



2016 HISPANIC PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

NATIONAL HISPANIC LEADERSHIP AGENDA
QUADRENNIAL BLUEPRINT FOR ADVANCING THE LATINO COMMUNITY

NHLA
25th
Anniversary

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the 40 national Latino organizations comprising the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), I am pleased to present the 2016 Hispanic Public Policy Agenda. This agenda is a culmination of an extensive and productive process consisting of meetings, discussions, and roundtables in which Latino leaders and community advocates addressed many critical issues of the utmost importance to the Latino community. This agenda consists of both a road map and specific recommendations that are necessary to ensuring that the executive and legislative branches of the Federal Government affect a profound, lasting and positive impact for our Latino community and, in turn, our entire nation.

2016 marks the 25th anniversary of our NHLA coalition and we celebrate it by presenting in unity our strongest Hispanic Public Policy Agenda to date, which will guide the priorities of the Latino community for the next four years. This agenda represents our goals and aspirations for the future at this pivotal time for Latinos.

More than 58 million Latinos reside in and make meaningful contributions to the nation every single day. In the last ten years, Latinos represented more than half of total U.S. population growth. This significant demographic change signals a shift in community attitudes, political representation, and electoral power. Indeed, the Census estimates that by 2050 Latinos will comprise nearly one third of the entire nation's population. Growth, however, has not come without its challenges as our community has been under serious attacks and advancement is required in many areas to ensure that Latinos are afforded the same protections and opportunities as all other populations across this land.

This is why the work of NHLA and our Public Policy Agenda is so important. It reflects an array of substantive issues that impact the lives of millions of people around our country every day. As such, in unity we deliver this powerful agenda that sets out our community's needs and priorities related to economic security and empowerment, education, immigration, government accountability, civil rights, and health. We have also tackled other important issues that we have not previously addressed in our policy agenda, such as the criminal justice system, energy, and the environment. We also created a Latina Task Force, which ensures that all of our work and our priorities are evaluated using a gender lens, which has led to the inclusion of new recommendations and enhancements to existing ones, resulting in the most Latina-inclusive agenda that the NHLA has produced.

These proposals have been informed by the challenges that have faced Latinos in recent years, ranging from economic turmoil, widespread civil rights violations, divisive anti-immigrant and anti-Latino legislation, and a continued underrepresentation of Latinos in elected and appointed positions in government. They have also been guided by the many prospects for change and growth that talented Latino community members and leaders offer this great country in areas including science, medicine, law, media, environment, and education, among others.

Thinking and talking about the issues that impact us is not the same as implementing a plan of action to address our concerns. Latinos have proven that we are both civically and politically engaged. Our community has demonstrated that it is willing to take to task any political leader that disparages or disregards our people and our interests, whether it be by making racially charged comments or overlooking our community as important policies are considered and undertaken that have an adverse impact on Latinos and others. As such, this policy agenda is not simply aspirational in form. Rather, it presents a platform for what Latinos expect from our elected and appointed officials to adequately represent our community's interests.

We look forward to working with government, candidates, political parties, organizations, and, most importantly, the public to make the goals and recommendations in this agenda a reality. The Latino community exists as an integrated and interconnected part of this nation. Latino priorities are, by definition, the priorities of the United States as a whole, and our success is inextricably intertwined.

In Unity,

Hector E. Sanchez



ABOUT NHLA

The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) was established in 1991 as a nonpartisan association of major Hispanic national organizations and distinguished Hispanic leaders from all over the nation. The NHLA's mission calls for unity among Latinos around the country to provide the Hispanic community with greater visibility and a stronger influence in our country's affairs. The NHLA brings together Hispanic leaders to establish policy priorities that address, and raise public awareness of the major issues affecting the Latino community and the nation as a whole.

The NHLA is composed of 40 of the leading national and regional Hispanic civil rights and public policy organizations. The NHLA coalition members represent the diversity of the Latino community – Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Hispanic Americans.

NHLA LEADERSHIP



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Thomas A. Saenz
Mexican American Legal
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Alianza Americas

American G.I. Forum

ASPIRA Association, Inc.

AVANCE

Casa de Esperanza

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI)

Cuban American National Council (CNC)

Farmworker Justice

Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU)

Hispanic Federation

Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA)

Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR)

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)

LatinoJustice PRLDEF

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

MANA, A National Latina Organization

Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)

National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives (NAHFE)

National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP)

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)

National Association of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP)

National Conference of Puerto Rican Women (NACOPRW)

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)

National Hispana Leadership Institute (NHLI)

National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL)

National Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA)

National Hispanic Environmental Council (NHEC)

National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts (NHFA)

National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC)

National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)

National Institute for Latino Policy (NILP)

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH)

National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc. (NPRC)

Presente.org

SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc.

Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP)

United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC)

United States Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI)

United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce

U.S.-Mexico Foundation

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Latina Task Force

Co-Chair Jessica González-
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Reproductive Health (NLIRH)

Co-Chair Patti Tototzintle, Casa de
Esperanza

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The NHLA Board would like to extend its gratitude to the many individuals who have dedicated their time, energy, vision, and commitment to make this agenda possible. First, we would like to thank the NHLA staff and interns, including Teresa Acuña and Mónica Ramírez. We would also like to thank the leadership and staff members of all of the NHLA coalition members. Sincerest thanks to the Raben Group, LLC, including Michael Torra. Finally, we are grateful to Polimnia Rossin of Centurion, LLC. Above all, we are thankful for the opportunity to serve the Latino community. It is our true and distinct honor.

EXECUTIVE Summary

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Latinos¹ face a wealth gap that leads to poorer socio-economic outcomes for Latino families. The NHLA proposes a range of policies to close the wealth gap.

Principal Policy Recommendations

Enact Fair Federal Budgets:

The NHLA calls for a fair approach to the federal budget that permanently eliminates the arbitrary across-the-board cuts known as sequestration, increases investments in growing our economy, and reforms tax policy to generate greater revenues that can be invested in domestic programs and deficit reduction.

Expand Workforce Opportunities:

Greater investment is needed in workforce training programs – especially for youth and women – as well as English instruction, and the inclusion of community-based organizations in these programs' implementation.

Promote Policies that Reward Work:

Policies must be implemented to improve living standards for Hispanic workers in low-wage occupations, including increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2020 and expanding tax policies, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, to more people without children.

Increase Retirement Security:

Policies must be created to improve retirement security and combat elder poverty, including expanded access to 401(k)s and IRAs, the creation of federal savings plans, protecting Social Security from cuts, and increased funding for the Older Americans Act's programs.

Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2020 and expanding tax policies, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, to more people without children.

Improve Working Conditions:

Policy solutions must increase federal enforcement of worker protections, including in fissured workplaces where convoluted subcontracting arrangements make it difficult to protect workers' rights. The NHLA also recommends enactment of the Paycheck Fairness Act, guaranteed paid sick and family leave, defending workers' ability to join unions, and extending worker protections currently denied to farmworkers, care-givers, domestic workers, and day-laborers.



Enhance Financial Access and Protect Consumers:

In order to better protect Latinos from predatory financial services while extending access to credit, measures must be taken to increase access to small-dollar loans, individualized financial counseling, improved accuracy of credit reports, and maintain the role of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

Support Homeownership:

Multiple measures must be taken to reverse the downward trend in the Hispanic homeownership rate, including strong implementation and enforcement of the CFPB servicing standards rules and increased housing counseling, while also addressing the need for farmworker housing.

Promoting a Fair and Orderly Solution to Puerto Rico's Fiscal Crisis:

As this publication goes to press, efforts to address Puerto Rico's financial crisis are in flux, but the need will likely remain for policymakers to provide Puerto Rico with the tools necessary to stabilize its economy, and accord the people of Puerto Rico their equal treatment as U.S. citizens, including full parity with the states of the union in the provision of services and funding for all federal programs.

Expand Access to Affordable Broadband and Mobile Phone Services:

In order to overcome high costs that depress Latinos' access to broadband, policymakers should:

- Modernize the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Lifeline Program to subsidize broadband services;
- Launch bilingual digital literacy campaigns;
- Ensure competition in the broadband and mobile phone markets; and
- Continue the FCC's E-Rate Program, among other measures.

**Greater investment
is needed in
workforce training
programs.**

EDUCATION

With Latinos comprising more than 25% of the public school student population, future U.S. economic competitiveness depends in great part on Latinos' educational attainment. While progress has been made, much work remains to be done.

Principal Policy Recommendations

Latinos comprise more than 25% of the public school student population.

Early Childhood Education:

- Institute universal pre-school;
- Expand existing Head Start programs; and
- Support training programs to develop more culturally and linguistically competent teachers.



School-to-Prison Pipeline:

Policymakers must reform overly harsh school discipline policies that lead to suspension, expulsion, or criminalization, as these policies contradict the goal of equal educational access, especially as they disproportionately impact Latino students.

Elementary and Secondary Education:

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, which reauthorized the civil rights-focused Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provides great discretion to states and localities, which have a mixed track record that underscores the continued need for strong federal leadership. The U.S. Department of Education must issue strong federal regulatory guidance, and states must ensure vigorous implementation and enforcement, to ensure the academic success of Latino students. These measures include:

- Collecting disaggregated data on student and school progress;
- Offering culturally and linguistically appropriate curricula and assessments;
- Providing resources to address academic disparities;
- Establishing goals to reduce achievement gaps; and
- Holding schools accountable for the progress of all students.

Higher Education:

Latino enrollment in higher education has surged to 49% of 18-24 year olds, yet less than a third earn a four-year degree. To improve college completion rates, policymakers must:

- Strengthen financial aid programs;
- Enact the DREAM Act;
- Increase funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and college preparation programs;
- Ensure for-profit institutions meet quality standards; and
- Incentivize community colleges to transfer more students of all backgrounds to four-year institutions.

Latino enrollment in higher education has surged to 49% of 18-24 year olds, yet less than a third earn a four-year degree.





Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators:

In order to ensure Latino students in public schools receive quality instruction and guidance, policymakers should:

- Strengthen the requirements for cultural and linguistic competency of teachers and administrators, including appropriate assessments and certifications;
- Support teacher preparation programs at Minority-Serving Institutions, which prepare most teachers of color; and
- Encourage the hiring and retention of Latinos in higher education.

Veterans Educational Opportunity:

In order to reverse the underutilization of the Montgomery G.I. Bill by Latino veterans, the federal government should launch a more proactive awareness campaign about G.I. Bill benefits to Latinos that enlist in the armed forces, their families, and those veterans already in college.

IMMIGRATION

Federal immigration law and policy continues to be a top priority for the Latino community. Our immigration, asylum, and naturalization policies must respect the dignity of the individual, end the criminalization of Hispanic immigrants, reflect our nation's commitment to human and civil rights, and deny state and local encroachment into this federal arena.

Principal Policy Recommendations

Administrative Relief:

In the absence congressional action to reform our immigration laws, the next Administration should:

- Continue administrative relief programs, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (pending judicial review); and
- Consider additional measures to provide others with relief from deportation, such those seeking refuge from violence.

The NHLA also supports addressing the root causes of forced migration and opposes efforts that call into question the citizenship of persons born in the United States.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform:

Congress and the President must enact reforms to fix our nation's failed immigration system. Reform must include:

- An earned path to citizenship and stronger protections for immigrant workers, including farmworkers, against exploitation;
- Family reunification provisions;
- The DREAM Act;
- A path to Legal Permanent Residency status for long-time recipients of Temporary Protected Status and similar programs; and
- Greater discretion to immigration authorities to prevent deportation in certain types of cases.

DREAM Act:

The NHLA supports consideration of proposals from both parties that offer young people who came to the U.S. as children meaningful immigration relief in order to attain higher education, serve in the military, or pursue other aspirations. Eligible students must have the right to federal financial aid and access to health care benefits.

Our immigration, asylum, and naturalization policies must respect the dignity of the individual

Naturalization and Integration:

In order to promote citizenship, policymakers should:

- Stabilize and lower naturalization fees;
- Reduce processing times for applications;
- Expand adult English language and civics education; and
- Provide funding for the USCIS Office of Citizenship's integration programs, as well as allow it to accept private funds.



Demilitarization of the Southwest Border.

The NHLA supports a more thoughtful approach to border security that includes:

- Consideration of border communities' private property rights and quality of life;
- Reversing exorbitant spending on border enforcement;
- Replacing National Guard troops with properly trained civilians;
- Ending racial profiling;
- Limiting the geographic range of Customs and Border Protection activity; and
- Halting the further construction of walls along the border.

Immigration Detention Reforms:

The NHLA calls for sweeping reforms related to detention facilities, including:

- The prevention of detainee abuse;
- Greater access to counsel;
- Ending the mandated bed quota and contracts with for-profit detention service providers; and
- Replacing detention facilities for women, children, and other vulnerable populations with alternatives to detention.



GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Principal Policy Recommendations

Federal Employment:

The President should issue an Executive Order on Hispanic hiring to increase the representation of Hispanics in career federal employment positions and other government posts. In the absence of an Executive Order, Federal Government Agencies and Departments should address the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the federal workforce by implementing the following items:

- Developing, funding, implementing, and enforcing a pipeline program for Hispanic candidates into GS-12 through GS-15 senior positions, to include the career Senior Executive Service (SES) and Candidate Development Programs;
- Increased cooperation with Hispanic organizations that promote Hispanic hiring and training through MOU's and partnerships; and
- Implementing, funding, and enforcing strong accountability mechanisms that encourage agencies and managers to meet hiring targets.

Federal Procurement:

In order to increase federal contracting opportunities for the thriving Latino and particularly Latina-owned small business sector, the Federal Government should:

- Take steps to increase Hispanic participation in the 8a program;
- Increase the number of Hispanics serving as Small Business Directors in the top 25 agencies;
- Implement the White House's Small Business Federal Contracting Task Force recommendations; and
- Improve small business contracting opportunities in general.

The NHLA Latino Appointments Program has helped increase the number of Latinos tapped for appointed positions in the last Administration, though more work remains to be done.

For its part, the NHLA will issue a Federal Career Employment Scorecard on federal agency progress towards increasing Hispanic representation, including in the career SES positions.

Political Appointments:

The NHLA Latino Appointments Program has helped increase the number of Latinos tapped for appointed positions in this last Administration, though more work remains to be done. Successful implementation of an Executive Order on Hispanic hiring could increase the pool of eligible candidates for appointed positions.

Increase the number of Hispanics serving as Small Business Directors in the top 25 agencies.



CIVIL RIGHTS

Today's obstacles to the full civic engagement of the Latino community come from both institutional and purposefully discriminatory actions. The NHLA is dedicated to restoring the dignity that comes with the protection of civil and constitutional rights in a strong democracy.

Principal Policy Recommendations

Democracy and Voting Rights:

To prevent the dilution of the Latino vote, policymakers should:

- Oppose excessive documentary requirements that disenfranchise Latino citizens;
- Support same-day registration and early voting options;
- Restore voting rights protection mechanisms to the Voting Rights Act;
- Ensure federal investigations and prosecutions of voter discrimination; and
- Rein in unlimited corporate money from distorting the democratic process.

Census:

Accurate census data is indispensable to civil rights enforcement, the fair allocation of federal funding, and documenting Latinos' socio-economic status. Policymakers should:

- Adequately fund the Census Bureau;
- Support the American Community Survey; and
- Ensure that any redesign of race and ethnicity questions does not diminish the quality of data collected about Latinos and others.

The Census Bureau should:

- Increase Latino representation in its workforce and contracting;
- Enhance its engagement with Latino stakeholders;
- Strengthen its linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach; and
- Include Puerto Rico in all of its data sets.

NHLA is dedicated to restoring the dignity that comes with the protection of civil and constitutional rights in a strong democracy.

Criminal Justice and Mass Imprisonment:

To address the disproportionate and adverse impact of discriminatory policing and criminal justice practices, the NHLA recommends that policymakers:

- Require ethnic and racial classifications in all relevant criminal justice data collection;
- Take steps to address the abuse of power by law enforcement;
- Implement pre-trial reforms that reduce excessive bail, bonds, and civil forfeiture;
- Enact trial and sentencing reforms to diversify juries and reduce overly harsh sentences;
- Adopt drug policy reform measures;
- Implement corrections reforms to curtail various inhumane practices;
- Improve educational, employment, and civic engagement opportunities for the re-entry population; and
- Reform juvenile justice systems to break down the school-to-prison pipeline.

Judiciary:

The President and U.S. Senate should nominate and confirm judges who have demonstrated records of preserving or expanding civil rights protections and who reflect the country's growing diversity.

Employment Discrimination:

Policymakers should support the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) enforcement actions against employment discrimination on various bases, and update and improve the EEOC's guidance on national origin discrimination.

Language and Integration:

The NHLA strongly opposes legislation to establish English as the national language and other measures that discriminate against language minorities. Instead, the NHLA supports "English-Plus" legislation and the implementation of language assistance standards for those with limited English proficiency skills receiving federally supported services.

Promoting Diversity and Tolerance in the Media:

In order to address the underrepresentation of Latinos in the media, government policies should promote media ownership diversity. The FCC should collect diversity data on media ownership and employment. Steps must be taken to address hate speech and investigate its correlation to hate crimes.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Principal Policy Recommendations

Environmental Justice:

The NHLA calls for action to address the disproportionate impact of pollution and toxic exposure on the Latino population by:

- Aggressively enforcing existing public health and environmental laws, including those protecting farmworkers and domestic workers;
- Engaging Latinos in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies; and
- Opposing efforts to undermine the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

Climate Change and Energy:

Policymakers should support efforts across the Federal Government to combat climate change. The NHLA recognizes the employment opportunities created in the new era of energy independence. As such, we call on the Federal Government to encourage the training and participation of Latinos in the growing green energy sector.



