

## 2026 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

# Spotlight on **FLORIDA**

## 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, roughly 25 percent of those arrested by federal immigration enforcement authorities in Florida have had no criminal history. The aggressive crackdown has led to the loss of nearly 7,000 enrolled students from Orange County Public Schools, the 8th largest school district in the country, in just the past school year alone. Approximately 2,500 of those students were immigrant students who did not return. As a result of this decline, the school board approved the closure of 7 public schools.*
- **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: One woman, a Mam interpreter in Florida, spent nearly 30 years helping families, survivors of violence, and community members access support and justice, and was a participant in Hispanic Federation grant programs to help women victims of violence. Despite her years of service and having four U.S. citizen children, she was detained after her family was profiled during a traffic stop.*
- **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.

- *For instance: Amid these heinous conditions, Florida alone has seen deaths in ICE detention rise 800 percent since last January, while spending millions of taxpayer dollars every day to fuel hazardous and legally questionable mass detention policies.*
- **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:** Hispanic Federation Florida works alongside immigrant rights organizations serving both urban and rural communities to expand access to legal services, support and education for immigrant families. Through legal clinics for DACA renewals, employment authorizations scholarships, asylum orientations, and community legal education, HF has supported 2,442 community members across Florida, with strong program presence in Orange, Seminole, Hillsborough, Osceola, and Palm Beach counties, and continued outreach in Miami-Dade, Lake, and Pinellas counties, helping strengthen legal stability, safety, and well-being of immigrant communities.

## 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 nearly 150 percent increase in out-of-pocket premium payments for the average Latino family in Florida, while Medicaid funds are slated to decline by \$16bn in Florida 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.

- *Florida's vaccination rates have gradually fallen over the past few years, with a mere 88.8 percent of kindergarteners vaccinated for mumps, measles, and rubella, well below the 95 percent herd immunity threshold. 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, more than thirty-six percent of rural hospitals across Florida are at risk of closure in the coming years. Simultaneously, the state faces a considerable shortfall of more than 25,000 nurses over the next four years alone, which will only be worsened in direct consequence of funding cut in H.R. 1.*
- **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 advances health equity through culturally-responsive initiatives providing mental health education, chronic disease prevention, and wellness workshops, like Esperando Tu Llegado, which supports expecting mothers and families with children under five through

education, resources, and community connection. Through two events, including a teen-focused edition in partnership with local schools, **more than 125 mothers and caregivers were impacted** through workshops and wraparound services, including referrals to health care and community-based support. Through these initiatives, HF has provided services, education, and community wellness support to more than 27,000 community members across Florida while promoting long-term healthy lifestyles and increasing access to trusted health information.

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## **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 Florida, over \$80 million dollars in Digital Equity Act funding have been cancelled, affecting more than 18,000,000 people statewide. Likewise, over 1.7 million 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 Florida 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. Three such laws in Florida 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.

- *Florida's Latino community is a powerful economic engine: with nearly 29 percent of the state's population, Florida holds the third-largest Latino population in the country. In a state where 90% of jobs require digital skills, Congress must make a sustained commitment to AI literacy and workforce development programs that ensure every Floridian can participate in and benefit from the digital economy.*

- 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 Leaders for Educational Advocacy and Diversity (LEAD) program supports opportunities in technology and workforce development. Over the past years, LEAD has scaled holistic professional development services to empower over 300 participants. By blending intensive career coaching with targeted training in AI, financial literacy, housing acquisition, and professional certifications, LEAD successfully equips individuals for strategic workforce positioning and high-quality job placement.

## 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:** Hispanic Federation has made civic participation a core strategy to empower Latino communities through nonpartisan voter education, voter registration, and community mobilization efforts across Florida. Through initiatives such as La Voz de Mi Gente and the Educate, Base Build, and Action (EBBA) model, HF has registered more than 22,000 voters since 2022 across Central, West Central, and South Florida, strengthened the civic engagement capacity of local organizations, and trained volunteers in voter protection, helping build long-term, community-led participation in the democratic process.



**hispanicfederation**

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