



# Power of Partnerships

2024 Annual Report

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## MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends of Congreso,

As I reflect on the past year, I am grateful and inspired by your support – we are stronger together. Congreso’s mission to empower individuals and families to achieve economic self-sufficiency and well-being is made possible through purposeful partnerships that shape and sustain our work.

Whether through the support of funders, the collaboration of stakeholders, or the dedication of our employees, we are reminded of the impact that can be achieved when we collaborate with a shared vision. Each connection is built on trust, transparency, and a commitment to our comunidad. It allows us to foster a relationship that enables us to expand our reach, deepen our impact and continue breaking down barriers to opportunity.

**In this year’s annual report, you will see the results of our collective efforts. Every milestone, achievement and story of transformation is a testament to the power of partnership.**

Mil Gracias for being a part of Congreso’s journey. Your belief in our mission and your willingness to work with us ignites our progress. Together, we are creating lasting change!

With gratitude and determination,



**Jannette Diaz**  
*Congreso President & CEO*

# ABOUT CONGRESO

## MISSION

**Congreso's mission is to enable individuals and families in predominantly Latino neighborhoods to achieve economic self-sufficiency and well-being.**

## WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1977, Congreso de Latinos Unidos is a leading provider of high-quality programs in Philadelphia. Its primary client model PCM™ which focuses on a client centered, data driven, and culturally appreciative approach to service delivery, is the foundation for Congreso's current "Mission 2 Impact." Through our Mission 2 Impact (M2I), we have renewed our focus on integrating services for children and their families using human-centered design and innovative methods to enhance our impact and further our mission outcomes.

## CORE SERVICES

**Economic Self-Sufficiency:** Education, Workforce Development  
**Well-Being:** Health, Housing, Parenting

**25+ programs offered agency widerelated to Education, Workforce Development, Health, Housing, and Parenting**

## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

- Congreso Awarded Top Workplace 2024 Honor for 6th Year Running
- Congreso Awarded 2024 Top Workplace USA Award
- Congreso Awarded 2024 Top Workplaces Culture Badges in:
  - Leadership, Purpose & Value, Innovation, and Work-Life Flexibility
- Congreso Awarded 2024 UnidosUS Northeast Affiliate of the Year
- Congreso President & CEO Jannette Diaz received a Leadership Award during PALC Conference
- Congreso Employee Princess Torres received the Paradigm Scholarship Award from the Philadelphia Greater Chamber of Commerce
- 5th Annual Congreso Celebra took place during Hispanic Heritage Month
  - Corporate Champion: Independence Blue Cross
  - Community Champion: The Lighthouse 1893
  - Employee Champions: Aida Rivera, Monica Martinez, Jesus Quinones, Kira Bellolio



## OUR COMMUNITY

- **76%** identified as Hispanic/Latino/x
- **69%** of clients reported an annual income of \$15,000 or below
- **68%** of clients reported living in Congreso's Target Zip Codes in North Philly
- **13,640** unduplicated clients in FY24

## Education

<b>26</b> Obtained a High School Degree	<b>90</b> Students Completed Internships
<b>29</b> Obtained a GED	<b>1050</b> Hours of Tutoring Received by Students at Julia de Burgos & Pan American Academy Charter School
<b>6</b> Obtained an Associate's Degree	

## Workforce

<b>269</b> Obtained Industry-Recognized Certification	<b>39,310</b> Total Training Hours throughout Programs
<b>203</b> Placed in a Job	<b>\$23</b> Average Wage per Hour

## Housing

<b>257</b> Avoided Homelessness	<b>103</b> Purchased a Home
<b>77</b> Prevented Foreclosures	<b>229</b> Received Rental Assistance

## Health

<b>18,702</b> Total Health Center Visits	<b>115</b> Achieved Good Adherence to HIV Treatment
<b>284</b> Accessed Pre-Natal Care	

“Every time a student passes their GED exam, we have them ring a bell and everyone cheers and claps,” said Natasha Del Valle, a Congreso GED Instructor.

Natasha divides her mornings teaching the English GED course at Congreso’s Training and Education Center and the local PA CareerLink center. In the afternoons, she also offers tutoring hours for her students.

