

2026 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

Spotlight on NORTH CAROLINA

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 75 percent of those arrested by federal immigration enforcement authorities in North Carolina have had no criminal convictions, while the federal crackdown last year has been estimated to have caused widespread and lasting local economic damage.*
- **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: Since 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, North Carolina has seen a rise in street arrests of immigrants by federal authorities. Federal agents detained a man at a public shopping center in Charlotte, NC, despite his repeatedly maintaining that he was a U.S. citizen. Detainees and watchdogs alike have filed continuous reports of hazardous conditions, inadequate medical treatment, and hostile enforcement efforts in detention centers.*
- **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: A family from Honduras seeking asylum was arrested while attending a regularly scheduled administrative appointment. An eleven-year-old and six-year-old who had been living in the United States for four years were detained and deported with little cause, prompting open concerns about due process violations by local community groups and Durham School Board officials alike.*
- **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's North Carolina Office operates a mobile legal clinic that delivers affordable, culturally competent immigration services to underserved rural communities. The program provides free assistance with citizenship applications, powers of attorney, and other essential legal cases. Since its launch in 2023, the program has served approximately 1300 people. Additionally, the office coordinates with state and national organizations to advocate for systemic policy reform and recently mobilized \$240,000 in emergency grants to Latino-led organizations responding on the ground to intensified CBP and ICE enforcement in North Carolina.

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 250 percent increase in out-of-pocket premium payments for the average Latino family in North Carolina, while Medicaid funds are slated to decline by \$23bn in North Carolina 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 North Carolina's immunization rates have largely continued to hold steady thanks to our robust support for medical research, recent years have shown worrying signs. The vaccination rate for mumps, measles, and rubella for upcoming kindergarteners has now fallen to 94.2 percent, beneath 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, six rural hospitals across North Carolina are at immediate risk of closure in the coming years. Simultaneously, the state faces a considerable shortfall of nearly ten thousand 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: Since its June 2024 launch, Hispanic Federation's bilingual health hotline, Salud NC, has connected over 5,200 people to critical care, eliminating language and navigation barriers for the Latino community. Beyond providing a trusted entry point to health care, the hotline captures real-time data to drive institutional reform and policy advocacy. In 2025, Salud NC proved its agility by rapidly adapting to community crises and policy changes, serving as a vital resource hub during heightened CBP/ICE activity in Charlotte, guiding families through complex benefits eligibility, and connecting residents to food banks when SNAP access was restricted.

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 North Carolina, over \$45 million dollars in Digital Equity Act funding have been cancelled, affecting more than 9,000,000 people statewide. Likewise, more than 900,000 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 North Carolina 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. Two such laws in North Carolina 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.

- *Latino workers are central to North Carolina's economy, but the state's digital divide falls disproportionately on its Latino communities, which make up 11.4 percent of the state and is its fastest growing population. In fact, North Carolina has a higher share of jobs exposed to automation-related disruption than the national average and 91% of jobs in North Carolina already require digital skills.*

- 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 weekend computer classes have empowered Spanish speaking adults in North Carolina, where 1.1 million households lack reliable digital access. The program covers topics such as foundational computer skills, navigating job applications, and accessing health portals like MyChart. To expand digital access, the program awarded one hundred-sixty laptops through a state-wide scholarship and distributed \$600,000 in subgrants to partner organizations supporting similar digital literacy initiatives. In addition to structured classes, the program provides individual workshops tailored to community interest, including sessions on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

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 leverages strategic research, grassroots education, and rapid-response funding to protect and empower vulnerable Latine and migrant farmworker communities in North Carolina. Through an innovative partnership with the Carolina Population Center, the organization developed advanced GIS mapping tools that overlay farmworker housing, flood zones, and emergency sites to enhance disaster preparedness, while also collaborating with Wake Forest University to evaluate emergency plans across all 100 North Carolina counties. Likewise, the annual Escuelita leadership academy equips residents with organizing skills, fueling powerful advocacy campaigns to overhaul local and state disaster preparedness, response, and recovery systems. Hispanic Federation solidified these efforts by deploying \$300,000 in emergency grants to Latino-led organizations on the ground following Hurricane Helene.



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