAM Act" in the Union Ballroom at 7 p.m. "DREAM Act" (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) is a piece of proposed federal legislation that would provide high school students who are illegal immigrants who wish to attend college or serve in the armed forces with financial loans and eligibility for legal status.

This lecture is open to all people and OU students.

Senator Patricia Torres

District 62- Senator Patricia Torres Ray (DFL)


Education: BA, University of Minnesota (Urban Studies). MPA, University of Minnesota (Humphrey Center).

Patricia Torres Ray made history on November 7, 2006 by becoming the first Latina to be elected to the Minnesota State Senate. She now represents Minneapolis Senate District 62 in the State Legislature, where she was elected by 81% of the vote! Prior to her election to the Senate, Torres Ray worked as a State Program Administrator for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. As a newly-elected member, she was selected to serve on the Senate’s reorganization team that decided the committees and membership in the Minnesota Senate for the 2007 Session. Torres Ray was appointed Vice Chair of the Health, Housing and Family Security Committee. She also serves on the E-12 Education Budget Division; the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Budget Division and the Education Policy committees.

Torres Ray has 18 years of experience in public service and community organizing. She has vast experience in building partnerships between agencies, non-profit organizations, tribal reservations and other organizations that serve children and families. In addition to her strong commitment to public service, she has served as a board member of the University of Minnesota Children, Youth and Family Consortium, the Minnesota Early Care and Education Finance Commission, the Minnesota Children’s Trust Fund, Cultural Beginnings, the Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, West Side Health Center, Kids Count, Children’s Defense Fund, National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, The Build Initiative, The Northway Community Trust.

Torres Ray was born in 1964 in Colombia. She comes from a family of eight siblings and a large extended family that maintains close ties. She lived with her family in Pasto until she met her husband, Jack, a student from the University of Minnesota, who had traveled to Colombia in a study abroad internship. They were married in 1987 and moved to Minnesota where Torres Ray learned English, worked various jobs, and completed my education. Torres Ray has two degrees from the University of Minnesota: a Bachelor’s Degree in Urban Studies and a Master’s Degree in Public Affairs from the Humphrey Institute.

The Rays have two wonderful boys, Tomás and Patrick, ages 13 and 10. During the last seven years, Torres Ray has been involved in her children’s education and volunteered at their schools in many different areas. She has tutored kindergartners, developed a bilingual book club of fifth graders and was active in the PTA at Emerson Spanish Immersion School.

The Rays own a home in the Longfellow neighborhood and have a great group of neighbors that welcome us back to the block each night. She enjoys gardening and remodeling their 1913 home. Torres Ray’s family loves camping, boating, fishing, and hiking. They enjoy walking around the lakes, but their favorite place is the Mississippi River.