

2026 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

Spotlight on CONNECTICUT

IMMIGRATION

Federal Immigration Operations

Indiscriminate mass apprehension operations conducted by the federal government have led to widespread community disruption, severe economic damage, and numerous deaths, including of U.S. citizens.

- *For instance: Since January 2025, more than 70 percent of those arrested by federal immigration enforcement authorities in Connecticut have held no prior criminal conviction, demonstrating just how indiscriminate a dragnet federal agents are casting.*
- **Hispanic Federation urges Congress to impose meaningful guardrails on federal immigration enforcement operations, including standard protocols for clearly visible identification of federal agents, ending roving patrols outside of their jurisdiction, restoring pre-arrest approval and judicial warrant requirements, and accountability measures for violations of protocol, including disciplinary actions and review panels.**

Due Process

The Administration's enforcement efforts have encroached heavily on constitutional rights, perhaps none more so than the right to due process under the law. More than 400 federal judges have ruled roughly 4,500 recent instances of immigrant detention illegal, an unsurprising outcome in the face of revelations like DHS guidance instructing agents to circumvent the need for signed judicial warrants for home entry.

- *For instance: After Supreme Court Judge Brett Kavanaugh published a concurring opinion giving ICE agents the authority to stop and question anyone they suspect of being undocumented based on their appearance or language, Connecticut saw a rise in street arrests of immigrants by federal authorities. Many advocates and lawyers report that federal agents are racially profiling and arresting Black and Brown Connecticut residents, even leading to the arrest and detention of a high school boy.*
- **Hispanic Federation demands Congress take steps to restore basic constitutional rights to due process for those entailed within federal enforcement operations, including timely legal representation, fair hearings, vetted review processes to regularly assess detention legality and necessity, and adequate funding to address the continuous backlog at USCIS.**

Detention Overhaul

A rapid expansion of detention infrastructure has led to widespread reports of harm amid unsafe conditions. The last year has seen new records broken in fatalities among those held in immigration detention, all while the number of those held without criminal convictions has risen 25-fold. As the ranks of those detained expands rapidly, communities, news outlets, and lawmakers alike have reported horrifying conditions, including woefully inadequate access to medical treatment and rampant sexual abuse.

- *Amid these heinous conditions, growing numbers of Connecticut residents have been detained in neighboring and then distant states. Within weeks of inauguration, reports grew of Connecticut residents detained in Maine – outside the reach of local law and oversight, while an increasingly opaque network of detention transfers further weakens the power of state-level protections.*
- **Hispanic Federation exhorts Congress implement measures reforming the conditions and processes of immigrant detention like suspending the practice of family separation, enforcing standards of access to hygiene and health care, regular health and wellness inspections, and creating enforceable mechanisms by which detainees may report abuses.**

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Since 1990, Hispanic Federation has worked relentlessly to protect and advance immigrant rights. Our early efforts focused on local advocacy and collaborations with member agencies to develop citizenship campaigns. Today, Hispanic Federation has expanded its focus to become a national provider of immigrant integration and other direct services as well as a national advocate for progressive immigration reforms. Last year alone, we helped more than 60,000 immigrant families everything from applications for citizenship and direct relief to refugees and asylees, to educational support for immigrant children and families.

HEALTH CARE

Health Care Access

Recent legislative and executive actions are poised to strip health care coverage from upwards of 11 million Americans, which will prove catastrophic not only to vulnerable communities but also underlying health care infrastructure that supports all Americans from home to school to the workplace.

- *For instance, the elimination of ACA marketplace plan subsidies has led to a roughly 110 percent increase in out-of-pocket premium payments for the average Latino family in Connecticut, while Medicaid funds are slated to decline by \$10bn in Connecticut over the next decade.*
- **Hispanic Federation demands Congress reverse looming and actualized funding cuts to key health care access programs like Medicaid and Affordable Care Act marketplace plan subsidies to protect millions of Americans from losing health care coverage through no fault of their own.**

Vaccines

Repeated real-world trials and biological theory render it indisputable that vaccines work. Mass immunization campaigns reduce incidence of illness and hospitalization, supporting healthy, productive living for all, including those living with immunocompromising conditions.

- *While Connecticut's immunization rates have largely continued to hold steady, recent years have shown worrying signs. The seasonal vaccination rate for influenza has fallen by 6 percent, while that for covid-19 has declined more than 25 percent. Concerningly, vaccine hesitancy may be creeping up in households and particularly among school-going populations. In turn, our communities are at dangerous risk of endemic spread and breakthrough infections.*
- **Hispanic Federation thereby urges Congress to redouble its commitment to vaccination as an essential pillar of public health through policies including public information and outreach campaigns, and proper funding for vaccines, immunizations, and research support.**

Health Care Provider Resources

Our communities rely on access to well-funded health care facilities and well-trained medical professionals. Reductions in federal funding going to health care facilities, particularly rural health care facilities, and proposed caps to federal financial aid for graduate students pursuing degrees like nursing are likely to lead to diminished availability of health resources.