Engaging Latinos in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Conservation:

The NHLA supports policies to protect public lands, develop Latino conservation leadership, and protect and share Latino history in national monuments and protected areas.

NHLA calls for action to address the disproportionate impact of pollution and toxic exposure on the Latino population.



HEALTH

Principal Policy Recommendations

Access to Quality and Affordable Health Care:

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has provided Hispanics with the opportunity to obtain affordable and quality health coverage. The NHLA supports full funding and implementation of the law, including the expansion of Medicaid and the Prevention and Public Health Fund. As reforms are considered, the NHLA urges policymakers to:

- Ensure that health insurance options are affordable;
- Enhance health insurance literacy programs;
- Eliminate the seasonal worker exemption under the employer mandate;
- Strengthen health insurance portability across state lines; and
- Develop policies to increase health care coverage for immigrants.

Health Care Delivery Reform:

As policymakers work to improve the experience of care for individuals, improve the health of populations, and lower per capita costs, the NHLA believes that the health care system needs to adjust from acute episodic care to chronic care that is coordinated across the continuum of care in the community and health care facilities. Reforms must:

- Address the challenges facing economically and socially disadvantaged individuals;
- Be inclusive of culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services; and
- Focus on safety net hospitals, clinics, and private medical practices.

The NHLA supports full funding and implementation of the law, including the expansion of Medicaid and the Prevention and Public Health Fund.



Medicaid:

Increased access to Medicaid decreases costs in the health care system by providing access to preventive services at earlier stages of chronic diseases, and lessens the use of higher cost care required in hospitals and emergency rooms. The NHLA urges policymakers to:

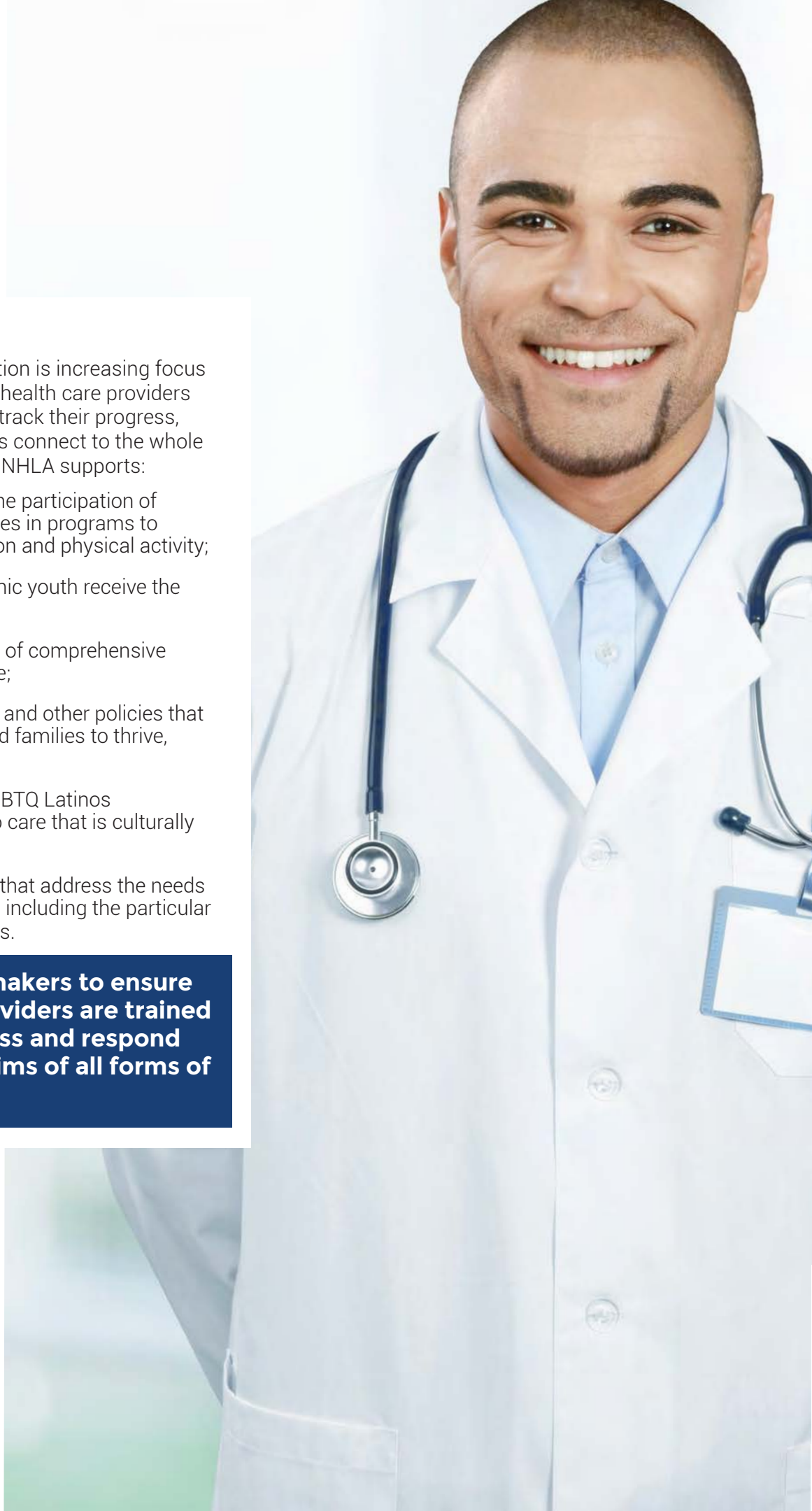
- Develop incentives for quality care for underserved populations;
- Encourage collection of racial and ethnic identification in health care data;
- Ensure cultural and linguistic competency in health education, policies, and care facilities;
- Increase disease prevention programs that incorporate social determinants of health;
- Eliminate the five-year waiting period for legal residents to access Medicaid;
- Maintain the expansion of Medicaid to those up to 133% of the federal poverty line; and
- Eliminate barriers to care for people in Puerto Rico.

Population Health:

The health care transformation is increasing focus on targeted populations for health care providers to set goals and measures, track their progress, and identify how these goals connect to the whole population. To that end, the NHLA supports:

- Policies to encourage the participation of children and their families in programs to increase healthy nutrition and physical activity;
- Efforts to ensure Hispanic youth receive the HPV vaccination;
- Access to the full range of comprehensive reproductive health care;
- Promotion of child care and other policies that allow young parents and families to thrive, especially mothers;
- Policies that provide LGBTQ Latinos coverage and access to care that is culturally competent; and
- Programs and benefits that address the needs of the aging population, including the particular needs of Hispanic elders.

NHLA urges policymakers to ensure that health care providers are trained to understand, assess and respond to the needs of victims of all forms of violence.





ECONOMIC SECURITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Latinos face an ever-growing racial wealth gap, making entry into the middle class increasingly difficult. The Great Recession had a staggeringly negative impact on Latino household wealth—during the period from 2005 to 2009, 66% of Latino household wealth disappeared—positioning Latinos as the group with the largest wealth decline during the recession.² The racial wealth gap has only continued to widen, with White household wealth at more than 10 times that of Latino households in 2013.³

Efforts to reduce the federal budget deficit have exacerbated this trend by placing a disproportionate amount of deficit reduction measures on the shoulders of lower-income families and shortchanging the investments our economy needs in order to grow. In addition to changing our approach to the federal budget, various economic policies have the potential to improve the economic standing and quality of life for Latinos. Improving labor conditions, ensuring workers receive the pay they deserve, providing greater pathways to homeownership, closing the digital divide, improving retirement security, and protecting consumers from fraud and predatory financial practices, are all important paths to enhancing the economic status of Latinos and growing the nation's middle class.

ENACT FAIR FEDERAL BUDGETS

Since 2011, federal efforts to reduce the deficit have disproportionately relied on cuts to domestic discretionary programs rather than raising revenue. The 2011 Budget Control Act set strict caps on discretionary funding through arbitrary across-the-board budget cuts known as sequestration. While some limited relief from sequestration was achieved in the 2013 and 2015 Bipartisan Budget Acts, investments in non-defense domestic discretionary programs have been cut dramatically in recent years and are on track to reach their lowest share of GDP since 1962.⁴

These cuts to domestic discretionary programs hit the Latino community particularly hard, as they mean less investment in public education, job training, infrastructure, and important government functions, such as the enforcement of civil rights and labor laws, and conducting the census. These programs are essential to help ensure that children and working families can have better opportunities to succeed. Through its advocacy on federal budget and appropriations issues, the NHLA has repeatedly called for sufficient funding for these important programs and activities to reinvest in young people and working families in order to ensure a more prosperous future for more Americans.

EXPAND WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES

Latinos are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. workforce and are projected to make up nearly one-third of the total U.S. workforce by 2050, therefore, public policy solutions must aggressively work to narrow the educational gap between Latino adults and other adults.⁵ Now, more than ever, there is an essential role for the Federal Government to play in educating and training working adults who have aged out of the public school system. The Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) largely govern the publicly funded workforce development system. While WIOA has led to gains for Hispanics, greater investment is needed to ensure that community-based organizations are able to support the education and training needs of their communities.

For Hispanics, who sometimes face a combination of challenges, including limited educational attainment, limited basic skills, and limited English proficiency, a one size-fits-all approach to adult education and training, combined with severe funding constraints, has meant that those who most need the system's benefits are the least likely to receive them. While unemployment rates for Latinos have traditionally been higher than unemployment rates for other racial and ethnic groups, the gap between the unemployment rate of Hispanics and non-Hispanics has grown from 0.5% in 2006 to over 1% in 2015.⁶ Furthermore, Latinas continue to contend with unemployment rates of 6.3% compared to 5.5% for Latino men.⁷

Unemployment among young Latinos remains stubbornly high, at over 18% in late 2015, depriving young people of critical work experience to prepare them for future labor market success.⁸ It is, therefore, imperative that Congress enact legislation that expands career opportunities for Latinos, increases access to training, lowers Latino youth unemployment, and fully funds WIOA implementation.

Policy Recommendations

- End sequestration and the budget caps imposed by the 2011 Budget Control Act so that non-defense discretionary programs that help grow the economy and middle class are no longer subject to arbitrary cuts and limitations.
- Increase investments in non-defense discretionary programs that help grow the middle class, provide support to vulnerable populations, and fund important government functions such as the enforcement of civil rights and labor laws, and conducting the census.
- Reform tax policy to generate greater revenues that can be invested in domestic programs and deficit reduction.

Public policy solutions must aggressively work to narrow the educational gap between Latino adults and other adults.

Latinos are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. workforce and are projected to make up nearly one-third of the total U.S. workforce by 2050.

Policy Recommendations

- Increase investments in adult education and workforce development services for low-skilled, limited-English-proficient jobseekers, and young workers.
- Provide women with equal access to training opportunities and programs.
- Ensure systematic inclusion of community-based providers in addressing unemployment and career advancement.
- Ensure that Trade Adjustment Assistance, which provides training and support to workers who lose their job due to international trade, receives sufficient funding, especially in conjunction with efforts to expand U.S. trade agreements.
- Create a tracking and monitoring system to protect internationally recruited workers from labor abuses by recruiters, placement agencies, supervisors, employers, and third parties.

IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS

Latinos are overrepresented in low-wage occupations, including in building services, food establishments, agriculture, and home health care, among other occupations, where fissured workplaces are an issue.⁹ A fissured workplace occurs when the relationship between workers and employers is increasingly blurred as layers of subcontracting of low-wage jobs grow. The convoluted nature of these arrangements makes it difficult to ensure compliance with regulations meant to protect workers. Nationally, Latinos make up one-third of construction workers, over three-quarters of all agricultural workers, and one-fifth of service-industry workers, and are more likely to work in high-fatality industries where labor laws are frequently violated.¹⁰

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Latinos experienced the largest increase in fatal work injuries in 2013, a 9% jump from 2012.¹¹ Nearly 820 Latino workers died on the job in 2013 compared to 750 Latino workers in 2012.¹² But while the fatality rate for Latino workers increased, there

was a slight decrease for the overall workforce. Latinos are the least likely to have access to any form of paid leave or workplace flexibility. “Nearly 60% of Latino workers have children under the age of 18, compared to less than 40% of White workers or Black workers. Latino workers are also more than twice as likely as White workers to have multiple children—12.8%, compared to 6.1%.”¹³ Often, the burden falls on women to take unpaid leave to care for their children and/or loved ones.¹⁴

Given the growing number of Latinos in the workforce, public policy solutions must aggressively work to increase federal enforcement of worker protections, ensure a decline of occupational fatality rates, prevent sexual assault,¹⁵ and address the exclusion of farmworkers from employment laws and regulations. Ensuring the necessary funding and resources for federal enforcement agencies to execute their duties is a critical step toward guaranteeing that worker protections do not lag behind the evolving workplace dynamics.

Trade union membership also plays an important role in improving the living standards of Latino workers and their families.¹⁶ According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unionized Latino workers earn on average \$5.60 more per hour than non-unionized Latino workers, translating to \$11,544 in increased annual earnings.¹⁷ Unionized Latino workers are also more likely to have employer-provided health insurance and a pension plan.¹⁸ In addition to pay and benefits, trade union membership better protects workers from wage theft and exploitation based on immigration status, and narrows the gender pay gap for Latina workers.¹⁹

Nearly 820 Latino workers died on the job in 2013 compared to 750 Latino workers in 2012.

Policy Recommendations

- Defend the right of workers to join labor unions and to participate in collective bargaining.
- Support gender equity in the workplace by enacting the Paycheck Fairness Act and other measures that promote gender fairness in the workplace, such as prohibiting pregnancy discrimination²⁰ and ensuring equal pay for equal work.²¹ See the Civil Rights section for additional recommendations.
- Address the issue of fissured workplaces, including

thorough enforcement of the joint employer concept.

- Increase and improve the quality of enforcement of the wage and hour and health and safety laws, including those that protect farmworkers.
- Enact legislation to protect victims of crime, including workplace sexual violence, or serious labor violations from deportation.
- Enact legislation that guarantees paid sick and family leave.
- Grant farmworkers parity with other occupations under employment laws and regulations.
- Extend federal workplace protections to individuals employed in the shadow economy, including domestic workers, caregivers, farmworkers, and day laborers, among others.
- Ensure that internationally recruited workers are protected from workplace abuse, including all forms of discrimination in recruitment and placements.
- Support the full implementation and effective enforcement of the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) and ensure that farmworkers are engaged at every stage of the process.

**Latinas only earn
56 cents for every
dollar paid to White
men.**

PROMOTE POLICIES THAT REWARD WORK

The decades long disconnect between wages and worker productivity has contributed to wage stagnation, especially for low-income workers. Between 1979 and 2013 workforce productivity increased 64.9%, while wages increased only 6.1% over the same time period. Therefore, efforts such as preserving work-based tax credits and raising the minimum wage are critical to incentivize and reward work, as well as address wage stagnation.

As the largest and fastest-growing minority group, Latinos comprise an increasingly important segment of the U.S. workforce. However, Latinos are overrepresented in low-wage occupations and have lower levels of household wealth than other racial and ethnic groups. Because Latinos are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, the effect of wage stagnation on their sense of economic well being is particularly profound, with 67% of Latinos reporting in a recent poll that they are not earning enough to meet their basic expenses.²² Losses of household wealth and poverty wages have contributed to the situation today where about one in four Latinos live in poverty. In fact, 42% of all Latinos earn poverty-level wages despite having the highest rate of labor force participation among all racial and ethnic groups. Low wages have real consequences, especially for women, immigrant families, and people of color, who are disproportionately affected by low pay. Nationally, women make up two-thirds of the nearly 20 million workers in low-wage jobs, despite making up slightly less than half of the workforce as a whole.²³ Latinas earn less than all other workers.²⁴ In fact, it is estimated that Latinas only earn 56 cents for every dollar paid to White men.²⁵ They are also often subjected to gender steering, which results in job placement in lower paying jobs with fewer opportunities for advancement, and they are frequently subject to wage theft.²⁶

For these reasons, policymakers must not mistake an economic upswing that puts people back to work in low-wage, low-quality jobs as a true recovery. Building a better economy requires the creation of high-quality jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and benefits, keep workers safe on the job, and provide opportunities for career mobility. Policymakers should continue to support efforts to incentivize and reward work, while also addressing wage stagnation.

Policy Recommendations

- Raise the federal minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour by 2020, which would benefit at least seven million Latino workers.
- Support efforts to address income inequality, including pay discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and/or sex.
- Gradually phase-out of the subminimum wage for tipped workers.
- Support innovative efforts to expand Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) access to more taxpayers, including more workers without children and noncustodial parents.
- Oppose efforts to penalize U.S. citizen children in response to concerns about errors in the tax system.
- Take measures to prevent, investigate, and prosecute wage theft committed against Latino workers.²⁷

ENHANCE FINANCIAL ACCESS AND PROTECT CONSUMERS

Latino and immigrant families have lower rates of access to mainstream financial products, and often resort to non-mainstream markets to access necessary financial products. According to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) while 25.6% of all U.S. households are either unbanked or under-banked, 43% of Latino households are either unbanked or under banked. Operating outside of mainstream markets leaves Latinos vulnerable to less regulated and predatory products, such as payday loans. Strong consumer protections are necessary to ensure that individuals are shielded from predatory and discriminatory lending practices and financial products.²⁸

Congress should strive to enact legislation and regulatory actions to increase access to credit, provide strong consumer protections from predatory and discriminatory practices, and support individualized financial counseling, while opposing any efforts to dismantle, weaken, or undermine the structure of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Unhindered access to mainstream financial products is essential for the Latino community and for a strong economy.

