

Former Puerto Rico Education Secretary Removed From Post-Maria Movie About the Puerto Rican Spirit

"Julia Keleher was arrested on July 10, 2019 and has no place in a film about the resilient spirit of the Puerto Rican people," says Director John Pritchard.

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA, USA, August 21, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Directors of the highly acclaimed 2018 documentary film, ¡OJALA!: Puerto Rico Rebuilds, have just reissued the movie after removing several minutes of Puerto Rico's former Secretary of Education, Julia Keleher. Keleher was arrested on July 10, 2019 and the Director, John Pritchard, along with Associate Directors, Efraín Blasini and Melissa Rosario, agreed that she has no place in a film about the resilient spirit of the Puerto Rican people. For a limited time you can watch the film for free in Spanish or English at ojalamovie.com.

After Keleher's arrest, both of the island's teachers' unions issued statements that they felt vindicated in their longstanding disagreements with and protests against Keleher and her policies. Keleher's reforms hurt students, cost jobs, and closed hundreds of schools. Keleher's arrest is one of the latest in a series of corruption-related scandals, resignations, and cabinet dismissals which has led to the Puerto Rican people successfully removing Ricardo Rosello as governor.

According to a Forbes magazine article on July 17, 2019, "Did Betsy DeVos's School Choice Program Enable Puerto Rico's Corruption Scandal?," Keleher's 32 counts of fraud, money laundering, etc. had much to do with Trump Education Secretary, Betsy Davos, setting up policies to reduce public school funding in favor of private and charter schools. Keleher "led wide-scale education reform efforts and referred to the island's education system as a 'laboratory' to test the DeVos model, as she pushed to adopt private school vouchers and charter schools while closing hundreds of public schools. While schools were struggling to recover from the hurricane, Kelleher worked to permanently close over 20% of them."

¡OJALA!: Puerto Rico Rebuilds celebrates the resilient spirit of the Puerto Rican people who have shown the world the strength of peaceful protest in the streets. Viva Puerto Rico!

ABOUT THE MOVIE

Here are some comments about the ¡OJALA! movie:☐

"I'm a Desert Storm Vet. I was in Puerto Rico during Maria and lived through hell for 6 months without electricity, but as a Vet with 25 years of Service, I adapted. If there's something that I learned during this period was that we as a People must be prepared and try our best to help our families and neighbors because we CANNOT depend on the Government. Great Documentary."

- Robert Maza, Desert Storm Veteran

"The cinematography was excellent. The extreme devastation from the hurricane was clearly palpable. Demonstration of our people's response to meeting immediate needs for survival – neighbor-to-neighbor, community-to-community – was a thing of beauty... thank you for your sincere concern and interest in bringing this story to light."

- Carmen Vivian Rivera, Coordinator at ¡Despierta Boricua! Recovering History Project

"Excellent, very well documented, I am a Puerto Rican living in the USA since 1976. I have missed the warmth and loving people of Puerto Rico. I really loved the pictures at the end and it showed how well educated we are. Viva Puerto Rico!"

- Ivette Babuca de Jesus, Tucson, AZ

"Great film John! Thanks for not making it a bleeding heart film (that we need the USA), but a film with puñeta (a punch)... we have hundreds of years of torture and slavery and our drums still summon our resolve to move forward into a new light."

- Angel Franco, NY Times Pulitzer Prize-winning Photographer

"John, this was brilliant. Thank you so much for sending me the link. I watched it twice! Such a huge project, and so beautifully done. My heart went out to everyone in the film. So ashamed of my government for not responding with intelligence and compassion. So impressed by the community support that emerged across the island. Congratulations on covering it all with such a forward-looking message of hope."

- Mary Potter, World Languages Teacher, Dana Hall School

¡OJALA!: Puerto Rico Rebuilds premiered in New York City at the 2018 International Puerto Rican Heritage Film Festival and on the island of Puerto Rico at the Rincón International Film Festival in April 2019. For a limited time you can watch the film for free in Spanish or English at ojalamovie.com.

¡OJALA!: Puerto Rico Rebuilds is produced by the non-profit film company, One Heart - One Spirit, at oneheartmovies.org.

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