

## 2026 FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

# Spotlight on **NEW JERSEY**

## 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, over 50 percent of those arrested by federal immigration enforcement authorities in New Jersey have had no criminal history.*
- **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, New Jersey saw a rise in street arrests of immigrants by federal authorities. Since last January, federal immigration officials have reportedly violated more than fifty court orders across New Jersey. Among these violations have been deportation despite standing protections and cross-country transportation of those in custody. While New Jersey officials have been active in seeking to head off such abuses, the sheer extent of violations clarifies just how much work remains to be done.*
- **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: the Delaney Hall detention camp, based in New Jersey, has emerged as an emblem of the myriad abuses taking place in federal immigration detention facilities. Over the last year, detainees held in the facility have alleged manifold abuses, ranging from improper construction to inadequate provision of medical care to deadly results. These conditions, combined with the stonewalling of oversight efforts by elected officials, have become all too representative of federal immigration detention writ-large.*
- **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.

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## 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 an exorbitant increase in out-of-pocket premium payments for the average Latino family in New Jersey, while Medicaid funds are slated to decline by \$29bn 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.

- *For instance, despite resisting some of the worst declines in vaccination rate across the nation, New Jersey's childhood immunization rates have fallen concerningly. Now, fewer than 90 percent of New Jersey two-year-olds are fully vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis, while the mumps, measles, and rubella vaccination rate has fallen below the 95 percent herd immunity threshold, risking the health of our state's most vulnerable populations.*
- **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, clinics across the state are at risk of reductions in services, or even closure, amid declining federal funding resources, while the state faces a projected shortfall of nearly one thousand nurses over the next few years alone.*
- **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.

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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 New Jersey, over \$35 million dollars in Digital Equity Act funding have been cancelled, affecting more than 7,000,000 people statewide. Likewise, over 325,000 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, New Jersey has become a sustained flashpoint for AI-enabled civil rights abuses. In Newark's Ironbound neighborhood, ICE conducted a warrantless workplace raid in which U.S. citizens — including a military veteran whose service documentation was dismissed — were fingerprinted and had their faces photographed on the spot. These abuses are the downstream consequence of an unaccountable AI surveillance infrastructure: commercial platforms guide enforcement operations by generating target maps, compiling personal dossiers from government and commercial databases, and assigning algorithmic "confidence scores" to predict where individuals can be found — with no independent oversight or civil rights review. That same infrastructure has fed detainees into Delaney Hall— with state health inspectors denied full access to investigate. Without binding federal standards governing AI use in enforcement, these systems will continue to funnel Latino and immigrant communities into a pipeline of surveillance, wrongful detention, and harm.*
- **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.

- *A full 92 percent of U.S. jobs require digital skills, Meanwhile, Latino workers represent a growing portion of New Jersey's labor force, but have an intolerable digital skills gap compared to their neighbors. Not only that, but these workers are also vulnerable to AI-driven displacement, requiring immediate federal investment to ensure all New Jerseyans can 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:** Since 2020, HF has trained 231 New Jersey residents in digital workforce skills, helping 82 secure employment. In 2025 alone, HF served 105 individuals and connected 22 with jobs — and has connected New Jersey CBOs with the state's broadband office to expand digital access infrastructure statewide.

## 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:** In just 2025, Hispanic Federation provided training to more than 1,200 nonprofit leaders across 40 different capacity building workshops. At the same time, we provided community-based organizations across the country with more than \$25 million in aid, distributed to more than 400 different organizations. In New Jersey alone, Hispanic Federation has provided more than \$500,000 in funding across multiple organizations, supporting the essential work that community-based organizations do on the ground every day.



**hispanicfederation**

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