While 25.6% of all U.S. households are either unbanked or under-banked, 43% of Latino households are either unbanked or under banked.



Policy Recommendations

- Increase access to small-dollar loans and credit for underserved consumers and enforce accuracy and accountability of credit reporting entities to ensure that reporting errors do not harm individuals.
- Oppose any efforts to dismantle, weaken, or undermine the structure of the CFPB.
- Provide strong consumer protections from predatory and discriminatory practices, including payday lending.
- Support individualized financial counseling.
- Eliminate discrimination in automobile loan lending.

Provide strong consumer protections from predatory and discriminatory practices, including payday lending.

Currently, poverty rates for elderly Latinos are more than twice that of the U.S. elder population as a whole.

INCREASE RETIREMENT SECURITY

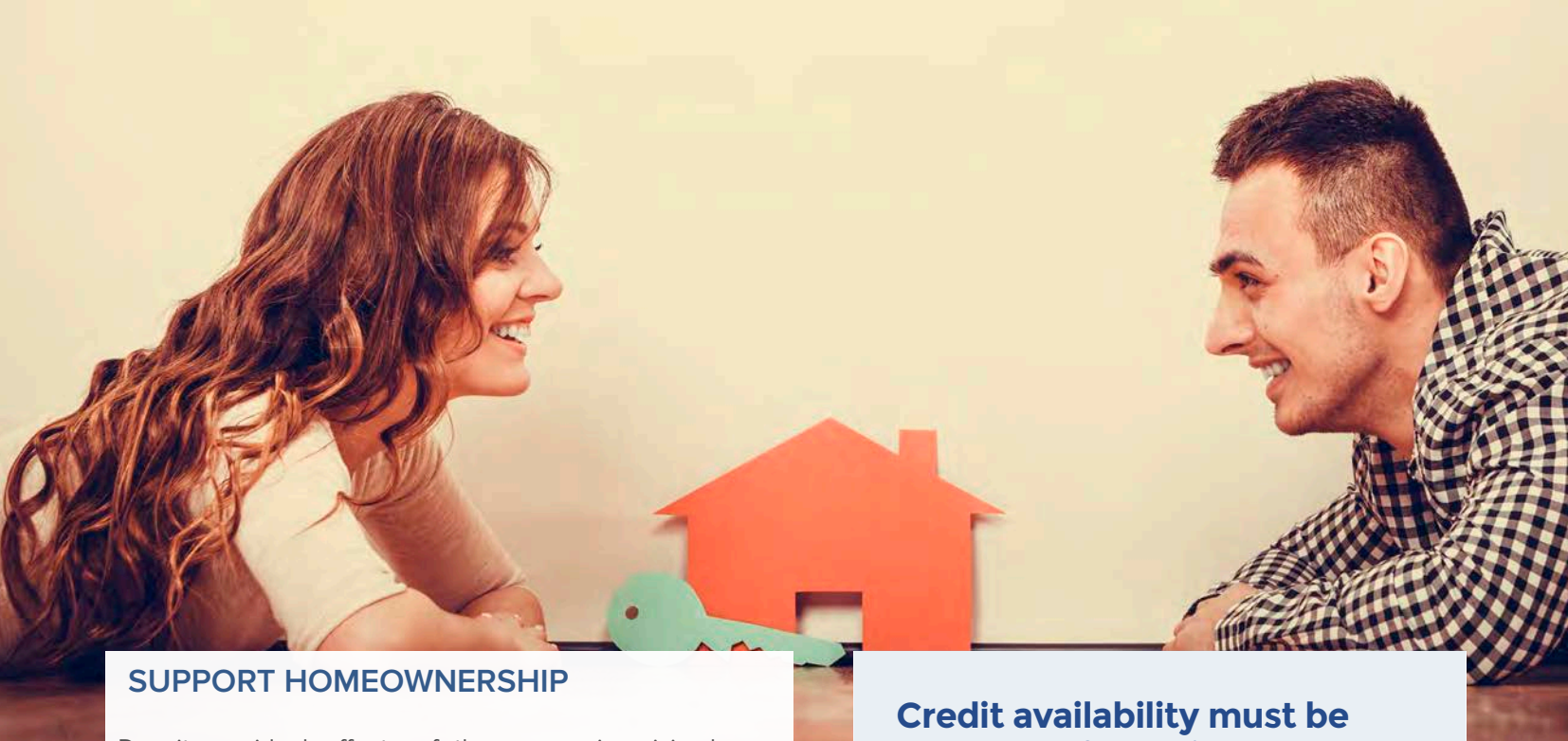
Studies show that Latinos are more likely to rely on Social Security benefits as their main source of retirement income due to the absence of other sources of retirement income, such as pensions or retirement accounts.²⁹ For many, Social Security is the sole means of retirement income, which it was never designed to be. Studies by the Berkeley Center of Labor find that 26% of Latinos, compared to 22% of Whites, relied on Social Security for more than 90% of their retirement income.

Currently, poverty rates for elderly Latinos are more than twice that of the U.S. elderly population as a whole. Labor market trends suggest that, absent intervention, these rates will continue to increase. Latinos are projected to account for the bulk of growth in the American workforce between 2010 and 2050. However, the majority of Latinos work for employers that do not offer retirement plans. As such, many future retirees will rely solely on Social Security and on programs authorized by the Older Americans Act to provide critical nutrition, caregiving, and employment support services.

A lack of retirement security not only affects retirees but can also have a profound effect on our national economy, undermining household wealth and economic mobility, straining the federal social safety net, and slowing economic growth, as retirees reduce their consumption of goods and services to make ends meet. Therefore, it is in the nation's interest to ensure that Latinos maximize opportunities to prepare for a financially secure retirement.

Policy Recommendations

- Improve the adequacy of Social Security benefits and protect the program from cuts that would erode the economic security of low-income seniors and future generations.
- Expand access to private retirement savings such as 401(k)s and IRAs through state and federal policy.
- Support a savings system that encourages, through the tax code and other means, low- and moderate-income families to save for their children's education, to buy a home, pay off debt, and retire securely.
- Provide a mechanism by which workers who are employed in low-paid positions or in the shadow economy may have a way to participate in any federally created savings plans, particularly women who are overrepresented in many of these positions.
- Reauthorize and increase funding for the Older Americans Act, which provides services to help older adults age in dignity and in the best possible health, including Meals on Wheels, the Congregate Nutrition Program, the National Family Caregiver Support Program, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program.



SUPPORT HOMEOWNERSHIP

Despite residual effects of the economic crisis, homeownership remains an essential step in building wealth for Latino families. Savings accrued from home equity can be used for retirement, college, starting a small business, or financial emergencies. For many Latinos, home equity is the greatest financial asset they will acquire in a lifetime.

Unfortunately, predatory lending targeted at minority borrowers in the lead up to the housing crisis and constrained affordable credit options threaten to undermine Latino homeownership in the United States. In 2014, the rate of Latino homeownership was 45.4%, a rate still lagging behind the pre-recession rate for Latinos of 47.3% in 2001.

Providing pathways to sustainable homeownership is crucial for this nation's economic recovery. The housing market must be fair and balanced, allowing creditworthy borrowers, including Latinos, to access safe and affordable home loans. Without the presence of expanded credit availability, Latinos will lose out on the opportunity to build wealth, and contribute to the economy through new home purchases. Research shows that in 2013 Latinos were refused loans at rates twice as high as White loan seekers and were also more likely to receive loans at higher prices. Credit availability must be expanded for Latinos to have greater opportunities to strengthen the economy, build "wealth" and acquire assets.



Credit availability must be expanded for Latinos to have greater opportunities to strengthen the economy, build wealth, and acquire assets.

Policy Recommendations

- Increase the quality and quantity of housing for farmworkers and other rural Latinos.
- Support principal reduction through the Federal Housing Finance Agency.
- Ensure strong implementation and enforcement of the CFPB servicing standards rules.
- Increase funding for Housing Counseling.
- Ensure that the housing finance system furthers our nation's fair housing goals.

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EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE BROADBAND AND MOBILE PHONE SERVICES

Latinos are currently facing a broadband crisis. According to the Pew Research Center, only half of Latinos have a home broadband connection—down from 56% in 2013—with many indicating that the cost of the service is the main barrier to adoption. Over the past decade, broadband has evolved from a luxury to a necessity, as basic services and educational and occupational opportunities have migrated online. Indeed, students without home broadband, who are often already challenged with poverty, are increasingly victims of the “Homework Gap” and are falling further behind in our schools.³⁰

“Support ongoing modernization of the FCC’s Lifeline Program, which currently subsidizes low-income Americans.”

Policy Recommendations

- Support ongoing modernization of the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Lifeline Program, which currently subsidizes low-income Americans’ telephone service, to also cover broadband services and continually evolve to meet the needs of low-income consumers.
- Fund English and Spanish language digital literacy campaigns and ensure that Latino outreach related to these campaigns is culturally relevant.
- Promote competition in the broadband and mobile phone markets to lower prices and improve service.
- Support the building of high-speed Internet infrastructure to improve connectivity in rural and underserved areas, schools, libraries, and community centers.
- Support the FCC’s E-Rate Program, which currently subsidizes broadband access in schools and libraries.
- Continue to convene the Broadband Opportunity Council, comprised of 25 Executive Branch agencies and departments, to explore further, cross-agency action to improve broadband deployment, adoption, and competition.

PROMOTING A FAIR AND ORDERLY SOLUTION TO PUERTO RICO’S FISCAL CRISIS

Puerto Rico is in crisis. Its nine-year recession has driven hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans to the mainland in search of employment. The Puerto Rican government faces a \$72 billion debt that it cannot pay. Its cash reserves are exceedingly low. In addition, the government faces a \$30 billion shortfall in public pension funds. To deal with the deficit, the government has cut services and raised taxes. Citizens are feeling the strain, with a 12.5% unemployment rate, a 41% poverty rate, and nearly a quarter receiving food stamps. The challenges facing Puerto Rico’s economy impacts its 3.5 million residents, plus the 5 million Puerto Ricans who live stateside. The NHLA is alarmed by Puerto Rico’s rapidly deteriorating economy and the inaction of the Federal Government.

The United States needs to correct discriminatory federal laws and actions that impede Puerto Rico’s economic development and fail to accord the people of Puerto Rico with equal treatment as U.S. citizens. This includes parity with the states of the union in the provision of services and funding for federal programs.

As a U.S. territory, Puerto Rico currently lacks the tools necessary to stabilize its economy and provide an orderly path to pay its creditors. Federal intervention is needed. Inaction is not an option. The NHLA urges the Administration and Congress to take appropriate steps.

The United States needs to correct discriminatory federal laws and actions that impede Puerto Rico’s economic development.

Policy Recommendations

Territorial Bankruptcy and Debt Restructuring Protections

Congress should pass legislation granting Puerto Rico the right to declare Chapter 9 bankruptcy or another orderly and fair alternative in order to renegotiate the debt and establish a fair repayment plan. Bankruptcy protection would enable Puerto Rico's municipalities and government-owned corporations to have the option of restructuring their debts as is currently allowed in all 50 states under Chapter 9 federal bankruptcy law.

Health Programs

Immediately address discriminatory practices in the areas of Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Care Act toward Puerto Rico. The upcoming financial shortfall of the Affordable Care Act and a double-digit reduction in Medicare Advantage will result in a major health care crisis in Puerto Rico.

Jones Act

Exempt Puerto Rico from the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (also known as the Jones Act), which unfairly increases the prices of imports and exports to and from Puerto Rico with requirements that all goods transported on the seas between U.S. ports be carried on U.S. flag ships. The President should grant a temporary waiver and Congress should pass legislation that amends the costly shipping mandates dictated by the Jones Act.

Tax Policy

Following the loss of Section 936 tax incentives, the Federal Government should institute tax policies that foster economically diverse and living-wage job creation. The President should also support local government implementation of an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) that rewards work and supplements earnings of low-income workers in Puerto Rico and expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC). Furthermore, the Federal Government should preserve remaining federal tax incentives to attract businesses and investments to Puerto Rico.

Federal Policy & Funding Formula Assessment

Create a White House-Treasury emergency task force that partners with all of the major stakeholders in Puerto Rico in government, business, and civil society to tackle Puerto Rico's fiscal crisis, implement a comprehensive economic development plan, and collaborate with Congress, as needed.

Purchase Debt and Safeguards for Investment

The Federal Government should immediately increase the Puerto Rico government's liquidity by purchasing their new debt and/or issuing bond guarantees, as it has done for Jordan, Tunisia, and the Ukraine. This is critical because the recent downgrade is forcing Puerto Rico to borrow at unsustainably high rates, which will delay its economic recovery. The Federal Government needs to extend the same safeguards that govern investment activity in the United States to investment companies operating in Puerto Rico. This will prevent abuses against Puerto Ricans, many of whom are near or of retirement age, who might unknowingly invest in mutual funds that are heavily stocked with public debt bonds that have dropped significantly in value due to Puerto Rico's debt problems.

As a U.S. territory, Puerto Rico currently lacks the tools necessary to stabilize its economy and provide an orderly path to pay its creditors. Federal intervention is needed. Inaction is not an option.

Improving labor conditions, ensuring workers receive the pay they deserve, providing greater pathways to homeownership, closing the digital divide, improving retirement security, and protecting consumers from fraud and predatory financial practices, are all important paths to enhancing the economic status of Latinos and growing the nation's middle class.



EDUCATION

The demographics of our nation are changing, and Latinos are paving the way. In 2015, for the first time in history, our nation's public schools are what is commonly referred to as majority-minority: more than 50% of students are Latino, African American, Asian American, Native American, or two or more races. This revelation is still so new that the terminology has not yet caught up with the demographic reality. Children of color are no longer the minority, but the new majority of students in our public schools, and this is due to the growth of the Latino community; while Latinos have grown to 17% of the total population, we represent more than 25% of the students in our nation's public schools.³¹

The future economic competitiveness of the United States will depend in great part on the educational attainment of the nation's growing Hispanic community. Increasing the high school graduation and college completion rates among all Latino student groups will translate into higher lifetime salaries, raise the standard of living for millions of Latino families, and strengthen the economic base of the United States.

Much work remains to be done. Hispanics have lacked many of the opportunities and access to a quality and comprehensive education that others have enjoyed. According to 2015 Census Bureau data, 75% of 25 to 29-year-old Hispanics have at least a high school diploma, compared to 96% of non-Hispanic Whites in the same age range. Similarly, only 15% of Hispanics between the ages of 25 and 29 have bachelor's degrees compared to 41% of non-Hispanic Whites in the same age range.³²

An academically sound and comprehensive education is critical for Hispanics to achieve success in any career or profession. Ensuring a quality education for Latinos will require a commitment at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure that each level of our educational system meets the needs of America's new and emerging demographics.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Latinos are the racial or ethnic group least likely to be enrolled in early childhood education, according to a 2015 study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. In a study of three- and four-year-olds enrolled in preschool, Latinos trailed behind other groups at 37% enrollment, as compared to 48% enrollment of African American children, and 49% of non-Hispanic White children.³³ Without an academically robust early childhood education, Latino children will start elementary school behind their peers, and be less prepared to move up the education ladder leading to academic and career success.

Policy Recommendations

- Institute universal pre-school that meets national standards.
- Increase financial support for Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Ensure that Migrant and Seasonal Head Start provides after-school and daytime activities for children to prevent them from being pulled into farm labor.
- Establish support for schools of education and teacher colleges to establish teacher education programs in culturally and linguistically competent early childhood instruction that addresses the educational and developmental needs of Hispanics and English Learner (EL) students, and that increases the ability of school officials to communicate effectively with limited English proficient parents.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

In late 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) was signed into law, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). First enacted fifty years ago in 1965, ESEA is a civil rights bill written to ensure equal access to a quality education. Within those fifty years, the Latino community has grown from roughly 3% of the nation, to 17% today nationwide, and 25% of students in public schools.³⁴ It is because of this growth in the Latino community that students of color are no longer the minority, but the new majority of students in our nation's public schools.

The ESSA pushes much of the decision-making to ensure equal access to education to state and local government. The Department of Education must issue strong federal regulatory guidance, and states must ensure vigorous implementation and enforcement, in implementing ESSA consistent with the law and with the NHLA's policy recommendation outlined below



**Institute universal pre-school
that meets national standards.**

Policy Recommendations

- Require states, districts, and schools to collect, and make available annually, disaggregated data on student subgroup and overall school progress.
- Ensure all students have access to:
 - High academic standards that are statewide and prepare students for college and career;
 - Curricula that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, and aligned to a state's college- and career-ready standards; and
 - Culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments of student progress, not based on a single high-stakes test, but based only on measures of student academic performance.

- Ensure that every child has the resources needed to succeed, by requiring intervention where there are disparities in access to educational resources.
- Ensure that Latino students have equal access to high-quality teaching.
- Ensure that Latino students have unfettered and equal access to high-level enrichment opportunities outside the classroom.
- Ensure that successful efforts are implemented to reduce elevated rates of high school non-completion among both Latino boys and Latina girls.

Ensure that schools, districts, and states are held accountable for the performance of all students.