To successfully complete the GED course, students must prove efficiency in Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. A practice test comes next, where they must score within the green category. Students then schedule the actual GED exam.

“I’ve had students complete this GED course in 3 weeks. Some take 10-12 weeks. But we are flexible with students and allow them up to 6 months to complete everything,” she said.

While the window from 3 weeks to 6 months seems more than flexible, Congreso staff know students often face external barriers which can make it difficult to finish.

“Some disappear and come back after a few months. I’ve seen lots of students drop off because they need to work or take care of family relatives,” shared Natasha.

However, walking through Congreso’s doors and studying in a welcoming atmosphere makes a difference.

Edgar Chicas, a recent GED graduate recalls his time in the classroom. “The experience was great,



Ms. Natasha basically held my hand through the whole thing and guided me to take the right steps and gave me nothing but her time of day to help me get closer to my goal.”

**“The students start to look forward to their education. They start to see a positive outcome where they really want to do something. They’ll ask me to help them make a resume, what I think about certain career choices, things like that,”** Natasha said.

One of the most important things Natasha tries to instill in her students is a “growth mindset.” She explains, “Sometimes we get students who are so overwhelmed. So, I tell them that if they fail, they can always try it again. Even though today is difficult, tomorrow will be better. It’s my way of teaching.”

Edgar also emphasizes the importance of the program and the support it provides. “I think this type of program and support are important because it gives hope to people who never thought about furthering or getting their education. I also think that with the support of Congreso and everybody who works there, you’re much more likely to pursue a career or further your education because they’re on top of you and keep you accountable,” he shared.



**A total of 80 Spanish speaking students and 100 English speaking students have enrolled for Fiscal Year 24-25.**



On September 23rd, 2024, Congreso graduate Gary DeJesus stood before a group of commercial driver’s license (CDL) trucking students to share his journey and offer advice on starting a trucking business. While the two-hour event was impactful, Gary’s road to success had been years in the making.

“I had gotten word of Congreso’s CDL-A trucking program in 2017. I came into the interview, and it was a match made in heaven,” he recalls.

“Back then, a CDL program could cost between \$7,000 - \$8,000. I couldn’t afford to take a 6-month program that I wasn’t getting paid for. I’d have to take off work,” Gary continued, “For Congreso to be able to provide a free CDL in the short amount of time that it took... it’s priceless. It changes your life.”

Congreso’s free CDL-A program equips individuals with the education and training needed to secure a Class-A license and enter the trucking industry. Through partnerships with organizations like All-State Career School, AAA School of Trucking, and Smith & Solomon, students receive support with instruction, hands-on training, and valuable employment opportunities.

After gaining experience on the road, Gary found-



**Since January 2024, 147 students have enrolled. 82% have earned their Class-A license, and 70% have secured jobs with starting salaries of \$52K-\$55K.**

ed his own trucking company in 2020, Brave Heart Transportation. Needing drivers, he turned to Congreso to help build his team with CDL graduates.

“I wanted to give back to Congreso for what they had given me—and offer new drivers a chance to get their foot in the door,” he said.

Alongside his business, Gary continued supporting Kim Cromer, Congreso’s Director of Workforce Initiatives, with speaking opportunities, student interviews, and acting as an advocate for the program.

Gary knows the CDL program has changed his life for the better and recognizes it can serve as a beacon of hope for many who seek a fresh start.

**“I think this program is really important. There’s a lot of people who are from very low-income neighborhoods, haven’t graduated high school, or have prior trauma and they don’t have a way out,”** Gary said.

“Congreso breathes life into those people and communities. Congreso gives them a second chance if they don’t have anywhere else to go,” Gary added.





For over two decades, Maria Ulloa has passionately advocated for domestic violence survivors through Congreso's Latina Domestic Violence program (LDVP), which offers free, confidential counseling and advocacy services to victims and survivors.

"In '96 I joined Congreso, and in '99 I transitioned to the Domestic Violence program because I had gone through that same trauma. So, I wanted to help people. I wanted to raise my voice that domestic violence wasn't acceptable," said Maria.

Presently, Congreso's DV program operates in collaboration with sister agencies across the city - Women Against Abuse, Women in Transition, and Lutheran Settlement House. All four organizations manage the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline together.