- *For instance, two of our state's four rural hospitals are at immediate risk of closure in the coming years. Simultaneously, cuts to the availability of federal financial student aid could undermine our state's hard work at ensuring an adequate buffer in the availability of health care professionals like nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.*
- **Hispanic Federation exhorts Congress to appropriate wider, targeted funding to support the staffing and maintenance of health care facilities for underserved and rural communities and to reduce cost barriers for all students pursuing degrees in health care.**

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Hispanic Federation offers several preventative health and wellness resources and programs under its Ser Saludable initiative that focuses on maintaining healthy lifestyles in the Latino communities by addressing disparities, increasing physical activities, providing access to vaccines, managing chronic diseases to increase overall quality of life, and more. Through these programs, Hispanic Federation has aided more than 100,000 families last year alone.

AI AND TECH

Digital Infrastructure Investments that Expand Access and Opportunity

Only two in three Hispanic adults have home broadband and a computer at home, leaving millions disconnected. The bipartisan Digital Equity Act was poised to close longstanding gaps in internet access and digital skills, yet the administration has moved to dismantle it before its promise could be realized.

- *For instance, across Connecticut, over \$25 million dollars in Digital Equity Act funding have been cancelled, affecting more than 2.8 million people statewide. Likewise, more than 175,000 households across the state were dependent upon Affordable Connective Program funding for broadband access, which has now been jeopardized.*
- **Hispanic Federation urges Congress to expand broadband programs and digital infrastructure investments through the Digital Equity Act, the BEAD program, Universal Service Fund and to create a replacement for the Affordable Connectivity Program. These programs empower everyone in this country with the tools and connectivity required to access jobs, health care, education, and essential government services.**

Federal AI Governance that Protects the Rights, Safety, and Opportunities of Hispanic Communities and All Americans

AI systems are already making consequential decisions impacting Latino communities. Our communities need AI guardrails that protect civil rights, secure data privacy, and ensure systems are transparent, accountable, and independently audited. The unregulated development and widespread deployment of artificial intelligence have left communities vulnerable to the impacts of algorithmic discrimination, privacy violations, and serious safety concerns.

- *For instance, while Connecticut has been proactive in attempting to leverage the opportunities accorded by gains in Artificial intelligence while protecting small businesses and civil rights, several of those laws are threatened by moves toward federal preemption of state-level AI regulations. Four such laws in Connecticut are threatened by the federal push to remove these safeguards.*
- **Hispanic Federation calls on Congress to enact comprehensive federal AI governance legislation that mandates evaluations for accuracy and disparate impact for AI tools used in federal enforcement and benefits decisions – including implicit biases, privacy protections that limit procurement and deployment of personal data, and ensures affected communities have meaningful recourse when algorithmic systems cause harm.**

AI Literacy and Workforce Development

As AI reshapes industries and the skills employers demand, Latino workers risk being left behind without targeted investments in the education and training programs that build digital fluency and career readiness.

- *47 percent of Hispanic and Latino residents fall below Connecticut's Digital Literacy Benchmark compared to 36% of the overall population. The barriers are compounded for Latina women, who earn just 39 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men – the widest wage gap in the 25 states with the largest number of Latina working women.*

- Hispanic Federation urges Congress to invest in AI literacy and workforce development programs that equip Hispanic communities and all Americans with the capacity to fully engage in a rapidly changing digital economy, including education and workforce funding for traditional and nontraditional students, as well as workers in at-risk industries, partnerships with Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and initiatives that expand Latino representation beyond end users into the AI field itself.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Hispanic Federation's Impact: Since 2020, HF has trained 1,532 Connecticut residents in digital workforce skills — including 442 in AI literacy since 2024 — helping 246 secure employment, and has connected CBOs with state broadband offices to advance digital equity. This year, Hispanic Federation expanded its tech and AI training to include workshops on AI literacy training directed at small business owners in Connecticut.

NON-PROFIT PROTECTIONS

Nonprofit community-based organizations play essential roles in the communities they serve, filling vital service niches in their local areas by addressing gaps in services from governmental and for-profit providers. Over the past few years, the nonprofit sector has contributed approximately \$2 trillion to the GDP, providing essential services to address gaps in each of the areas discussed above.

- *For instance, the Federation's network of COVID-19 grantees, which had an estimated combined reach of more than 10 million people annually, was able to deliver emergency services, including food and housing assistance and health care, to some of the most overlooked and vulnerable communities during times of crisis, including individuals without health insurance, undocumented and mixed-status families, children and youth, pregnant women, domestic violence survivors, farmworkers, day laborers, and seniors.*
- *Likewise, Hispanic Federation's Lucha Contra El Hambre hunger relief effort focused on boosting food support to families throughout New York, Florida, and Illinois. Since its inception in 2011, the program has provided more than 1,250,000 fresh, healthy and culturally-responsive meals to Latinos in New York alone through our network of 71 non-profit member organizations across the city. In Puerto Rico, HF piloted a new preparedness program in 20 municipalities to stock 23 community kitchens with a three-day emergency supply of nonperishable food. These community-managed kitchens that provide hot meals after disasters committed to store the food through the end of hurricane season, only to be used in case of emergency.*
- **Hispanic Federation implores Congress and executive officials alike to protect and support vital community-driven, nonprofit funding and 501c3 status.**

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: To further strengthen community-based organizations, Hispanic Federation launched a Financial Education Initiative for organizations in Connecticut. This funding was implemented directly and in conjunction with four Hartford-based nonprofit partners serving low- to moderate-income families, immigrants, and youth. Each organization has a proven track record of providing culturally responsive financial coaching to a diverse range of clients. Through this program, HF built replicable, bilingual financial education models and advanced long-term economic mobility and institutional capacity.



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