- Ensure that systems are accountable for the performance of students by:
 - Assessing all students with statewide annual assessments, including students with disabilities except for the most cognitively disabled 1%, and English learners except during their first year in the country;
 - Including performance goals to reduce student achievement gaps; these goals must aim toward equity of outcomes at all levels of achievement, not simply to an established competency floor; and
 - Requiring proven remedies/ interventions that reduce student achievement gaps.

- Expand Latino-serving programs to meet full needs of the community, including:
 - Accountability, data, and parental involvement (Title I, Part A);
 - The Migrant Education Program (Title I, Part C); and
 - Language instruction for English learners (Title III).

- Ensure states set rigorous proficiency targets for the English language proficiency of English Learners, and ensure that assessments are culturally and linguistically competent, and aligned to state college and career-ready standards.

- Ensure that English proficiency for English Learners is a significant portion of every state's accountability system. Cross-tabulate data by race, gender, English Learner status, student with disability status, and economic disadvantage, so that disparities can be better identified, and interventions can be better tailored to the needs of the involved student groups.
- Ensure that state plans do not diminish accountability for any subgroup of students, and that accountability applies to all groups of students protected by ESEA, including racial and ethnic subgroups, English Learners, students with disabilities, and the economically disadvantaged.
- Ensure states collect and report data in a manner that does not mask student subgroup performance or rob school officials of the ability to narrowly tailor improvement interventions to address persistent subgroup achievement gaps unique to a subgroup.
- Ensure that schools, districts, and states are held accountable for the performance of all students in all schools, not just the lowest-performing schools.
- Ensure that state and local plans do not disrupt standing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) settlements with particular districts within those states.
- Pilot test the feasibility for states and districts to collect and report subgroup data within the larger English learner category, including recently arrived English Learners, long-term English Learners, former English Learners, and interrupted English Learners.

SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Within many schools, Latinos are disproportionately suspended, expelled, and referred to law enforcement.³⁴ These exclusionary discipline practices are directly contrary to the goal of equal access to education for all students. These practices also have a disproportionate impact on the Latino community. For instance, criminalization of simple disciplinary matters could send a student to prison, but if that child is an immigrant, it could bar that child from ever receiving temporary or permanent status, and may make that child eligible for deportation. Criminal convictions can also bar a child from ever obtaining federal financial aid to go to college.

Policy Recommendations

- End the practices of suspension, expulsion, zero-tolerance policies, the criminalization of truancy, and involuntary school transfers.
- Collect data on suspension, expulsion, involuntary school transfers, and in school arrests by subgroup, and require that disparities between racial and ethnic groups, English Learners, students with disabilities, and gender be addressed.
- Require that school resource officers be equitably distributed between schools, not concentrated in schools that predominantly serve low-income students and students of color.
- Ensure that teachers are trained on classroom management as an alternative to suspension, expulsion, and the criminalization of in-school behavior.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Enrollment in higher education has become a major achievement of the Latino community. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, for the first time in 2012, Latino enrollment of 18-24 year olds in college surpassed that of White students, at 49% and 47% respectively.³⁵

However, Latino college completion rates lag far behind those of other groups. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, less than a third of Latinos graduate from four-year institutions in four years, at 29.8% as compared to 43.3% for White students.³⁶ This trend remains true in public and private, for profit and non-profit institutions. Thus, the NHLA recommends programs that will help students afford to stay in college, obtain necessary supports, and earn their degrees.

Policy Recommendations

- Strengthen financial aid programs to make college affordable by:
 - Decreasing interest rates on federal student loans;
 - Increasing Pell Grant caps and making Pell Grants available year-round;
 - Increasing income protection allowances, and matching them to inflation to better determine financial need;
 - Simplifying the procedure for migrant and homeless students to complete and file their financial aid applications;
- Allowing educational loans to be discharged in bankruptcy;
- Expanding income-based repayment by:
 - Giving all borrowers the option to pay back their educational loans at 10% of their discretionary income;
 - Waiving accrued interest for former Pell grant recipients; and
 - Reducing the marriage penalty to 50% of the combined household adjusted gross income for married borrowers.
- Expanding student loan debt forgiveness programs by:
 - Creating a new public service loan repayment plan for borrowers who are working in public service or as teachers, in which payments would be 5% of discretionary income and under which unpaid interest would not accrue;
 - Increasing the amount forgiven by the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program; and
 - Restoring the access to federal financial aid for current and formerly incarcerated potential students.
- Support enactment of the DREAM Act, to allow undocumented students to qualify for federal financial aid.
- Support state-level measures that allow long-tenured graduates of a state's high schools to qualify for in-state tuition.

- Regulate for-profit institutions that receive federal financial aid, in which Hispanic students are disproportionately enrolled, to ensure that they provide students with a quality education that adequately prepares them for gainful employment and does not overburden the students with loan debt.
- Increase funding for college preparation programs that assist low income students and students of color to gain access to higher education opportunities, including federal TRIO programs; Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP); Title IV, Part A; Special Programs for Migrant Students (High School Equivalency Program (HEP); and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)).
- Fully fund Title V of the Higher Education Act (HEA), which gives undergraduate and graduate support to Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).
- Work to ensure that all universities, including flagship institutions, admit and enroll groups of students commensurate with the demographics of the state. Eliminate admissions criteria that are not educational necessary and have a discriminatory effect on Latino and Latina students.
- Increase federal resources for K-12 schools and teacher preparation programs to recruit a diverse teaching body, and train student teachers in cultural and linguistic competency with diverse student bodies, as well as incorporating STEM into K-12 curricula.
- Expand support to schools of education at HSIs to increase the number of Latino elementary and secondary school teachers.
- Support the creation of a capacity-building program at HSIs to be housed within pertinent federal agencies (e.g., National Science Foundation; U.S. Department of Commerce; U.S. Department of Agriculture; U.S. Department of Energy, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) to support the training and retraining of faculty and curriculum development for STEM education.
- Extend funding past 2019 of Title III, Part F of HEA, which promotes articulation agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions and professional schools to prepare students in STEM careers.

- Increase federal and state support to HSIs to:
 - Provide advanced training and development in STEM areas for elementary and secondary school teachers;
 - Expand the number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in STEM areas in schools with large numbers of Latino students;
 - Promote awareness of higher education options for students in the varied STEM fields; and
 - Support HSIs to enhance and expand counseling programs to train culturally and linguistically prepared counselors capable of addressing the needs of Hispanics and English learner students.
- Measure, monitor, and incentivize community colleges to successfully transfer higher proportions of students to four year institutions, and to eliminate subgroup transfer differentials.

Promote awareness of higher education options for students in the varied STEM fields.



TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, ADMINISTRATORS

Nationally, Latino students comprise 25% of the children in K-12 public schools, but Latino teachers only represent 8% of teachers.³⁷ Closing this massive gap between teacher workforce and student enrollment will require investing in and supporting the teacher preparation work at Minority-Serving Institutions, which prepare most teachers of color. Additionally, all teachers must be culturally and linguistically competent, and prepared for the diversity within their classrooms.

Policy Recommendations

- Ensure that students of color have equitable access to quality teachers, counselors, and school administrators.
- Develop assessments and certifications of cultural competency and assign teachers appropriately based on such assessment and training.
- Ensure quality professional development for teachers of Latino, English Learner and migrant students, to ensure these teachers are culturally and linguistically competent.
- Ensure that the definition of Profession-Ready teacher and principal currently in the Educator Preparation Reform Act is included in Title II of the Higher Education Act.
- Develop partnerships between school districts and colleges and universities to provide degree advancement and professional development to teachers of Latino and English Learner students.
- Provide federal resources to train principals, superintendents, and other high-level school officials with cultural and linguistic competency.
- Ensure that Latinos are being recruited to serve in high-level positions within colleges and universities, including but not limited to presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and similar positions.
- Ensure that programs are in place aimed at retaining Latino and Latina higher education professionals.

VETERANS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Latinos make up the largest single group of veterans under 34 years old, at 19% as compared to White veterans at 7%, and African American veterans at 11%.³⁸ This continues a long tradition of service in the Latino community; Hispanics have served in every war since the American Revolution, many making the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation. After World War II, the Montgomery G.I. Bill was the first federal program to grant higher education assistance. To this day, the G.I. Bill assists veterans, including Hispanics, to pursue higher education.

Unfortunately, the Montgomery G.I. Bill does not provide meaningful outreach provisions to assist the Office of Veterans Affairs with resources to identify and reach out to Hispanic veterans, and other veterans of color to encourage and support access to higher education.

Policy Recommendations

- Fund proactive college outreach and recruitment of Hispanic veterans, and other veterans of color, as well as programs that provide academic and related support services to eligible veterans enrolled in Hispanic-Serving Institutions and other Minority-Serving Institutions.
- Include a college outreach and guidance plan for veterans as they enlist into the armed services, throughout transitions in location of service, and as they approach the conclusion of their term of service.
- Promote awareness of the extension of Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits to immediate family members in communities of color.

IMMIGRATION

Of the more than 58 million⁴⁰ Hispanics living in the United States, 35% are foreign-born.⁴¹ Federal immigration law and policy continues to be a top priority for the Latino community. Our immigration, asylum, and naturalization policies must respect the dignity of the individual, end the criminalization of Hispanic immigrants, reflect our nation's commitment to human and civil rights, and deny state and local encroachment into this federal arena.

Rather than working to demonize and attack immigrants, Congress must work toward passing a fair and just comprehensive immigration reform bill

Immigration from Latin America has been on a decreasing trend in recent years.⁴² One notable exception is the case of Central American adults and children who have been fleeing Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, seeking safe haven and opportunities for a dignified way of life.⁴³ However, anti-Latino and anti-immigrant fervor has increased in the media, from presidential candidates and Congress. Over the last three years, Congress has considered bills with significant support from Congressional members that would challenge the President's executive authority on deferred action, place enforcement of immigration laws in the hands of local police, criminalize those who would help immigrants, militarize the southern border, exploit immigrant workers, eliminate the due process rights of immigrants, and increase the number of Hispanics detained and deported. Rather than working to demonize and attack immigrants, Congress must work toward passing a fair and just comprehensive immigration reform bill that must ensure all people are treated with dignity and afforded the necessary protections under the law against discrimination and abuse. Administratively, the NHLA calls on the Obama Administration to reconsider its harsh positions in relation to Central Americans seeking safe haven, and to end family detention practices. We urge any subsequent administration to treat those seeking refuge consistent with human rights principles.

ADMINISTRATIVE RELIEF

On June 15, 2012, the Obama Administration announced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program to protect immigrants who were brought to the United States as children and meet other specific requirements against deportation.⁴⁴ On November 20, 2014, President Obama announced that the administration would offer deferred action to undocumented parents in a program known as Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA).⁴⁵ The President also announced an expansion of the 2012 DACA program for youth who came to the United States as children. Together the programs are anticipated to benefit 5.2 million undocumented immigrants.⁴⁶ The NHLA strongly supports the deferred action initiatives, such as DACA and DAPA, and is a proponent of continued and expanded administrative relief, particularly in the absence of congressional action.

In the absence congressional action to reform our immigration laws, the next Administration should continue administrative relief programs.

Policy Recommendations

- Provide deferred action to parents of DACA holders and LGBTQ immigrants without children who are not otherwise eligible for relief under DAPA.
- Ensure the timely adjudication of DACA renewal applications and provide interim Employment Authorization Documents and other protections for DACA renewal applicants facing lapse in status in employment authorization.
- Provide deferred action to workers and others with deep ties to the United States.
- Provide a more robust system to expand access to prosecutorial discretion and take necessary steps to ensure uniform availability nationwide.
- Expand the use of Deferred Enforced Departure and Temporary Protected Status for Latinos from countries that are experiencing crisis -- such as a natural disaster, armed conflict, or extreme criminal violence, including sexual and domestic violence.
- Expand the use of Administrative Closures to stop removal proceedings and order of supervision for persons in cases in which people with final removal orders cannot be deported to their home countries.
- Provide protections for victims of notario fraud.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

The majority of Americans support prompt federal action in enacting sweeping and compassionate immigration reforms to fix our nation's failed immigration system and strengthen our commitment to basic fairness, opportunity for all, and equal treatment under the law.⁴⁷ Any legislation seeking to offer legal immigrant status without a clear path to citizenship, militarize the border, and/or criminalize immigrants must be rejected. Additionally, legislative action should also address the push factors that lead many from Central America to flee their countries as a result of violence, poverty, and government corruption. Congress must act to ensure that adults and children seeking refugee status are treated humanely, that their claims are being adjudicated consistent with the law and human rights principles, and that we as a country are working to address root causes of forced migration.

Policy Recommendations

- Enable the estimated 11.5 million undocumented people in our country to come forward and attain legal status, with an earned pathway to full citizenship.
- Reform legal channels that reunite families, such as changes to the family preference system.
- Eliminate per-country caps that unfairly discriminate and delay the entry of Latino immigrants.
- Expand the number of visas available in the appropriate immigrant and non-immigrant categories. Eliminate visa caps for victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, trafficking and other crimes. Limit the expansion of guestworker programs that do not lead to permanent residence.
- Oppose all efforts, whether through constitutional amendment, federal or state legislation, or state-to-state compacts, that would reopen the Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment or call into question the citizenship of persons born in the United States.
- Include stronger protections for immigrant workers against exploitation by employers who underpay, cheat and use abusive and retaliatory tactics, including but not limited to:
 - Bolster the U visa and T visa for immigrant labor, and ensure protections for workers suffering from labor or civil rights violations.
 - Oppose discriminatory and unfair employment eligibility verification systems, such as E-Verify.
 - Ensure workplace discrimination is eliminated and all immigrant labor and civil rights are protected.
- Ensure that any temporary worker program protects temporary workers and protects against adverse effects on the wages and working conditions of domestic workers. Temporary worker protections should include, at a minimum:
 - 1) A roadmap to citizenship for guestworkers;
 - 2) Strong and equal labor protections;
 - 3) True economic freedom and mobility;
 - 4) Ability to live with immediate family if desired;
 - 5) Sensible limits ensuring temporary workers are only brought in when there is a true market need; and
 - 6) Protection from abuse during the international labor recruitment process.
- Provide undocumented farmworkers with a path to adjust their immigration status and attain eventual citizenship. Ensure all workers' ability to enforce legal protections, improve wages and working conditions, and participate in civic life.
- Include the DREAM Act in comprehensive reform to ensure students' paths to earned legal status and ultimately citizenship.
- Extend the dates for eligibility under section 245(i) of the Legal Immigration Family Equity Act so that qualified individuals can adjust their immigration status upon payment of a penalty.⁴⁸
- Promote immigrant entrepreneurship by awarding green cards and a path to citizenship to immigrants whose businesses thrive and create jobs.
- Grant authority to immigration judges and DHS officers to waive inadmissibility factors or terminate removal proceedings for a noncitizen where it would not be contrary to public interest, where there would be hardship to a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse, child, or parent, or where the noncitizen would be otherwise eligible for naturalization.
- Enact legislation to provide a pathway to Legal Permanent Residency status to individuals who have resided in the U.S. for long periods of time as recipients of different forms of temporary status, such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

- Enact legislation to provide adequate foreign aid to “sending” countries in order to creatively and thoughtfully address the triggering factors that lead so many people, including unaccompanied children, to flee their homes as a matter of survival.

STATE AND LOCAL ENFORCEMENT OF FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAWS

Federal immigration enforcement properly rests with federal authorities. Accordingly, the NHLA strongly objects to state and local law enforcement of immigration laws, either on their own or delegated by the federal government to state and local law enforcement officials.

Policy Recommendations

- Stop states and localities from enforcing immigration laws, which by their nature should be enforced at the federal level.
- Eliminate the Priority Enforcement Program, and any immigrant detainer or requests for notification mandates or agreements with local authorities.
- Eliminate all U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) presence in or access to local jails and databases, a practice that has led to racial profiling, illegal detention, and deportation.
- Eliminate any information sharing (e.g. release date from custody, home address, place of employment, court hearings) between all local law enforcement and ICE, including but not limited to, police, sheriffs, probation officers, parole officers, and prosecutors.
- Enforce federal laws, such as the ruling in Plyler v. Doe,⁴⁹ that protect a student's right to an education without discrimination based on immigration status.
- Work with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in its efforts to exercise prosecutorial discretion in enforcement of immigration laws and the U.S. Department of Justice in its efforts to curtail states and localities impermissibly enacting immigration laws, a federal responsibility.

DEVELOPMENT, RELIEF, AND EDUCATION FOR ALIEN MINORS ACT (DREAM ACT)

Each year, approximately 65,000 students who came to this country as young children,⁵⁰ unaware of their immigration status, see their dreams to attain higher education, serve in the military, or pursue other aspirations come to an abrupt halt as their status prevents their access to the opportunities they were raised to believe they would enjoy.

Policy Recommendations

- Consider both Republican and Democratic immigration proposals that offer minors and young adults meaningful immigration relief. Encourage bipartisan efforts to develop workable legislation to help immigrants.
- Enact the DREAM Act⁵¹ to give undocumented students a path to earned legalization and citizenship.
- Enact legislation that ensures that eligible students have the right to federal higher education assistance, student loans, and other critical benefits, such as health care. Oppose policies that would deport youth who grew up in the United States to a country they barely know.

Enable the estimated 11.5 million undocumented people in our country to come forward and attain legal status, with an earned pathway to full citizenship.

NATURALIZATION AND INTEGRATION

In July 2007, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) increased naturalization application fees from \$400 to \$675.⁵² Prior to the increase, there was a dramatic rise in naturalization applications beginning in 2006. In fiscal years 2011 and 2012, USCIS saw a decrease in the number of applications. A 2013 study by the Pew Hispanic Center stated that 93% of Latino immigrants who have not yet naturalized say they would if they could.⁵³ Of those Latino immigrants eligible to naturalize, nearly 20% cited financial costs as a main prohibitive factor to naturalizing, with another 28% conveying language and other personal barriers.⁵⁴ This study suggests the negative impact of high costs on the rate of naturalization, particularly for groups with generally lower incomes and English language difficulties.

Policy Recommendations

- Stabilize and lower the cost of naturalization by revisiting the immigration fee structure and expanding the availability of options to make naturalization more affordable. Direct USCIS to actively examine viable options to make naturalization more affordable.
- Provide discretionary funding of \$10 million for Citizenship and Integration Grants administered by the Office of Citizenship, but not to be allocated from the Immigration Examinations Fee Account.
- Ensure a fully operational Task Force on New Americans by allocating funding for and appointing an Executive Director, as directed by the President, who is tasked with creating the Task Force agenda, convening meetings, and supervising Task Force activities.
- Empower the Office of Citizenship to obtain private financial support for citizenship promotion and education work. In order to reduce the agency's reliance on revenue from immigration service application fees and continue to stabilize naturalization fees, the Director of USCIS and his/her designees should be permitted to solicit, accept, hold, administer, and utilize gifts and bequests, including property, for the limited purpose of supporting the work of the Office of Citizenship and funding the Citizenship and Integration Grants Program.
- Provide for more flexible or generous fee waiver policies beyond what is currently available.
- Support through discretionary funding, the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, which is a cost-effective and efficient means of making naturalization more accessible for our nation's legal permanent residents.
- Continue the progress made in reducing the average processing time for naturalization applications.
- Increase funding to expand the availability of adult ESL and civics education so that those applying for naturalization can be prepared for the naturalization exam.
- Encourage state, local, and employer incentives that support and encourage, but do not coerce naturalization.
- Ensure immigrant access to critical services, such as health care, regardless of status.

Stabilize and lower the cost of naturalization by revisiting the immigration fee structure and expanding the availability of options to make naturalization more affordable.

DEMILITARIZATION OF THE SOUTHWEST BORDER

Militarization and spending on securing the Southwest border has increased exorbitantly over the last decade. In 2012, the budget for CBP was \$11.65 billion dollars, an increase of 94% from 2004's budget of \$6 billion.⁵⁵ The U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) employs more than 21,400 agents, double the size from 2003.⁵⁶ More than 85% of its force is deployed at the U.S.-Mexico border.⁵⁷ The number of CBP agents does not include the thousands of Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel deployed along the Southwest border. Nearly two thirds of the United States population, or about 200 million people, live within CBP's 100-mile border zone jurisdiction.⁵⁸ The militarization along the Southwest border has destroyed environmental resources, involved unfair and discriminatory taking of private property, encouraged racial profiling, proliferated immigration checkpoints, and drastically affected the means of subsistence and way of life of persons living in border communities.

Policy Recommendations

- Oppose exorbitant spending on border enforcement, spending which is taking place without thoughtful consideration of current border-community and security needs.
- Restrict CBP's authority on the border to under 25 miles and limit searches of private property.
- Prohibit racial profiling anywhere, regardless of proximity to the border.
- End discriminatory checkpoints.
- Limit CBP's authority to conduct internal immigration enforcement to a designated area along the border.
- Oppose the construction of any more walls along the Southwest border. Currently on the US-Mexico border there are over 650 miles of fencing, more than 300 video surveillance systems and a dozen drones.
- Withdraw National Guard troops from the Southwest border and replace them with civilian law enforcement officers who are properly trained to deal with border issues.

DRAMATICALLY REDUCE THE NUMBER OF DETAINED IMMIGRANTS, END THE DETENTION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, AND END THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF DETENTION

Over the last decade, government spending on immigration detention beds has increased at a rapid rate without any commensurate justification. Since 2003, the number detention beds increased by 86% from 18,000 to a congressionally mandated bed quota of 33,400.⁵⁹ A mandated bed quota is only found in the immigration detention system and is justified to detain immigrants who pose a public safety risk. However, according to DHS data the majority of immigrants detained had no criminal record. The dramatic increase in immigration detention beds is out of step with the decline in unauthorized immigration rates and stabilization of the undocumented population in recent years. According to new preliminary research by the Pew Research Center based on census data, the unauthorized immigrant population has remained stable for the last five years after 17 years of changes.⁶⁰

With the recent increase of women and children migrating to the United States from Central America, there has been a dramatic rise in family detention in an effort to slow the flow of migration. After years of decline, in 2014, the Obama administration announced that it would renew detaining immigrant children and families. Two new facilities opened in 2014, including a GEO Group privately operated facility in Karnes County, Texas. In its supplemental appropriations request to Congress, the Obama Administration asked for funding for up to 6,300 family detention beds across the country.

Overall private prison corporations have increased their share of the immigrant detention industry. Since 2009 the private prison industry has increased its share of immigrant detention beds by 13%. Today, for-profit prison companies operate more than 60% of ICE immigration detention beds, up from 49% in 2009. Private companies run 90% of the largest ICE detention facilities.

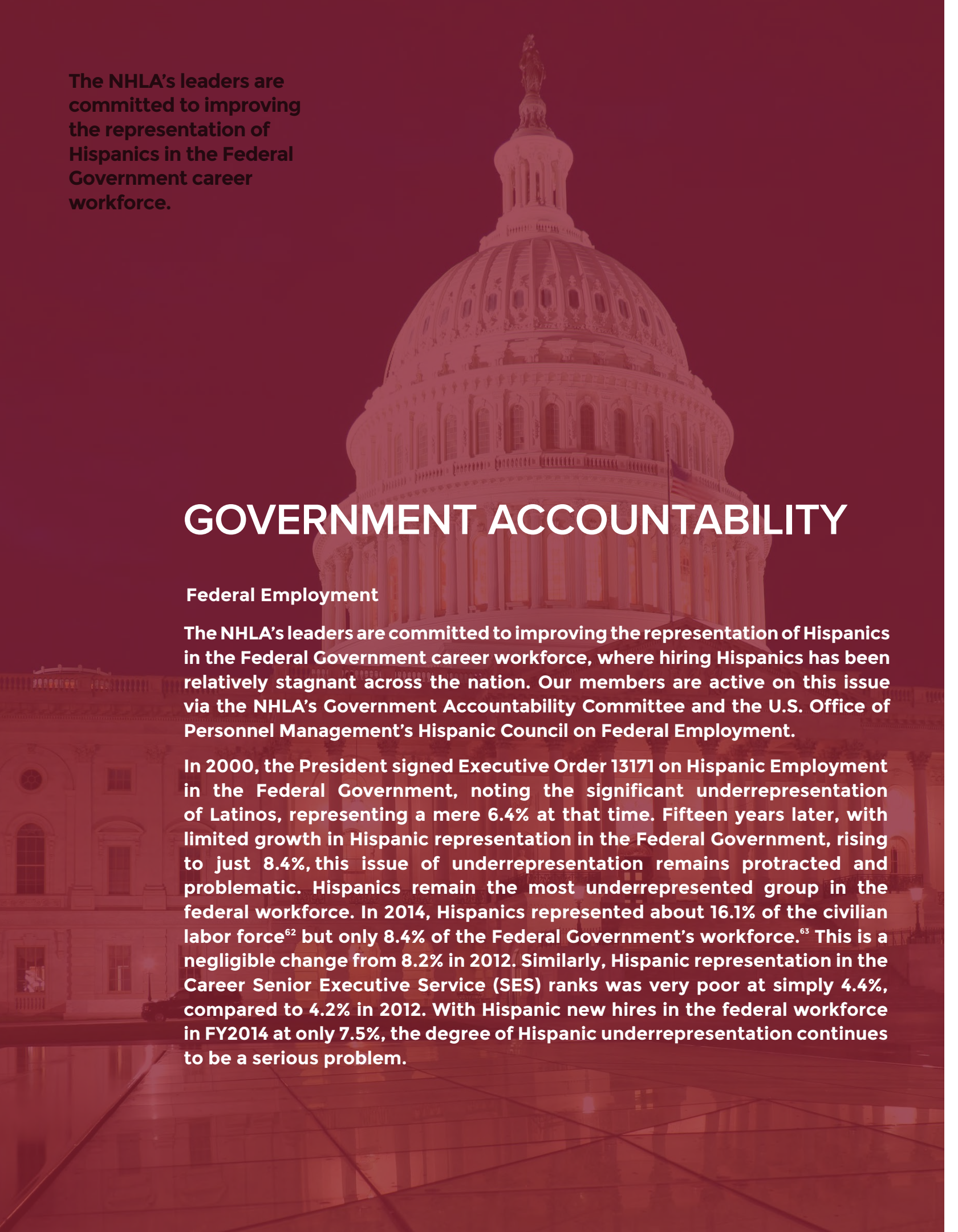
In detention, immigrants often suffer physical or verbal mistreatment, and are routinely denied access to medical care and attorneys. Furthermore, detention results in family separation, negatively impacts children, and destroys the financial stability of the family. DHS must prioritize a system that keeps families together and respects due process rights of all immigrants. LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) immigrants in detention face a high likelihood of sexual assault and other abuse; DHS must protect all detainees from such violations, or release them from detention.⁶¹

Policy Recommendations

- End the detention of families and close all facilities used for the sole purpose of detaining women and children.
- Reject any inclusion of a mandated bed quota in congressional appropriations legislation.

- Require DHS to use cost effective alternatives to detention, with an emphasis on community supervision programs and not GPS monitoring, and increase the number of persons granted release on their own recognizance, and reform bond practices.
- Prohibit federal and state governments from contracting with for-profit companies for immigration related detention services or alternative to detention programs.
- Immediately end contracts with facilities with reported abuse, and prosecute individuals accused of having abused immigrants.
- Ensure all detention facilities provide adequate access to health services.
- Increase the protections for LGBTQ immigrants in detention. Alternatives to detention are the safest options for LGBTQ immigrants. However, if a transgender individual must be detained, ICE's policy should be to place the individual in housing that is consistent with the individual's gender identity, not the anatomy or sex assigned at birth.
- Require Legal Orientation Programs in all immigration facilities and increase access to counsel for immigrants. Nearly 85% of detained immigrants are not represented by an attorney. Requiring a Legal Orientation Program in all facilities will assure detained immigrants have an understanding of their basic rights. Access to counsel is the single biggest determining factor in the outcome of immigration cases, and increased access to attorneys will assure more immigrants are released from detention.
- Ensure that all personnel are informed on interacting with survivors of trauma and how to conduct adequate, trauma-informed, credible fear interviews with potential refugees to ensure they do not fall through the cracks.
- Ensure that all individuals are thoroughly and properly screened for any and all immigration relief to which they are entitled, including but not limited to U visas, T visas, asylee or refugee status.
- Take measures to prevent violence against all detainees, including physical and sexual violence, by federal employees, third party contractors, other detainees, and any other individual who is in contact with detained individuals.

DHS must prioritize a system that keeps families together and respects due process rights of all immigrants.



The NHLA's leaders are committed to improving the representation of Hispanics in the Federal Government career workforce.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Federal Employment

The NHLA's leaders are committed to improving the representation of Hispanics in the Federal Government career workforce, where hiring Hispanics has been relatively stagnant across the nation. Our members are active on this issue via the NHLA's Government Accountability Committee and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Hispanic Council on Federal Employment.

In 2000, the President signed Executive Order 13171 on Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government, noting the significant underrepresentation of Latinos, representing a mere 6.4% at that time. Fifteen years later, with limited growth in Hispanic representation in the Federal Government, rising to just 8.4%, this issue of underrepresentation remains protracted and problematic. Hispanics remain the most underrepresented group in the federal workforce. In 2014, Hispanics represented about 16.1% of the civilian labor force⁶² but only 8.4% of the Federal Government's workforce.⁶³ This is a negligible change from 8.2% in 2012. Similarly, Hispanic representation in the Career Senior Executive Service (SES) ranks was very poor at simply 4.4%, compared to 4.2% in 2012. With Hispanic new hires in the federal workforce in FY2014 at only 7.5%, the degree of Hispanic underrepresentation continues to be a serious problem.

The absence of a representational number of Hispanics across the Federal Government undercuts the government's ability to produce policies that are inclusive, fair, and responsive to the concerns of the Hispanic community. As a result, Hispanics, and the issues and programs affecting them, are either overlooked or managed ineffectively. In addition, federal employment has been a significant factor in the development of a stable middle class and its relative absence in the Hispanic community adds to this community's economic challenges, including its level of civic participation.

Projected mass retirements in the federal workforce present government departments and agencies with the opportunity to change the numbers, but only if federal employment policies and practices regarding the recruitment and hiring of Hispanics are completely revamped. Since Hispanics constitute the largest and fastest growing segment of the population, it would appear to be a perfect opportunity to both backfill positions and to commence an affirmative concentrated effort to change the paradigm from one of exclusion to one of inclusion. The Federal Government must work toward creating equal opportunities to remedy the historically severe underrepresentation of Hispanics in the federal workforce.

Policy Recommendations

The NHLA reiterates its position that the President needs to sign a new Executive Order specifically addressing the need for the Federal Government to correct the underrepresentation of Hispanics in its workforce. Without such a specific commitment from the White House, advisory mechanisms, such as the Hispanic Council on Federal Employment, will continue to be ineffective in addressing this problem.

This Presidential Executive Order on Hispanic Federal Employment should outline an aggressive program to substantially and affirmatively increase the number of Hispanics in the federal workforce, including increased representation of Hispanics in the career SES. The Federal Government should:

- Provide staff development programs to retain existing Hispanic federal workers and increase opportunities for promotion into higher ranks of government service.
- Develop a Federal Hispanic Accountability Model, to be promoted at departments and agencies by the Office of Personnel Management.
- Monitor progress toward reaching the Hispanic civilian labor force statistics as tangible hiring goals and hold department and agency leaders accountable by making Hispanic hiring goals part of the performance-based review system and using it as an evaluation tool for the promotion of managers.
- Eliminate citizenship requirements for employment with the Federal Government, unless constitutionally mandated.
- Require that Hispanic Council on Federal Employment (HCFE) recommendations be institutionalized into agencies' policy structures.
- Prevent agencies from receiving a positive green GPRA rating if their hiring of Hispanics fails to meet strategic targets.
- Place the agencies with the worst records of Hispanic hiring under special status requiring a major restructuring. This should include agencies, which have historically had the poorest records of Hispanic hiring.
- Require each agency to undergo an annual Federal Advisory Commission Act comprehensive review process addressing Hispanic underrepresentation in its workforce.
- Require agencies to develop partnerships through MOUs with Hispanic organizations that promote Hispanic hiring.
- Provide adequate resources to develop a pipeline program of Hispanic candidates leading into GS-14 and GS-15 positions, the career Senior Executive Service (SES) positions, and SES Candidate Development Programs (CDP).
- Develop a Mentoring Program for Hispanics aspiring to progress and/or advance into the supervisory/management and SES levels. Publicly disclose demographic data for federal flagship programs, such as the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program, career pathways, and special hiring authorities.

- Intentionally increase recruitment and placement of Hispanics in the Presidential Management Fellows Program, especially Hispanics from HSIs; if there is resistance or a lack of commitment to increasing Hispanic representation in this program, then a separate program for Hispanics should be created and funded.
- Proactively encourage federal agencies to sponsor/hire Hispanics and students from HSIs into federal internships and contract for such internships through third-party Hispanic providers.

There is only one Hispanic serving as Small Business Director among the top 25 federal agencies.

FEDERAL CAREER EMPLOYMENT SCORECARD

The NHLA will develop and distribute a Federal Career Employment Scorecard. The NHLA periodically issues an assessment of the Administration on its efforts to ensure the full inclusion of Hispanics throughout the federal workforce and issues a scorecard on the level of Hispanic employment within each federal agency.

The NHLA Federal Career Employment Scorecard will reflect the representation of Hispanics within those agencies. The categories specifically related to Hispanics that will be scored will be: GS-5 through GS-11; GS-12 through GS-13; GS-14 and GS-15 and; Senior Executive Service (SES) levels.

It will also evaluate programs developed to address the underrepresentation of Hispanics, including how those programs are implemented; enforced; funded vs. other non-Hispanic programs; the Applicant Data Pool collected for Hispanics; and the number of Hispanics selected from that Applicant Pool by occupation.

The fundamental purpose of the Scorecard is to ensure that leaders, organizations, the public, and the media are fully informed about the performance of federal agencies as related to the underrepresentation of career and non-career employees in the Federal Government.

The NHLA Federal Career Employment Scorecard will reflect the representation of Hispanics within those agencies.

The President needs to sign a new Executive Order specifically addressing the need for the Federal Government to correct the underrepresentation of Hispanics in its workforce.

FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

In fiscal year 2011, the latest year for which we have data, of the \$98.2 billion in government awards, Hispanic-owned companies won only about 8.4% of that total, or \$8.21 billion. That year, only the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Small Business Administration exceeded their minority-owned small business procurement goals.