Now after 27 years of tremendous work, Maria retired in the summer of 2024. Her tireless dedication leaves "a legacy built on heart, resilience and unwavering commitment to safety and healing," shared Kira Bellolio, VP of Family and Parenting Services, during a Survivor Commemoration event in October.

During her time at Congreso, Maria even continued to advocate fearlessly through her battle with breast cancer. Her style of advocacy has been described by her clients as a source of strength and hope.

**"For our community... she was an angel. A hero."**

**Clients still come here and speak so beautifully about how she impacted their lives. She's a legend. She will always be a legend," said Ramona Peralta, Director of Family Wellness.**

Even though Maria's work at Congreso has concluded, she believes "there's still more work to do" to combat domestic violence and empower survivors.

In September 2023, Congreso's Domestic Violence program added a Workforce Specialist to the team that specializes in supporting clients with financial empowerment and employment opportunities.

"She also accompanies clients to welfare appointments, job interviews, and is consistently looking to go above and beyond," said Ramona.

"Even after retiring, my work against domestic violence hasn't ended. I work with my church and if I know someone is going through domestic violence, I know I can help them. I can connect them to resources," said Maria.



***In FY24, LDVP provided meaningful counseling and advocacy services to 1,443 adult victims of domestic violence and responded to over 2,500 calls on the Philadelphia DV Hotline.***

The 2024 Tax Season marked a significant moment for Congreso's Tax Site program. It returned a remarkable \$727,538 in total refunds to the community.

The program, which has been serving the community for over 20 years, helps qualified community members with free tax preparation services.

Congreso's Tax Site Manager, Miriam Figueroa, has seen the positive effect the tax site has on families firsthand. One of those families included Francisco.

"Francisco usually comes to us for his taxes but decided to use a paid preparer last year. They made errors on his return and all of a sudden, he was getting penalized by the IRS," recalled Miriam.

Not knowing what to do, Francisco returned to Congreso and got the issue settled.

"It brought a sense of relief. With the extra support, I was able to take my family on a trip, something we hadn't been able to do because of all the tax issues we'd been dealing with," shared Francisco.

Miriam knows people trust Congreso's reputation in the community, but its "the passion and commitment" from her volunteers that are key to the tax site's success and growth.

"About 50% of volunteers returned from the following year, so they had that knowledge of being at the tax site already." She continued, "The client flow was more seamless and smoother...we could get through people a lot quicker."

**Bernice, a Tax Site volunteer, remembers her experience. "Seeing the relief and happiness on clients' faces when they received help was incredibly rewarding. It was also eye-opening to see how Congreso immediately connected clients with other valuable resources and programs, highlighting the organization's deep commitment to the community."**

In addition to her volunteers, Miriam was also able to secure a partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and their Taxpayer Advocate services. Through this collaboration, IRS representatives visited Congreso in the Fall of 2024 to offer bilingual support for clients who may have unresolved issues with the IRS or tax returns.

"I hope this is the first of many workshops for the future," she stated.

While the Tax site continues to meet the needs of Congreso's clients, Miriam already has her eyes set on the next milestones.

"The two major goals for me are to double the volunteer numbers from 7 people last year and also hit the \$1,000,000 dollar mark in refunds!"



***In 2024, Congreso served 499 unduplicated clients and completed tax 535 returns.***



# AMPLIFYING EASTERN NORTH PHILLY'S VOICE

**OUR WORK SINCE JULY 2024**

**12**  
Empowering Events Hosted with 250+ Participants

**43**  
EVEV Social Media Posts with 35,000+ impressions including 11 Instagram Videos

**455**  
Individuals Engaged by Ambassadors

**1,000**  
Vote Plans Distributed

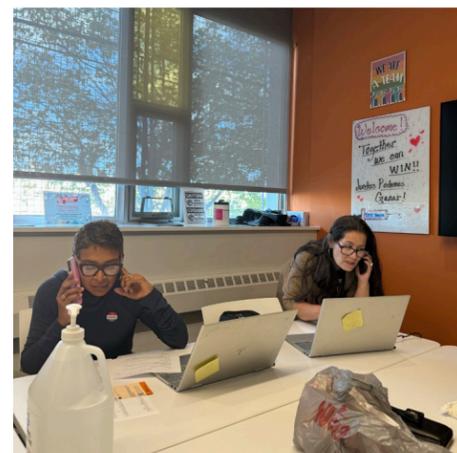
**1,162**  
Bilingual Phone Calls Made

In 2024, Congreso was once again awarded funding by Lenfest to participate in their Every Voice Every Vote (EVEV) Initiative, a citywide coalition catalyzing collaboration and building stronger connections among media outlets, community organizations, residents, and elected officials to encourage civic engagement, raise issues, and track progress over time.

As part of this coalition during this critical 2024 election season, Congreso committed to increase awareness and knowledge, encourage and foster civic and community engagement, and amplify voices in North Philadelphia and the Latino community through:

- **Empowering Events:** educational workshops, civic celebrations
- **Community Outreach:** tabling, phone banking, materials, etc.
- **Social Media:** creative content, collaboration with creators

All of this was accomplished using a bilingual, bicultural approach and with the support of two community ambassadors and two content creators.



Partnership and collaboration were key to Congreso's efforts this Fall. We were excited to work with others to address our goals including:

- Contact Creators & Community Ambassadors to support with awareness and outreach.
- Health Transportation Inc to provide rides to the polls on Election Day.
- The Ceiba Latino Equitable Development Collective and the National Puerto Rican Agenda to bring attention and information to the Latino community through advocacy and events.
- Congreso employees and volunteers participated in educational workshops and were equipped with key information to have nonpartisan conversations with community members and clients.



*"Phone banking to push the vote out in our community was more than just calls. It was about connecting with people, listening to their concerns, and reminding them of the power they hold in shaping our future. Each conversation felt like a step towards collective change."*

- Brendinelle Lopez, Manager of Housing Counseling



*"I talked with a few people that were so busy they hadn't had the time to figure out their voting plan. I was able to give information about mail-in ballots over the phone while one person was driving to her second job. I texted her the link to request a mail-in ballot and she was glad that it was an option this year, since she had to work all day on election day and couldn't vote in person."*

