

June 2, 2015

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: NHLA Position on Amendments to FY16 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Amendments**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of 39 leading nonpartisan national Latino advocacy organizations, we strongly urge you to vote against any anti-immigrant amendments offered to H.R. 2578, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2016.

NHLA's mission calls for unity among Hispanics nationwide to provide the Latino community with greater visibility and a stronger voice in our nation's affairs, including the pressing need to reform our badly broken immigration system. **NHLA will closely monitor votes on amendments to H.R. 2578 and will include them in future NHLA scorecards evaluating Members' support for the Latino community.**

In particular, **NHLA urges you to vote "nay" on the following amendments:**

- **Amendment No. 2 offered by U.S. Rep. Steve King** to prohibit funds from being used for the legal defense of individuals who are unlawfully present in the United States. This amendment would block federal support for efforts to provide legal representation for vulnerable populations with meritorious claims for relief, including unaccompanied children, and victims of mistreatment, exploitation, and trafficking. Without government assistance to representation, it is nearly impossible for unaccompanied children – who range in age from toddlers to teenagers – to identify attorneys and navigate our complex immigration laws and adversarial Immigration proceedings. Additionally, there may be a fiscal savings where immigrants have access to counsel for removal proceedings.<sup>1</sup>
- **Amendment No. 3 offered by U.S. Rep. Steve King** to prohibit funds from being used to with respect to the case of *Texas v. United States*, No. 15-40238 (5th Cir. May 26, 2015) (order denying appeal of preliminary injunction and motion for stay). This amendment would prevent the Administration from defending legal challenges to the Immigration Accountability Executive Actions announced in November 2014 to address some of the most immediate and damaging flaws in our immigration practices. In addition to effectively blocking the implementation of a sensible policy that helps families across the country, preventing a party to a legal dispute from the ability to mount an effective legal defense in court would pervert our system of justice and set a dangerous precedent.
- **Amendment offered by U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar** to prohibit funds for immigration guidance, as issued in [Operating Policies and Procedures Memorandum 15-01](#), Hearing Procedures for Cases Covered by new DHS Priorities and Initiatives. This amendment seeks to block implementation of the Administration's Immigration Accountability Executive Actions. The impact of blocking these actions would cause disproportionate harm to Latino families, who are the primary recipients of current and future grants of deferred action. Instead of attempting to cripple the Administration's movement toward fair and humane immigration practices, Congress must

---

<sup>1</sup> John D. Montgomery, Cost of Counsel in Immigration: Economic Analysis of Proposal Providing Public Counsel to Indigent Persons Subject to Immigration Removal Proceedings, NERA ECONOMIC CONSULTING, May 28, 2014, available at [http://www.nera.com/content/dam/nera/publications/archive2/NERA\\_Immigration\\_Report\\_5.28.2014.pdf](http://www.nera.com/content/dam/nera/publications/archive2/NERA_Immigration_Report_5.28.2014.pdf).

work with the Administration to enact bipartisan, comprehensive, and long-lasting immigration reforms.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns. For additional information, please do not hesitate to contact NHLA through Andrea Senteno of MALDEF, at [asenteno@maldef.org](mailto:asenteno@maldef.org) or 202-572-0467.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Saenz  
MALDEF, President and General Counsel  
NHLA Immigration Committee Co-Chair

Jose Calderón  
Hispanic Federation, President  
NHLA Immigration Committee Co-Chair

###

Established in 1991, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (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. In 2013, NHLA launched the Latinos United for Immigration Reform campaign. For more information, please visit [www.nationalhispanicleadership.org](http://www.nationalhispanicleadership.org) and follow @NHLAagenda.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

| Estuardo Rodriguez | [erodriguez@rabengroup.com](mailto:erodriguez@rabengroup.com) | (202) 463-4806 |  
| Brenda Arredondo | [barredondo@rabengroup.com](mailto:barredondo@rabengroup.com) | (202) 587-4945 |

American GI Forum | ASPIRA Association, Inc. | Avance | Casa de Esperanza | Cuban American National Council | Farmworker Justice | Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities | Hispanic Federation | Hispanic National Bar Association | Inter-University Program for Latino Research | Labor Council for Latin American Advancement | Latino Justice PRLDEF | League of United Latin American Citizens | MANA, A National Latina Organization | Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund | National Alliance of Latin American & Caribbean Communities | NALEO Educational Fund | National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives | National Association of Hispanic Publications | National Association of Latino Independent Producers | National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc. | National Council of La Raza | National Hispana Leadership Institute | National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators | National Hispanic Council on Aging | National Hispanic Environmental Council | National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts | National Hispanic Media Coalition | National Hispanic Medical Association | National Institute for Latino Policy | National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health | National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc. | Presente.org | SER – Jobs for Progress National, Inc. | Southwest Voter Registration Education Project | United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce | United States Hispanic Leadership Institute | United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce | U.S.-Mexico Foundation