Under the 8(a) program, while Hispanic businesses constitute 40% of all minority-owned firms in the United States, they receive only 14% of the dollar value of all contracts awarded in that program. Hispanic businesses are also underrepresented among recipients of SBA loans and technical assistance grants. Additionally, the growth rate of women-owned businesses is outpacing the number of male-owned businesses.⁶⁴ In fact, the number of Latina-owned businesses has grown an astounding 87.5%.⁶⁵ According to the National Women's Business Council, Latinas own close to 788,000 businesses in the U.S., an impressive 45% increase since 2002 and a 133% growth since 1997.⁶⁶ Likewise, Latinas own 36% of businesses owned by minority women, and one of every 10 women-owned businesses overall, yet they represent less than one percent of government contractors from the five percent of the prime and subcontractors for women-owned small business established by federal executive agencies according to the SBA.⁶⁷ Moreover, there is only one Hispanic serving as Small Business Director among the top 25 federal agencies.

The number of women-owned firms is increasing faster than the number of men-owned businesses.

POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

The NHLA recognizes that the future of the Latino community hinges on the ability to sit at every decision-making table in our government. Our democracy works best when we have a reflective democracy that is representative of the diverse voices of every community. Despite the growth of the Latino population and their increased civic participation, Latinos account for a fraction of state and presidential political appointments.

The NHLA Latino Appointments Program helps tackle the pipeline problem by creating the infrastructure to identify and support Latino candidates interested in political appointments, running state pilot programs with our coalition members to increase political appointments made by Governors, and creating a network of current and former appointees that we can support as they move up the pipeline and that we engage to serve as mentors for those coming up behind them.

Over time, tied to Presidential elections, it appears that Hispanic appointments have increased within each term. It also appears that following the creation of the NHLA Latino Appointments Program, Hispanic appointments increased more steadily. The apparent correlation between increased representation and direct intervention provides evidence in favor of the need for an Executive Order on Hispanic Federal Employment.

**Our democracy works best
when we have a reflective
democracy that is representative
of the diverse voices of every
community.**

A blue-tinted photograph of the Lady Justice statue, a symbol of law and justice. The statue is shown from the waist up, holding a pair of scales of justice. The scales are ornate, with a decorative frame and two pans hanging from a central point. The statue's face is blindfolded, representing impartiality. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a courtroom or a similar formal setting.

CIVIL RIGHTS

Today's obstacles to the full civic engagement of our vibrant and compassionate Latino community come from both institutional and purposefully discriminatory actions that continue to profile, punish, and marginalize Latino potential. The NHLA recommits itself to restoring the dignity that comes with the protection of civil and constitutional rights in a strong democracy and to ensuring public safety while concomitantly combating the worst effects of mass imprisonment.

DEMOCRACY AND VOTING RIGHTS

American democracy requires constant vigilance against overt and dilutive measures to weaken the Latino vote. Suppression of the Latino vote has evolved from delays and intimidation at the polls to illegal purges to excessive documentary requirements to prove citizenship among our naturalized citizens. Such laws purport to address “voter fraud” – a phenomenon that has no basis in fact. Instead these measures are aimed at disenfranchising many Latino citizens, and have an especially disproportionate negative impact on women.⁶⁸

The power of minority voters was also directly compromised by the gutting of a powerful provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). In 2013, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* struck down Section 4 of the VRA, a key provision that determines those states and subdivisions required to seek federal preclearance for election changes, in order to ensure voters are not disenfranchised based on race.

Today’s obstacles to the full civic engagement of our community come from both institutional and purposefully discriminatory actions that continue to profile, punish and, marginalize Latino potential.

Policy Recommendations

- Oppose voter photo identification requirements, voter purges, and other measures that disproportionately suppress Latino voter turnout.
- Oppose proof of citizenship requirements for purposes of voter registration; signed attestations are sufficient.
- Support same-day registration and early voting options.
- Support the right of the people of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia to determine their own future political status.
- Support legislation or a constitutional amendment to rein in unlimited corporate money from influencing elections and the democratic process and to remove “personhood” from corporations.
- Support legislation to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that restores key voting protections by providing for pre-clearance review of election changes by historic offenders and also guards against future discrimination by requiring federal review of election changes most associated with voter discrimination. The NHLA requires any

legislation to amend the VRA to provide meaningful, long-term protections for the growing and highly mobile Latino electorate.

- Oppose legal and legislative efforts to alter the 14th Amendment’s grant of citizenship to native-born Americans, or to reinterpret the 14th Amendment to exclude children and non-citizens from consideration in legislative apportionment and redistricting.
- Provide for new discretionary funding to support states and localities, through the mechanisms established in the Help America Vote Act, in making crucial upgrades to outdated election equipment and processes.
- Ensure the Federal Government is using all tools at its disposal to target voter discrimination, including rigorous investigation and prosecution of violations of federal language assistance and accessibility requirements applicable to all levels of government actors.

CENSUS

The activities of the Census Bureau to collect data on all residents of the United States through the decennial census, American Community Survey (ACS), and other surveys are indispensable to the enforcement of civil rights, to the fair allocation of federal funding, and to documenting the economic and social status of the Latino population. As the United States’ demographic profile becomes increasingly diverse, it is critical that the Census Bureau collect reliable data about Latinos and the nation as a whole.



As the United States’ demographic profile becomes increasingly diverse, it is critical that the Census Bureau collect reliable data about Latinos and the nation as a whole.

Policy Recommendations

Funding

Support sufficient funding to the Census Bureau to adequately prepare for the 2020 Census, and assure the continuation of the Economic Census. The Congress must provide sufficient funding to the Census Bureau to ensure the data collection process is both more effective and efficient, while reducing the incidence of undercounting Latinos, children, immigrants, non-English proficient, and other hard-to-reach populations.

American Community Survey And 2020 Census Testing

Support the continuation and further development of the American Community Survey (ACS), including increasing its sample size, to further improve its accuracy with smaller geographies and subgroups. Turning the ACS into a voluntary survey would seriously and completely undermine its value.

The Census Bureau must ensure that it tests all options under consideration with linguistically diverse pools of sample respondents, and that any redesign of race and ethnicity questions does not diminish the quality of detailed data collected of a specific Latino national origin and other racial and ethnic groups.

Latino Employment And Procurement

Establish a special Latino Employment Task Force that reports directly to the Director of the Census Bureau to address the longstanding and persistent problem of the extreme underrepresentation of Latinos on the Bureau's workforce, including, but not limited to, a review of the Bureau's use of prior arrest records and citizenship status as barriers to employment. This is particularly important in the staff recruitment and build-up that takes place prior to the next decennial census.

Support a change in the Bureau's "usual residency rule" to allow prisoners to be counted at their home address and thus eliminate "prison-based gerrymandering."

The Census Bureau should create and adequately fund the position of Chief Diversity Officer to develop a Minority and Female Owned Business Procurement Program to substantially increase the business it conducts with Latino and other minority-owned vendors, particularly as it develops its Communications Program for the 2020 Census. This program should identify and eliminate obstacles to such contracting in the Census Bureau's current procurement rules and practices.

Latino Community Outreach

The Census Bureau must increase its active engagement with Latino stakeholders on critical decisions regarding the 2020 Census and other Census surveys, including decisions that may fundamentally alter the collection of racial, ethnic, and immigration data. The Bureau must assure adequate Latino representation on its National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations, its Scientific Advisory Committee and other advisory and expert committees and forums.

The Census Bureau must develop a stronger language assistance program that can provide accurate translations and culturally sensitive messages for all of its surveys and services.

In preparation for the 2020 Census outreach, we support the expansion of the Census Bureau's Census Information Centers (CIC) Program that supports Latino and other community-based institutions in the dissemination of Census data and research to the nation's communities of color and other underserved populations.

Begin to fully fund the Census Bureau's Partnership Program by 2017 and maintain it thereafter as a means of strengthening the Bureau's network of stakeholders and informing them in a timely manner about key policy concerns.

The Census Bureau must increase its active engagement with Latino stakeholders on critical decisions regarding the 2020 Census.

Puerto Rico

The Census Bureau should include Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories as part of its regular national population counts and all of its data sets. This would include the immediate inclusion of Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories in the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Economic Census to ensure full inclusion of all U.S. citizens in the federal statistical system on such critical issues as national measures of economic, health, and other indicators.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND MASS IMPRISONMENT

The United States continues to have the highest proportion of prisoners per capita of any country in the world, a product of a racially skewed criminal justice and law enforcement system. The reality is that Latinos are disproportionately and adversely affected by discriminatory policing and criminal justice practices, but are not actively and fully engaged in shaping their solutions. The reasons for this are multilayered but at the core is the overall Black and White binary that dominates the criminal justice debate in this country. In some parts of the country imprisonment and/or arrest data is still collected only for Blacks and Whites. In other parts of the country the police killing of unarmed Latinos and Latinas is not elevated sufficiently by the mainstream press.

In addition, unconstitutional practices such as racial profiling based on group stereotypes, not individualized suspicion, are a constant yet unwarranted feature of Latino life both near the border and in our urban enclaves. This bias results in more frequent stops by law enforcement, higher incidences of police brutality (including death), and greater obstacles to post-incarceration re-entry. The bias is particularly acute in the pre-trial stages: Hispanics are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to be detained pretrial, least likely to receive a non-financial release option, and are given the highest bail amounts. This holds true even when controlling for the type of offense, prior failure to appear in court, number of charges, and prior criminal record.

“Latinas make up one of the fastest-growing groups imprisoned. In fact, the number of women behind bars is increasing at almost double the rate for men, and Latinas are 69% more likely to be incarcerated than White women.”⁶⁹ Once in prison, women are subject to sexual misconduct perpetrated by prison guards who often go unpunished.⁷⁰ Finally, the privatization of correctional facilities, especially for immigration detention, places profit over humane treatment of Latino families, women, and children.

At the same time there is an urgent need to address the public safety needs of Latino communities – needs that often go unmet by law enforcement. In 2010 the FBI reported that two-thirds of ethnically motivated hate crimes in the country were based on “anti-Hispanic bias,” the highest percentage of such victims in the past decade.

The United States continues to have the highest proportion of prisoners per capita of any country in the world, a product of a racially skewed criminal justice and law enforcement system.

Latinos are disproportionately and adversely affected by discriminatory policing and criminal justice practices.

Data Collection

Require through regulatory oversight the collection of all relevant criminal justice data, at the federal and state level, for both Hispanics and others across racial classifications, as well as sexual orientation classifications; condition federal appropriations to States on full and accurate race/ethnicity reporting.

Eliminate excessive and unreasonable bail in all nonviolent criminal prosecutions.

Addressing Abuse of Power by Law Enforcement

Support the use of body cameras on police personnel, and other measures to document the incidences of the use of police force, with appropriate protections for the confidentiality of victims of underreported crimes, such as domestic violence and sexual assault.

Two-thirds of ethnically motivated Support the institution of special prosecutors to independently investigate and convene grand juries in every instance of a shooting or other severe physical harm of civilians by law enforcement.

Require a full accounting of all injuries and attacks against Latinos and immigrants in private federal detention centers.

Pre-trial Reforms

Eliminate excessive and unreasonable bail in all nonviolent criminal prosecutions.

Reform bail procedures so that those who are ultimately not convicted are refunded their full bail payment, and eliminate bail requirements for asylum claimants.

Develop a far-reaching mechanism to enforce Padilla, which holds that defense attorneys must explain the immigration consequences of a guilty plea to their clients.

Prohibit excessive bonds and civil forfeiture related to Latinos and immigrant detainees.

Trial and Sentencing Reforms

Study mechanisms to increase the diversity of criminal court juries by promoting service by non-English speakers and by non-citizens.

Adopt drug policy reform measures that have the biggest impact on reducing the incarceration of Latinos for nonviolent drug crimes.

Eliminate mandatory minimums. Such laws take discretion away from judges to take nuances of a given case into account, and result in longer prison sentences, thus expanding the prison population.

Ban the use of the death penalty, which disproportionately impacts people of color.

The U.S. Department of Justice should aggressively investigate complaints related to excessive fines and fees that result in increased incarceration of poor Latinos in debtors' prisons across the United States.⁷⁰

Corrections Reforms

In order to sever financial incentives to incarcerate Latinos, eliminate the use of private prisons and terminate the Immigration and Customs Enforcement quota of 34,000 immigration detention beds throughout the country. Additional policy recommendations for reforming immigrant detention can be found in the Immigration section of this report.

Prohibit the shackling of pregnant women during their pregnancy and delivery in immigration and criminal detention centers. Such practices are cruel and cause trauma to both the mother and child.⁷¹

Prohibit the use of solitary confinement for pregnant women, juveniles, transgender, and gender non-conforming people. For all others, eliminate solitary confinement for petty corrections violations, severely limit the stay in solitary confinement beyond reasonable limits, and ensure that basic human needs are provided to anyone sentenced to solitary confinement.

Create a guide on how to prevent sexual assault in prison and a protocol on how to respond to sexual assault in prisons.

Re-entry

Support the establishment of educational resources available to prisoners as a way to rehabilitate Latinos behind bars.

Eliminate felon disfranchisement as a way to accelerate prisoner reentry and civic engagement and enhance democracy.

Congress and the President should enact the Second Chance Act and require employers to "ban-the-box" so that the formerly incarcerated have better chances to find permanent employment.

Collaborate with Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) to link formerly incarcerated people with higher education opportunities upon release.

Invest additional resources in family reunification to address the cross-generational effects of incarceration.

Eliminate the use of private prisons and terminate the Immigration and Customs Enforcement quota of 34,000 immigration detention beds throughout the country.

Ensure that juvenile justice reforms address the issues of young women of color, including Latinas.

Juvenile Justice

Provide funding to school districts to reduce the racial discipline gap and over-reliance on school suspensions of Latino students as a way to curb the school-to-prison pipeline that harms so many Latinos.

Ensure the full inclusion of Latinos in the priorities and program service delivery of the President's My Brother's Keeper and eliminate the gaps in opportunity and achievement that they face.

Ensure that juvenile justice reforms address the issues of young women of color, including Latinas, which are among one of the most rapidly increasing groups of incarcerated youth.⁷³

Ensure that juvenile justice facilities and adult facilities across the country track Latinos by race, gender, and ethnicity, from initial court processing through final sentencing or case disposition.

Advance a federal mandate that requires all children under 18 years of age be tried as youth offenders. Latino youth are more likely than their White peers to receive adult sentences.

Insist that incarcerated youth receive the same quality vocational and educational opportunities that public school students receive by implementing stronger accountability systems.

Allow teens to speak with a trauma informed counselor who may be able to determine whether the juvenile has been a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence in order to address his/her needs as a victim, not as a criminal.

Hate Crimes

Increase the support and funding for the U.S. Department of Justice investigations and prosecutions of hate crimes against Latino residents.

Allocate additional resources to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to investigate hate crimes against Latinos.

Latino youth are more likely than their White peers to receive adult sentences.

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

The NHLA strongly supports vigorous federal enforcement of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and other federal anti-discrimination laws, especially as they relate to actions on behalf of Latino employees.

Policy Recommendations

- Support efforts to ensure that the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) aggressively pursue violations of civil rights employment laws, especially in matters of discrimination based on language, previous criminal histories, and credit worthiness.
- Support affirmative action outreach and hiring benchmarks via the federal contracting process through the Office of Federal Contract Compliance and other means.
- Ensure robust implementation of Executive Order 13583, or any similar executive actions, to increase Latino representation in the federal workforce.
- Enhance enforcement of protections against discrimination based on national origin or citizenship status.
- Support gender equity in the workplace by enforcing existing anti-discrimination provisions that prohibit sex-based discrimination in hiring, job placement and segregation, training, promotions, pregnancy discrimination, and equal pay.
- Enhance enforcement of protections for survivors of violence who are required to take time off work to deal with child custody, criminal prosecutions, protection orders, and other issues related to intimate partner violence.
- Create pathways to professional licensing for non-citizens.
- Enhance enforcement of protections against pregnancy discrimination. Women of color and immigrant women disproportionately work in physically demanding and low-wage jobs that offer little flexibility. Thus, they are especially likely to need these accommodations.⁷³
- Update and improve the EEOC's guidance on national origin discrimination as a way to curb unlawful practices against Latinos.

Create pathways to professional licensing for non-citizens.

- Take steps to protect against racial, sexual, citizenship, and other forms of bias-driven harassment in the workplace.
- Enhance protections against discrimination on multiple bases, such as national origin and sex or national origin and LGBTQ identity, among others.

LANGUAGE AND INTEGRATION

The Latino community strongly opposes both the increasing hostility to language minorities and the resulting efforts to establish English as the national or official language.

Policy Recommendations

- Oppose national legislation or state or local laws establishing English as the official or national language as they are unnecessary, harmful, and conflict with the constitutional rights of citizens and non-citizens alike.
- Support "English-Plus" legislation that celebrates the country's multiculturalism and multilingualism and enhances our global competitiveness.
- Significantly increase efforts across the Federal Government to ensure that Executive Order 13166 language assistance standards (for those with limited English proficiency skills) are carried out in all federal conducted activities, and by recipients of federal assistance, like state courts.



JUDICIARY

A fair and independent judiciary is critical for the preservation of Latino civil rights. As the Latino population continues to grow, and the backlash of discrimination continues to manifest itself, the need to protect the civil rights of the community will become even greater. Having diverse perspectives and experiences represented on the bench further enriches the ability of the judiciary to consider cases that impact our nation’s diverse population and reverses the underrepresentation of Latinos in the judiciary.

As the Latino population continues to grow, and the backlash of discrimination continues to manifest itself, the need to protect the civil rights of the community will become even greater.

Policy Recommendations

- Nominate and confirm judges who have demonstrated a record of preserving or expanding civil rights legal protections and who reflect the growing diversity of the country.
- Increase efforts to close the gap of law school enrollment and retention of Latino students so as to diversify the ranks of lawyers.
- Nominate and confirm more Latina judges.
- Nominate and confirm Latino/a and other judges with significant experience with and awareness of the growing Latino population.

PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND TOLERANCE IN MEDIA

Today nearly 40% of Americans are people of color, yet exceedingly few people of color are represented at mainstream media outlets. The number of Latino men in lead roles is diminishing and Latinas continue to be relegated to roles based on gender and ethnic stereotyping.⁷⁴ For example, “since 1996 Latinas have portrayed nearly 70% of the most well known maids on television and cinema.”⁷⁶ This lack of diversity has resulted in reckless and false representations of Latinos and other people of color, fostering a climate of hate and intolerance that breeds racism and hate crimes. It has also prevented Latinos and other communities from accessing the important news and information needed to fully engage in our democracy.

Nearly 40% of Americans are people of color, yet exceedingly few people of color are represented at mainstream media outlets.

Policy Recommendations

- Encourage a comprehensive Federal Communications Commission (FCC) inquiry into the extent and effects of hate speech in media, and/or an update to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (NTIA) 1993 report to Congress, The Role of Telecommunications in Hate Crimes.
- Undertake efforts to discontinue the use of inflammatory language about Latinos and immigrants by the media in order to help prevent the fueling of hate speech and intolerance.
- Support FCC policies to expand and promote media ownership diversity.
- Oppose broadcast consolidation as a race-neutral way to open doors for diverse owners to enter the media marketplace, including but not limited

to unreasonable covert consolidation, such as through Joint Sales Agreements and other vehicles, designed to circumvent FCC ownership limits.

- Ensure that the FCC is collecting thorough data on diversity of media ownership and employment. Require that the FCC provide this data to the public in a transparent and easily searchable format that breaks the numbers down by race and ethnicity.
- Support congressional action to reinstate the “minority tax certificate,” which increased ownership diversity substantially before it was abandoned in the late 1990s.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of several wind turbines. The turbines are dark silhouettes against a bright, orange-hued sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The lighting is warm and the overall tone is reddish-orange. The turbines are positioned at different heights and angles, creating a sense of depth and scale.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Latinos are on ground zero of environmental degradation and are disproportionately impacted by pollution and toxic exposure. Changes in climate and extreme weather are hitting our communities first and magnifying the existing vulnerabilities that Latinos already face, such as poverty, chronic and reproductive health conditions, and inadequate infrastructure, to name a few. Latinos want action to slow environmental damage and protect nature, not just for ourselves but also for future generations.

Half of all U.S. Latinos live in the country's most polluted cities. Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are more prevalent in Latinos living in inner cities near carbon emitting plants, truck routes, and factories. Though Latinos only account for about 16% of the labor force, they account for 43% of ground/maintenance and construction workers and up to 75% of agricultural field occupations that expose workers to health hazards, bad air quality and economic impacts of extreme weather. Pesticides affect Latinos who are agricultural workers in rural areas of the nation. Studies have shown that exposure to toxic chemicals leads to infertility, miscarriage, low birth weight, fetal malformation, and retarded fetal growth.⁷⁷ Moreover, states such as California, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, where the majority of Latinos live, are experiencing more intense and frequent heat waves and drought. Estimates show that in California alone the 2015 drought caused the loss of around 21,000 farming-related jobs, jobs occupied for the most part by Latinos.

In many of these cases, Latinas are even more vulnerable because they face social, economic, and political barriers that further limit their coping capacity. As NHLA member organizations' research has shown, Latinas are the most vulnerable of all groups at the workplace, and the situation is even worse for undocumented Latinas. In fact, women of color and immigrant women comprise a majority of domestic and hospitality workers who "are regularly exposed to industrial strength cleaning supplies, medical supplies, and other agents with known or possible impacts on reproductive health."⁷⁸ Latinas also have less access to resources and the decision-making process and face limited mobility. "Worker exploitation is also pervasive in these industries—making it that much harder for women to seek protection from chemical exposures."⁷⁹ Thus, in the policymaking response to environmental challenges, it is important to include gender-sensitive strategies.

New energy policies hold the promise of simultaneously addressing environmental concerns and creating economic opportunity. The new era of Energy Independence in the United States, along with our neighbors Mexico and Canada, has fueled thousands of jobs and lowered the price of fuel at the pump. While the development of oil and gas deposits has resulted in achieving energy independence, alternative energy technology, such as solar, wind, biomass, hydrogen fuel cells, and other renewable forms of energy, are also on the rise and

stand to directly benefit Latino communities, especially in the Southwest and Western United States. Also, Mexico's Energy Reform has the potential to create a boom of joint ventures and investment opportunities for small and mid-size companies in the Southwest, leading to opportunities for economic growth, employment, and educational opportunities. Possessing skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) will be necessary for Latinos to thrive in the energy sector. With less than 2% of today's STEM workforce being Latino, while comprising nearly 25% of the country's youth, there is an urgent need to develop diverse top talent in the technology and energy sector to take advantage of the opportunities for economic and social mobility that these jobs present. See the Education section for additional recommendations.

The transition to a clean economy presents a significant opportunity for the Latino community, not only to improve its health and reduce its vulnerability but also to access jobs in the green energy sector. However, to realize this opportunity we must include the resources for training and skills development. We must guarantee that the jobs that are created are long-term jobs with livable wages.

New energy policies hold the promise of simultaneously addressing environmental concerns and creating economic opportunity.

"Worker exploitation is also pervasive in these industries— making it that much harder for women to seek protection from chemical exposures."

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Oppose efforts to undermine or repeal bedrock environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and National Environmental Policy Act.
- Support strong enforcement of existing public health and environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act; Clean Water Act; Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (Superfund); Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA); and the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).
- Meaningfully engage Latinos with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, including those meant to address disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income communities.
- Enforce environmental and civil rights laws, such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, to protect vulnerable and overburdened communities from environmental pollutants in an appropriate, swift, and transparent manner.
- Expand research on the long-term impacts of environmental pollutants to public health in low-income Latino communities.
- Implement policies that will ensure Latinos benefit from the future growth in green jobs.
- Promote programs that prepare and train Latinos for these opportunities, especially in STEM and energy sectors, where Latinos are largely underrepresented.
- Update the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) to more effectively end the regular inclusion of toxic chemicals in common household products.⁸⁰

Support policies, programs and regulations that invest in communities most vulnerable to effects of climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Policy Recommendations

- Significantly increase efforts across the Federal Government to combat climate change, curtail greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable power, conservation, energy efficiency, energy efficient vehicles, and clean fuels.
- Encourage greenhouse gas standards, such as methane pollution standards for the oil and gas industry.
- Support policies, programs and regulations that invest in communities most vulnerable to effects of climate change.
- Support full implementation of the Clean Power Plan (CPP) and meaningful engagement of Latinos in the development of state implementation plans.
- Support policies, programs, and regulations that increase access to solar energy for all Americans, in particular Latinos.
- Promote policies and programs that aid small businesses in adopting clean energy and energy efficiency.
- Support robust funding of the U.S. contribution to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), a fund designed to address the critical needs of developing nations, including Latin America, in order to foster resilience to climate change impacts and support low-carbon development.


Significantly increase efforts across the Federal Government to combat climate change, curtail greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable power, conservation, energy efficiency, energy efficient vehicles, and clean fuels.

CONSERVATION

Policy Recommendations

- Support programs to recruit and train a new cadre of Latino conservation leaders and continue to promote an inclusive system of national parks and monuments with which Latinos can identify.
- Permanently reauthorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).
- Oppose all efforts to undermine or repeal the Antiquities Act, which gives the President the ability to establish new national monuments or enlarge existing monuments.
- Protect more places, such as national monuments, that tell the history of Latinos.
- Improve and create new partnerships for environmental stewardship and conservation of cultural, historic and natural resources important to Latinos.
- Enact the National Park Service Centennial Act to enable the National Park Service to better serve the American People, including Latinos.
- Oppose efforts to privatize public lands and attempts to mandate development on our public lands that could harm traditional and growing uses by Latinos.

The transition to a clean economy presents a significant opportunity for the Latino community.



Enact the National Park Service Centennial Act to enable the National Park Service to better serve the American People, including Latinos.

A photograph of a doctor in a white coat and stethoscope examining a baby held by a smiling woman. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The doctor is on the right, leaning forward, and the woman is on the left, holding the baby. The baby is looking towards the doctor.

HEALTH CARE

ACCESS TO QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 has been the nation's most transformative health care law in recent history that allows Hispanics a great opportunity to obtain affordable and quality health coverage. The ACA developed new health insurance marketplaces established by the State or by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) with a simplified enrollment process and open enrollment period during the winter each year. The NHLA has the following recommendations based on community feedback since the beginning of enrollment to the ACA.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 has been the nation's most transformative health care law in recent history.

Policy Recommendations

- Support full implementation and funding of the ACA, including the expansion of Medicaid and the Prevention and Public Health Fund.
- Emphasize affordability of health insurance options, examples of the actual costs of care, and provide a budget sheet and demonstrate the overall value of coverage.
- Support community navigator and in-person assister programs.
 - Provide more funding for navigator and in-person assister programs in Latino communities, especially rural Latino communities; and
 - Fund community based organizations, which are trusted entities that understand the Latino community and provide health insurance literacy education in a culturally appropriate manner, in addition to health organizations.
- Eliminate the seasonal worker exemption under the employer mandate to ensure that seasonal farmworkers and other seasonal workers receive equal access to employer provided health insurance and are not treated differently due to the nature of their work.
- Strengthen health insurance portability across state lines to ensure that migrant farmworkers and other mobile populations who travel and work in different states throughout the year have access to affordable health insurance plans that can be used throughout the U.S.
- Develop policies to increase health care coverage for immigrants, including:
 - Fully utilizing the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system in Health care.gov to avoid delay from requiring verification of status through additional forms of proof of status;
 - Ensuring that lawfully present immigrants with incomes below the poverty line are correctly determined eligible for subsidies without requiring them to obtain a Medicaid denial separate from their Marketplace application;
 - Allowing DACA and DAPA recipients to purchase plans with subsidies in the ACA Marketplace;
 - Oppose any effort to include a waiting period for accessing health programs in the DREAM Act or related legislation; and
 - Remove obstacles to undocumented individuals' use of health exchanges to purchase private, unsubsidized health care insurance.

HEALTH CARE DELIVERY REFORM

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the focus of health care policy is on the Triple Aim: improving the experience of care for individuals, improving the health of populations, and lowering per capita costs. Health care delivery reform priorities include meeting the demands of increased patients and clients to enroll in health insurance, to access health care and wellness services, to increase quality care with transparency and accountability, and to develop measures and outcomes for financing and for community-based services that impact population health services.

People living in poverty and without health insurance coverage, a disproportionate number of whom are Hispanics, and members of racial/ethnic minority groups, also experience our health system's shortcomings more acutely. Extensive research shows that economically and socially disadvantaged individuals have greater difficulty obtaining health care, receive lower-quality care, and have poorer health outcomes than other groups. As the Hispanic population has become the largest racial/ethnic minority group, there is a critical challenge for federal support of increased Hispanic targeted programs, research, and capacity development for CBOs that serve Hispanics. The NHLA recommends revisiting the 1996 Hispanic Health Action Agenda of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with the inclusion of other federal partners.

By prioritizing complex and vulnerable patient populations, we as a nation can target our energy and resources where the impact will likely be greatest. Moreover, improvements in care and health for these patients can catalyze improvements throughout the entire health care delivery system. The U.S. needs to improve the way information is communicated, with transparency on the cost and quality of care, to use electronic health information to inform care, and to bring the most recent scientific evidence to the point of care so we can bolster clinical decision-making for Hispanic patients. Health care providers need to participate with the Health Care Payment Learning and Action Network, an HHS initiative that brings together public- and private-sector stakeholders to work collaboratively to identify and overcome barriers to deploying new payment models, share lessons learned, and find ways to better align their activities.

The NHLA recognizes the importance of affordable and available services with innovative models, such as ACOs and patient-centered medical homes, that focus on prevention, health, and wellness care that should include culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services. In addition, the focus on quality of care with new incentives for primary care, team-based care with provider payment reform for value-based payment structures must include a focus on safety net hospitals, clinics, and private medical practices. The NHLA also supports the importance of coordinated care models that include inpatient, outpatient, home care, institutional long-term care, and the need for education about Medicare and community health care services for the chronic care users.

The NHLA recognizes the need to continue to focus on the public sector leadership that is required to build the focus on population health. Federal and state government agencies must collaborate and share data that emphasizes the need to support leadership development and grants to community based organizations that have expertise with Hispanic populations and health equity. At the federal level, health in all policies has been started, for example, at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation, and U.S. Department of the Interior, so that community health is improved. At the State Medicaid levels, DSRIP Waivers are key to the future infrastructure for Medicaid populations.

With the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, the focus of health care policy is on the Triple Aim: improving the experience of care for individuals, improving the health of populations, and lowering per capita costs.

MEDICAID

One way to decrease costs in the health care system is to provide increased access to Medicaid, so that more of the lower income population in our nation can access health care for preventive services at earlier stages of chronic diseases, decreasing the use of higher cost care required in hospitals and emergency rooms.

Key policies for Medicaid reform are those that support a seamless transition for persons who leave Medicaid for the Marketplace and, vice versa, for the dual eligible with unique challenges, and for more State expansion to cover the uninsured. In expansion states Medicaid covers adults at 138% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Tax credits in the Marketplace are available for those up to 400% FPL. On the average, States without Medicaid expansion only qualify families of three with incomes up to around 45% FPL.

States will also be the focus of Medicaid health care delivery reform. The NHLA recognizes that key States with large Hispanic populations should support community leadership that can help design culturally competent language services and programs targeted for all Hispanics, including undocumented individuals. States could encourage this in their roles as purchasers, regulators, and service providers.

In expansion states Medicaid covers adults at 138% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Tax credits in the Marketplace are available for those up to 400% FPL.

Policy Recommendations

- Develop cultural competence in community health education and health care policies and programs by:
 - Increasing community transformation grants;
 - Expanding health policy in all programs (beyond health care agencies) to individual states; and
 - Educating community leaders, such as the National Conference of Mayors, National Governors Association, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and school boards.
- Develop incentives for quality care for the safety-net and Hispanics, and other underserved populations, in health care policies.
 - Expand financing, tax incentives, and loan repayment to hospitals, clinics, physicians, and other providers who provide health care in underserved communities.
 - Develop the pay for performance programs and redesign programs to facilitate value based care and quality care and patient safety with reduction of medical errors with the ultimate goal to improve the patient-provider relationship.
- Encourage the collection of racial/ethnic identification in health care data and information and in health communications campaigns.
- Providers should participate in media, including Spanish-language media, to reach limited English proficient community members with information about enrollment and utilization.
- Ensure cultural and linguistic competencies in the health care facilities, including health systems, medical groups, and clinics that care for Hispanic patients. Take measures to provide quality care to all Latino patients, including indigenous community members from Mexico, Guatemala, and other countries who do not speak English or Spanish and whose health care customs may differ from mainstream Latinos.

- Increase disease prevention programs that incorporate social determinants of health, including all sectors that are important factors in health equity in our communities.
- Eliminate the five-year waiting period for legal residents to access Medicaid.
- Maintain the expansion of Medicaid to those up to 133% of the federal poverty line to ensure that the working poor and others will be able to receive health care coverage.
- Eliminate barriers to care for people in Puerto Rico by immediately addressing discriminatory practices in the areas of Medicaid, Medicare, and the Affordable Health Care Act toward Puerto Rico. The upcoming financial shortfall of the Affordable Care Act and a double-digit reduction in Medicare Advantage will result in a major health care crisis in Puerto Rico.

POPULATION HEALTH

The health care transformation is increasing focus on population health. This provides targeted populations for health care providers to set goals and measures, to track their progress, and to show a big data connection to quality care to whole populations.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Hispanic children have the highest prevalence of obesity at 17% compared to non-Hispanic White (3.5%), African American (11.3%), and Asian (3.4%) children.⁸¹ Prevention and early intervention programs must be targeted at Hispanic families to avoid the chronic health effects of obesity in our society. The NHLA encourages parents and siblings, who are role models for children in their families, to participate in programs to increase healthy nutrition, physical activity, and to reduce sedentary lifestyles for them and their children.

Hispanic children have the highest prevalence of obesity at 17%.

Policy Recommendations

Schools:

- Develop and mandate programs for public school teachers to instruct both Hispanic students and their parents about the importance of physical activity, proper nutrition, and to consider health insurance options.
- Support the implementation and maintain the funding of nutritious food for in- and after-school programs focused on Hispanic diets.

Communities:

- Develop healthy weight education and link to ACA enrollment locally at fiestas, health fairs, and churches with marketing and culturally tailored interventions.
- Increase access to breastfeeding, quality foods, and water or low calorie and non-sugary beverages within limited budgets.

Media:

- Increase Hispanic media information on obesity and strategies to decrease it.
- Use social media to reinforce interventions that keep communities informed.
- Disseminate culturally sensitive bilingual messages at an appropriate level of literacy that discuss the health effects of obesity and promote awareness about the ACA.
- Ban multi-media advertising of unhealthy food and sugar sweetened beverages specifically targeted to children.

Health Systems:

- Promote empowerment and Hispanic patient self-management through teaching, training, and partnering in patient centered medical homes, especially to increase discussions and focus on bullying and wellness for children who are overweight.
- Reimburse providers through quality measures and medical home financing, for targeted Hispanic family health education, counseling about consumption and chronic disease, and physical activity.
- Support the implementation of financial and food literacy resources to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children and SNAP Program.

