



# National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

## MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

October 29, 2015

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol H-232  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Congratulations on your election as Speaker of the House. As the coalition of the nation's 40 pre-eminent Latino nonpartisan advocacy organizations, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) looks forward to working with you to advance the priorities of our community and the nation as a whole. To that end, we respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Latinos currently comprise one-sixth of the U.S. population, and are an integrated and interconnected part of this nation. Given the community's size and stature, Latino priorities are, by definition, the priorities of the United States as a whole. Indeed, America cannot succeed unless Latinos also succeed.

Throughout our nation's history, Americans of Spanish and Latin American descent have played a key role in building the strength of our Republic, from the soldiers who fought along with Colonel Bernardo de Galvez against the British in support of American revolutionaries, to the farm workers who are the backbone of our agricultural sector, and the Latina entrepreneurs who are leading the way in small business and job creation.

At the same time, critical gaps persist between Latinos and the rest of the population, demonstrated in various socio-economic measures, as well as in our representation in media, business and government. Our coalition has identified various policy recommendations to close these gaps.

- **Advance a fair federal budget that invests in our economy and shifts the burden of deficit reduction away from working families.** In order to economically empower Latinos, we advocate for policies that increase opportunities for small businesses to grow, train Latino youth and workers to compete and thrive in the 21st century economy, and ensure there is a safety net for the poor, disabled, and elderly when they need it.

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

- **Ensure that hard work pays off.** Hard-working families should be able to earn a living that supports their needs. Therefore, we support reforming overtime rules so that workers receive the pay they're entitled to, permanently extending the 2009 expansions of the refundable portions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, increasing the minimum wage, including more workers under existing labor protections, and supporting equal pay initiatives to remove unfair income disparities and thus boost Latinas' and families' earnings. We support a fair playing field for employers and employees alike by supporting vigorous enforcement of employment laws that will deter and remedy illegal practices.
- **Reform our broken immigration laws and respect the dignity of all immigrants.** Immigration reform must be based on a framework that would allow the 11 million undocumented immigrants in our nation to earn legal status, then citizenship; that recognizes the unique situation of our DREAMers and agricultural workers; and that addresses the unfairness in our existing policies and practices. As legislative efforts stalled last year, we called for, and backed, President Obama's Immigration Accountability Executive Actions announced in November 2014 that would enable millions of families to remain united, step out of the shadows, fully contribute to the life of our communities and the nation, and find protection from further exploitation. For those immigrants with legal status, we advocate for efficient and affordable green card application and naturalization processes. We oppose any efforts to alter or diminish the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of citizenship to those born in the United States.
- **Hold states and school districts accountable for improving the educational outcomes of Latino and English learner students.** The future economic competitiveness of the United States will depend in great part on the educational attainment of the nation's growing Latino community. Increasing the high school graduation and college completion rates among all Latino students 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. Our nation must ensure that education gaps are eliminated in all areas of education and at all levels of achievement. We are also enthusiastic supporters of investing in education, from pre-school through graduate school, providing financial aid for college, and investing in Hispanic Serving Institutions of higher education.
- **Continue to implement the Affordable Care Act, which has dramatically reduced the rate of uninsured Latinos.** The Affordable Care Act gives our community the tools to narrow Latino health disparities through prevention programs, lower prescription drug costs, increased opportunities to expand the number of Latino health professionals, and most importantly of all -- access to affordable, quality health care that has resulted in four

million previously uninsured Latinos gaining health coverage. More work remains to be done, including the elimination of repugnant and unnecessary exclusions from potential coverage.

- **Protect our civil rights.** Defending the civil rights of our community remains a high priority as hate crimes, racial profiling, police abuse, and other forms of discrimination continue to take place far too often. We therefore support vigorous enforcement of our nation's civil rights laws. This includes strong opposition to any efforts to diminish community cooperation with local police by mandating cooperation with federal immigration authorities.
- **Restore and protect voting rights.** As we observed the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the Voting Rights Act and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the addition of language minorities to the act, we know all too well from documented cases that efforts to dilute the voting strength of the Latino community continue to this day. We therefore need enactment of legislation to modernize the Voting Rights Act and to restore anti-discrimination review procedures that were eliminated by the Supreme Court. We oppose unnecessary efforts to restrict access to the ballot for any qualified voter.

These priorities are not just important to the Latino community – they are the cornerstones of a strong future for America and its territories. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss your priorities, our priorities, and the future of this great nation.

To arrange a meeting and commence this critical conversation, please have your staff contact Teresa Acuña, NHLA's Director of Policy and Leadership Programs at [\(202\) 508 6919](tel:2025086919) or [teresa@nationalhispanicleadership.org](mailto:teresa@nationalhispanicleadership.org).

Sincerely,



Hector E. Sanchez  
Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda  
Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement