

## **Don't Harp on Brown Berets (Letter to Santa Cruz Sentinel, 2006)**

Your Story on Maria Shriver's abbreviated Watsonville visit at first left me thinking, "How rude! Surely the governor's wife should be able to visit any community in the state in her effort to promote improved nutrition for poor people without being made to feel unwelcome." That was presumably the purpose of your story.

With a moment's thought, however, it came to me that the first lady's real purpose was to promote the re-election this fall of her husband- a man who has gone out of his way to deny driver's licenses and health insurance to low-wage Mexican immigrant workers, to support the racist Minutemen and the militarization of our southern border, to reduce funding for after-school and bilingual education programs and to increase junior college tuition.

Little, if anything, the governor and his wife have done in office would commend them to a warm reception by the young community activists of Watsonville- folks who work hard year in and year out to keep their fellow students alive and out of jail, to instill them with hope and to help them find their way to forging productive lives for themselves in a society that has been less than entirely hospitable to them and to their hard-working families.