- Katie Breiner, Director of Family & Housing Services Division



# OUR LEADERSHIP

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

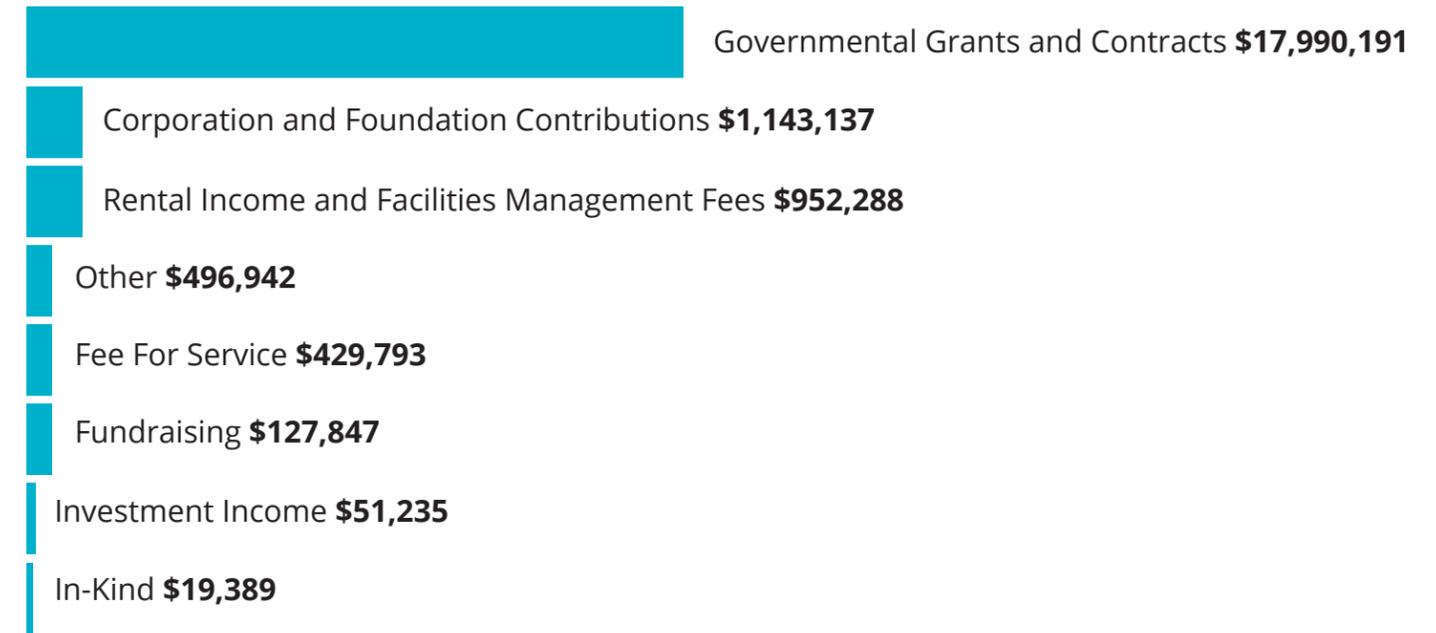
## Executive Cabinet

Jannette Diaz President & CEO	Jamie Hughes VP, Programmatic Development	Hildaliz Escalante VP, Housing and Financial Stability Services
Brendan Conlin Chief Program Officer	Denise Bernheim VP, Fiscal Operations	Kira Bellolio VP, Family and Parenting Services
Mary Lynn Alvarino Chief Financial Officer	Juan DeAngulo VP, Strategy and Administration	Lorett Matus VP, Healthcare Services
Julia Rivera Chief External Affairs Officer	Erin Mullin VP, People & Culture	
Daisy Rosa Senior VP, Program Operations	Rafael Arismendi VP, Education and Workforce Services	

## Board of Directors

Miguel F. Alban, <b>Board Chair</b> Senior VP, Philadelphia Market Banking Executive National Director of Multicultural Banking - Middle Market and Community Banking Division Customers Bank	Bridgett M. Battles, Board Member Executive Presence Strategist and Brand Stylist The Bridgett Battles Experience
Julio A. Correa, <b>Board Vice Chair</b> Product Manager Chemicals Continental Industries Group Inc.	Richard J. DePiano, Jr., Esquire, Board Member Chief Executive Officer ESCALON MEDICAL CORP
Robert Ahrens, <b>Board Treasurer</b> Group Manager – Middle Market M&T Bank	Mustafa Rashed, Board Member President & CEO Bellevue Strategies
Maribel Hernández MD, FACC, <b>Board Secretary</b> Cardiology and Arrhythmias, Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology Main Line HealthCare, Lankenau Heart Pavilion	Lissette Agosto-Cintron, Board Member School Principal School District of Philadelphia
Jose Aguirre, Board Member Sr. Manager, Government & External Affairs PECO	Oscar Budejen, Board Member Vice President Strategy, Growth, Customer Experience Fidelum Partners
Fernando J. Torres, Board Member Vice President Operations Avionic Instruments	Jessica DeJesus, Board Member Director of Research Support Center University of Pennsylvania
	Carlos Giraldo, Board Member Giraldo Real Estate Group

## Revenue



**Total Revenue \$21,210,822**

\* Our 2024 financials reflect expenses exceeding revenue due to large grants received in 2021 and 2023 intended to be spent over five and three years. As we spend these funds over the duration of the grants, expenses will likely exceed revenue.

## Expenses



**Total Expenses \$22,993,075**



# GRACIAS SUPPORTERS

We know that our success depends on the support of our extended Congreso Familia. We'd like to acknowledge those that have financially contributed to our mission through general operating donations or programmatic funding over the past year.

**Please note that the list below reflects supporters who have made a general contribution of \$100 or more to the agency or funded programs operating between December 1st, 2023 and October 31st, 2024.**

If you made a contribution after that date, you will be acknowledged in next year's annual report. Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the list below.