A persistent gap in coverage between the HPV vaccination and other vaccinations recommended for adolescents is a sign of missed opportunities to protect adolescents from cancers caused by HPV infections. Hispanic women have the highest rates of cervical cancer in the United States.

HPV AND HISPANIC YOUTH

Despite increases, coverage estimates for human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine remained low in 2014 and continues to lag behind rates for more common vaccines that prevent tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, and various bacteria. Four out of ten adolescent girls and six out of ten adolescent boys have not started the HPV vaccine series, and are vulnerable to cancers caused by HPV infections.⁸² A persistent gap in coverage between the HPV vaccination and other vaccinations recommended for adolescents is a sign of missed opportunities to protect adolescents from cancers caused by HPV infections. Hispanic women have the highest rates of cervical cancer in the United States. According to the CDC, studies have found that Hispanic adolescents and their mothers have limited knowledge of the HPV vaccination.⁸³ This is of major concern since, for every 100,000 women living in the U.S., about 11 Hispanic women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, compared to only seven non-Hispanic women.⁸⁴ Because of the overall lack of knowledge of the HPV vaccine and the increased incidence and prevalence of HPV related disease among Hispanics, it is imperative that Hispanic youth receive the HPV vaccination. Strategies include engaging parents, clinicians, and partners through culturally and linguistically competent methods, such as training and messaging.

For every 100,000 women living in the U.S., about 11 Hispanic women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, compared to only seven non-Hispanic women.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Latinos continue to face obstacles including cultural and linguistic differences, as well as restrictions based on age, economic status, immigration status, and geographic location which may prohibit many women, especially Latinas, from obtaining comprehensive quality reproductive healthcare and from exercising their reproductive freedom. Specifically, Latino communities suffer from disproportionately high rates of preventable diseases and treatable conditions and for decades Latinos have been the most uninsured racial and ethnic group.

Latinas are diagnosed with cervical cancer, a disease that is almost entirely preventable, at nearly twice the rate of non-Latina White women.⁸⁵ In fact, according to the latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Latinas have the highest cervical cancer incidence rates amongst all racial and ethnic groups.⁸⁶ Latinas also experience disproportionately high rates of unintended pregnancy⁸⁷ and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Latinas face challenges in consistently accessing contraception that is affordable and available, preventing them from planning their futures and their families. Latinas encounter additional barriers such as cost, lack of transportation and lack of geographically available clinics, insufficient culturally and linguistically competent health systems and providers, and discriminatory immigration policies that make it difficult for individuals and communities to access the full range of reproductive healthcare when they need it. It is for these reasons that the NHLA believes policies should not politically interfere with a Latina's ability to make or exercise these deeply personal decisions related to reproductive health, dignity, and autonomy.

Policy Recommendations

- Support access to a full range of comprehensive reproductive healthcare. Latinas' ability to make the best healthcare decisions for themselves and their families, including the decision to become a parent or to terminate a pregnancy, without barriers related to cost or immigration status will only be possible with access to a full range of comprehensive reproductive healthcare.
- Restore robust funding to the Title X family planning program in the appropriations process.
- Enact the Health Equity and Accountability Act, a comprehensive, strategic, and principled legislation, sponsored by the Congressional Tri-Caucus (Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Congressional Black Caucus, and Congressional Hispanic Caucus) which seeks to eliminate health disparities for communities of color and subpopulations that face widened disparities due to primary language, sex, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, and other factors that are barriers to health care.
- Provide increased funding for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI) and the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH)
- Remove all language in annual appropriations legislation that restricts coverage for, or the provision of, abortion care in public health insurance programs. This includes the repeal of the Hyde Amendment, and all policies that restrict funding for abortion care and coverage.
- Support proactive legislation that aims to ensure reproductive health by working to remove barriers to abortion access.

YOUNG PARENTS

Young parents, like all parents, deserve respect for their decisions and the opportunity for their families to thrive. Unfortunately, expectant and parenting youth are often shamed and stigmatized while trying to make the decisions that are best for themselves and their families. Cultural and political responses to young parenthood, particularly young motherhood within communities of color, criticize individual behaviors rather than provide solutions for the challenges that pregnant and parenting youth experience.

While pregnancy and birth rates among youth have been declining for decades, Latina youth continue to experience higher incidences of pregnancy and birth than their white peers. In preliminary data for 2014, Latinas between the ages of 15 to 19 had experienced birth at least twice the rate of their White peers of the same age.⁸⁹ There are many factors that contribute to this disparity including barriers to affordable contraception, lack of sexual health information and services, including culturally competent, comprehensive sex education, and lack of financial resources. Moreover, 30% of Latinos under the age of 18 live in poverty, making it quite difficult to obtain needed reproductive health services.⁹⁰

For young Latinos who decide to parent, they often face numerous issues that pregnancy prevention campaigns do not address. Young mothers bear the brunt of the narrow scope. These include discriminatory practices and inequities in the workplace, in educational settings, and in access to healthcare. They also often struggle with homelessness or lack of affordable childcare. In 2010, only 50% of young mothers were able to receive their high school diploma by the time they reached the age of 22.⁹¹ In the workplace, expectant and parenting youth are over-represented in low wage jobs where they may be more likely to experience pregnancy discrimination. In fact, women ages 16 to 24, including women of color, are 18.3% of the workers in these jobs.⁹²

Young parents, like all parents, deserve respect for their decisions and the opportunity for their families to thrive.

30% of Latinos under the age of 18 live in poverty, making it quite difficult to obtain needed reproductive health services.

Policy Recommendations

- Promote policies that allow young parents and families to thrive, especially mothers.
- Ensure fair employment and support policies that guarantee that reasonable accommodations are available to pregnant and parenting youth.
- Support policies that ensure pregnant and parenting students can complete high school by providing resources and tools to succeed in school and higher education, such as financial aid, childcare, lactation accommodations, and other resources.
- Promote policies that safeguard affordable, quality, accessible childcare, and early education. Increased investments must be made in childcare and early education programs, including increases of at least one billion dollars for the Childcare and Development Block Grant, \$1.52 billion for Head Start and Early Head Start, \$500 million for Preschool Development Grants, \$65 million for Grants for Infants and Families (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), and \$50 million for Preschool Grants (Part B, Section 619 under IDEA).

An estimated 267,000 LGBTQ undocumented persons cannot purchase private health insurance at full cost on the exchanges and are barred from applying for Medicaid and CHIP.

Expectant and parenting youth are over-represented in low wage jobs where they may be more likely to experience pregnancy discrimination.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER (LGBTQ) HEALTH

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Latinos face a number of health inequities due to discriminatory practices by providers, insurers, and other systemic barriers. LGBTQ Latinos already experience high rates of poverty and discrimination in employment that contribute to poor health outcomes.⁹³ Thirty-six percent of Latino transgender persons postponed care when they were sick or injured because they feared discrimination.⁹⁴ Prior to the completion of the first enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act, in a national study, one in three LGBTQ persons were uninsured, and more than two-thirds were uninsured for more than two years.⁹⁵

Moreover, immigration status plays a role in the health care that LGBTQ immigrants can access. An estimated 267,000 LGBTQ undocumented persons cannot purchase private health insurance at full cost on the exchanges and are barred from applying for Medicaid and CHIP.⁹⁶

Additionally, few health care providers are trained in the health concerns of LGBTQ persons, many reporting that they never received training during medical school.⁹⁷ For the LGBTQ Latino community, this means fewer providers who are linguistically and culturally competent regarding medical issues that this community faces. Given these factors, LGBTQ Latinos experience negative health outcomes, such as cervical cancer, HIV/AIDS, and other illnesses.⁹⁸ Latino men who have sex with men represented nearly 68% of new HIV infections in 2010 among the Latino community, underscoring the need for targeted outreach.⁹⁹

Policy Recommendations

- Support policies that provide LGBTQ Latinos coverage and access to gender-affirming care that is culturally competent. Continue to oppose policies that permit discriminatory health care policies impacting this community.
- Ensure that Ryan White Part D (Services for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Their Families) is fully funded and remains a distinct part of Ryan White and includes coverage of obstetric and gynecological services, which is particularly important for the immigrant community.
- Increase funding for data collection efforts and continue to collect adequate data to help close the disparities gap in LGBTQ populations, including communities of LGBTQ persons of color, LGBTQ immigrants, and other LGBTQ populations.
- Remove arbitrary transgender-specific exclusions from all health plans, including state Medicaid programs.
- Ensure the enforcement and implementation of Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, the non-discrimination provision, once regulations are finalized.

ELDERLY HEALTH

With the aging of our population and the high costs of health care and support services, it is essential that we continue to support the Medicare Program, including the trend toward patient-centered comprehensive coordinated care and value-based quality care delivery reform. In addition to the growth of the Medicare Advantage program and the Medicare part D program. The NHLA recognizes the importance of targeting aging care policies that focus on the Latino elderly. Latino elderly tend to have complex needs, with multiple-diseases, and are on Medicare and Medicaid (dual eligible), or to be in need of language and culturally competent services. They are in low-income households. Many live alone and with the chronic stress of poverty. They may also be in need of special family community care-giving mental health services.

Home health care programs and institutional programs (nursing homes, rehab facilities, and senior centers) need to be improved to include more comprehensive programs that can impact health disparities in cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, Hepatitis C, asthma, Alzheimer's disease, and depression in Latino elderly. There is a great need for the testing, screening, and education for these chronic diseases, along with increased follow-up, compliance with treatment, and services that are affordable.

Policy Recommendations

- Ensure that programs and benefits address the needs of the growing diverse aging population. Programs and benefits should be accessible to older adults with low levels of English proficiency and cultural and formal education gaps, with the goal of reducing the disparity of access to benefits for Hispanic older adults. Increase awareness of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hepatitis C testing recommendation to educate Hispanic elderly and providers. This entails:
 - Enforcing CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services) Standards;
 - Promoting age sensitivity; and
 - Outreach and education strategies that seek out older Hispanic adults where they live and gather in a culturally, linguistically, and age appropriate manner.
- Bridge the information gaps between social programs (Social Security, Medicare, pension programs, etc.) and those approaching the age of eligibility by developing an early notification system, so diverse older adults will be more aware of the options available to them and learn how to navigate U.S. systems.
- Ensure senior accessibility to SNAP and other cultural and age sensitive meal programs, or otherwise provide access to good-quality, nutritious food. No older adult should go hungry in the U.S.
- Ensure access to paid family leave, allowing families to have long-term care, and services and provide programs that support family informal caregivers through education, and moral support.
- Establish a pipeline for Hispanic students to enter the geriatric health care workforce with incentives to go into fields that serve the nation's older adults, so that health care facilities can provide health care in a culturally, linguistically, and age appropriate manner.

The NHLA recognizes the importance of targeting aging care policies that focus on the Latino elderly.

GUN VIOLENCE

Gun violence is an issue that impacts the Latino community, from individuals who face the ongoing threat of gun violence in their neighborhoods to Latino immigrants who have fled gun violence in their countries of origin. Hispanics in the United States are disproportionately affected by firearms violence, which leads to chronic stress, anxiety, and mental health issues. The homicide rate for Hispanic victims is nearly twice as high as the murder rate for white victims.

More than 47,000 Hispanics were killed by guns between 1999 and 2013, including 31,800 gun homicide victims and 13,317 gun suicides. Homicide is the second leading cause of death for Hispanics ages 15 to 24. More than two-thirds of Hispanic murder victims are killed with guns.¹⁰⁰ Women in the United States are eleven times more likely to be murdered by a gun than women in other high-income countries. More than half of all murders of America's women are committed with a gun, and abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm.¹⁰¹ More than two-thirds of spouse and ex-spouse homicide victims between 1980 and 2008 were killed with firearms.¹⁰² In 2013, a gun was the most commonly used weapon in a murder of a woman by a man.¹⁰³

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that nearly one-third of U.S. women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. In the No MAS study¹⁰⁴ of 800 Latinas and Latinos nationwide, 56% reported knowing a victim of domestic violence. Domestic violence is associated with an array of short-term and long-term health consequences. Because of the sensitive nature of abuse, providing culturally relevant care is critical when working with victims of domestic violence. Health care providers should recognize that each victim of intimate partner violence experiences both the abuse and the health system in culturally specific ways. Disparities in access to and quality of health care have an impact on the ability of providers to help victims of intimate partner violence.

Women who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely than White women to experience difficulty communicating with their doctors, and often feel they are treated disrespectfully in the health care setting. Some patients experience abuse from the health care system itself and this may affect their approach to and utilization of health services. Providers also enter health care encounters with their own cultural experiences and perspectives that may differ from those of the victim. To communicate effectively with Latino populations, providers need to be aware of personal assumptions, ask questions in culturally sensitive ways, and provide relevant interventions.

Policy Recommendations

- Health care providers should be trained to understand, assess, and respond to the needs of victims of all forms of violence, including but not limited to gun violence and domestic violence.
- Health care systems should have language access plans and utilize skilled interpreters (not family members, caregivers or children) when helping non-English speaking survivors of all forms of violence, including but not limited to gun violence and domestic violence, and their families.
- Providers should increase their knowledge of personal bias and increase their understanding of multiple issues that victims of violence, including but not limited to gun violence and domestic violence, deal with simultaneously, such as language barriers, limited resources, homophobia, acculturation, and racism to provide accessible and tailored care.
- Health care providers should connect victims of all forms of violence, including but not limited to gun violence and domestic violence, to services and counseling that help them protect and care for themselves and their children.

In the No MAS study¹⁰⁴ of 800 Latinas and Latinos nationwide, 56% reported knowing a victim of domestic violence. Domestic violence is associated with an array of short-term and long-term health consequences.

Providers need to be aware of personal assumptions, ask questions in culturally sensitive ways, and provide relevant interventions.

HEALTH CARE WORK FORCE

The United States has focused efforts to increase underrepresented students who are prepared academically to successfully apply and be accepted into health care professional schools, including medical, dental, public health, nursing, pharmacy, and other schools and programs, such as social work and mental health. However, despite the efforts of the federal government, private foundations, and academic health centers, there is a crisis affecting Latinos in need of health care and behavioral health services, as well as with the health care and behavioral health workforce.

Latinos are severely underrepresented in positions of leadership, national boards and advisory committees, policy making, or direct services.¹⁰⁵ Due to the workforce shortage, policies, issues and potential innovations pertaining specifically to Latinos go widely unnoticed and unaddressed.¹⁰⁶ The lack of a robust Latino health and behavioral health workforce affects access, utilization, and adherence to quality care, which has resulted in an overrepresentation of Latinos among the most vulnerable populations, including the homeless, the poor, individuals in child welfare, and the incarcerated.¹⁰⁷


These disparities could be addressed through expanded quality, culturally, and linguistically competent behavioral health services, which would be possible with a larger, more diverse, and multidisciplinary bilingual and bicultural workforce that advances health equity.¹⁰⁸ A multidisciplinary workforce will also contribute to leadership at all levels, enhance high-quality research, better training, and new culturally competent evidence-based interventions for health promotion, prevention, and treatments targeting Latino communities.

Providing health and behavioral health care to the Latino community at the “point of entry” in the system is the key to wellness. It cannot be expected or assumed that Latinos will search out or even know how to look for mental health services. Mental health services should be provided in a culturally and linguistically appropriate setting to help overcome some of the existing treatment barriers, including stigma surrounding mental illness and other barriers that hinder access, utilization, and follow-through.¹⁰⁹

Care that is provided in a holistic manner, close to a person’s home, and community in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner leads to the best health outcomes. Health care professionals should adopt an integrated behavioral and primary care¹⁰⁹ model, which includes a multidisciplinary workforce and has been shown to be a successful and accessible model for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Policy Recommendations

- Continue the federal support for programs that have supported the growth in Hispanic health professionals, including Health Careers Opportunity Program, Centers for Excellence, the National Health Service Corps, among others.
- Support teaching clinics, including training with the Veterans Administration, to train medical residents in graduate medical education (GME) with a focus on Hispanic communities and health issues.
- Increase the incentives for Hispanic health care and behavior health care professionals to participate in interprofessional and integrated care programs.
- Encourage public-private partnerships, including paid internships.
- Support mentoring programs in partnership with medical and counseling schools, faculty, staff, and minority medical and professional associations.
- Implement debt reduction strategies for pre-health and health professional students, such as scholarships, three-year medical schools, and public service (nonprofit employers) and health equity research loan repayment programs for 10 years with federal loan payment at the end of that time.
- The U.S. Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, EPA, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should increase support for Hispanic students and students attending Hispanic-Serving Institutions who are interested in being trained for jobs in STEM, particularly in the health care industry, through health career pathways to health professions schools and with mentoring and paid internships, as well as linkages to the national Hispanic health professional associations.
- Hispanic health research should be increased through special National Institute on Minority



Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) research initiatives and activities in collaborations that link to the Hispanic community, Hispanic health professionals associations, Hispanic researchers, and with health research institutions and programs.

- Leadership development programs are needed for Hispanic physicians and other providers to be prepared for trustee boards and executive positions throughout corporate and nonprofit health care organizations, as well as in the federal and state governments.
- Hispanic health care leaders are needed at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The department should support the health professional associations' leadership development programs.
- Hispanics should be encouraged to consider and be included in the Senior Executive Service positions. An identified pipeline of Hispanics within federal agencies and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) should be available to fill those positions.
- Federal agencies should work closely with non-profit organizations, such as the National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives (NAHFE), that deal specifically with the SES and upper management of federal agencies.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.
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