## 100+

Elizabeth Acosta  
Robert Ahrens  
Mary Alban  
Rafael Arismendi  
Lisa Auerbach  
Loraine Ballard-Morrill  
Jaime Batista  
Bridgett Battles  
Denise Bernheim  
Joy Best  
Marcus Bloodworth  
Patricia Bluemenauer  
Ricardo Carrion  
Jessica Cherian  
Rick Colon  
Jessica DeJesus  
Carmen Diaz  
Juliette Dresdner  
Karl Dresdner  
Hildaliz Escalante-Nimchuk  
Joanne Esquilin  
Cynthia Figueroa  
Donald Generals  
Greg Grimm  
Andreina Hein  
Jamie Hughes  
Kiea Hutty  
Toussaint Jensen  
Clyde Johnson  
Ernest Jones  
Keisha Jordan  
Jorge Kuri  
Jill Lavine  
Sayuri Lio  
Andalisa Lopez  
Waleska Maldonado  
Tony Maras  
Daryl Martino  
Lorett Matus  
Raymond McGarry

Argentina McKamey  
Hamirah Mobley  
Gladys Molina  
Erin Mullin  
Alixandra Obenski  
Toyin Omodara  
Luis Otero  
Joanna Otero-Cruz  
Adriana Perez  
Jovanny Ramos  
Tori Ridgeway  
Aida Rivera  
Julia Rivera  
Rebecca R. Rivera  
Aida Rosado  
Anthony Rosado  
Rebecca Selvin  
Elena Shields  
Fabian Soto  
Flood Taryn  
Yesenia Vicenty  
Mark Wallace

## 500+

Alicia Sbdull-Scott  
Alvaro Trujillo  
Lisette Agosto Cintron  
Carmen Alvarez  
Erica Avery  
Katie Breiner  
Oscar Budejen  
Brendan Conlin  
Julio Correa  
Judith Emmons Ferguson  
Maribel Hernandez  
Rodrigo Pimentel Ysla  
Daniel Reyes  
Hector Serrano  
Christopher Smith  
Fernando Torres  
Evan Urbania

## 1,000+

Daisy Rosa  
Jose Aguirre  
Jannette Diaz  
Valentino DiGiorgio  
Cynthia Figueroa  
Doug Kawka  
Raymond McGarry  
Richard Ost  
Roberta Trombetta

## 2,500+

Mary Lynn Alvarino  
Evan Ehlers  
Brian Jenkins  
David Velazquez  
Stephen Cohen

## Corporations & Foundations

AAA School of Trucking, Inc  
American Training Center  
AmericasourceBergen  
Aramark  
AARP  
Buenos Ayres Flooring  
Charities Aid Foundation of America  
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Comcast  
Comunidad Sana  
Customers Bank  
Devine Brothers  
DoorDash  
Exude Benefits Group, Inc.  
Fidelity Charitable  
FOP Senior Citizen Inc  
Haggerty, Goldberg, Schleifer & Kupersmith, P.C.

Health Partners  
Highmark Wholecare  
Independence Blue Cross  
Independence Foundation  
Janney  
Kendra Scott  
Le Vine Foundation  
Lincoln Financial  
McMasters Carr Supply Company  
Mutual of America  
M&T Bank  
PA AAP  
PECO  
Phillies  
Rumba 106.1 Philadelphia  
Santander  
Smith & Solomon Driver Training  
Somerset Pharmacy  
Sovereign Insurance Group  
S&T Bank  
TD Bank  
The Clayman Foundation  
The Haverford Trust Company  
The Philadelphia Foundation  
US Medical Staffing  
Verizon  
Visit Philly  
Wells Fargo  
William Penn Foundation  
Your Part-Time Controller



# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

At the heart of our mission is Congreso Cares, a program designed to connect passionate individuals with opportunities to make meaningful connections, build capacity, and making a positive impact in our community. This program brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds to work collaboratively on various initiatives that address the local needs.

**Through Congreso Cares, we offer a variety of ways for people to get involved:**

- **Corporate Volunteer Days**
- **Individual Volunteer Opportunities**
- **Donating your skills (photography, graphic design, knowledge on topics, etc.)**
- **Event Support**
- **Seasonal Initiatives**
- **Fundraising Team Support (data entry, acknowledgements, etc.)**

Whether it's organizing events, corporate involvement, or lending professional skills, Congreso Cares volunteers embody the spirit of service and community. Together, we're building a brighter future.

*For more information, please contact:*  
**Erica Avery**  
**Fundraising & Special Events Manager**  
[Averye@congreso.net](mailto:Averye@congreso.net)





# STAY CONNECTED

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*WEB [Congreso.net](http://Congreso.net)*

