



National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

January 11, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: NHLA Opposition to the Confirmation of Andrew F. Puzder as U.S. Secretary of Labor

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of the nation's 40 leading Latino advocacy organizations, we respectfully urge you to vote against the confirmation of Andrew F. Puzder to serve as the United States Secretary of Labor.

American workers and their families, including the Hispanic community, depend on the Secretary of Labor to fulfill the Department of Labor's (DOL) mission: "To foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights." The DOL should be led by a Secretary who has an unwavering commitment to implement the programs and enforce the laws that fulfill this mission. The Secretary's commitment helps ensure a healthy economy and a fair playing field for both workers and employers, and is especially critical for Latinos who lead the nation in labor force participation and make up the largest share of workers earning poverty-level wages.

The Secretary's responsibilities include enforcing minimum wage, overtime, and other wage-hour requirements and overcoming many systematic efforts by employers to evade them. Many workers are vulnerable, lack resources to enforce their rights, and depend on the DOL for effective enforcement of their rights. Such enforcement also protects law-abiding employers from being harmed by unscrupulous competitors who cut costs by violating labor laws. The Secretary is charged with enforcing occupational safety standards and adopting new safety rules to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths, so many of which are preventable. The Secretary must also ensure that the Department's workforce opportunity programs help workers gain needed training and job referrals to employers that pay at least prevailing wages and do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, national origin, disability and other unlawful factors.

In addition, the Secretary must enforce requirements under temporary foreign worker programs to ensure that U.S. workers are not displaced, U.S. wages and working conditions

- Alianza Americas
- 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
- 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 and Educational Fund
- 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 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
- Presente.org
- 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
- U.S.- Mexico Foundation

are not undermined, and foreign citizens are not exploited. Finally, the Secretary should use his or her influence and resources to encourage corporate responsibility, labor-management cooperation, improvements in job standards and job creation.

This nominee's record and statements demonstrate that he is the wrong choice for this important Cabinet position. Mr. Puzder is a business leader in the food industry, where many Latinos are employed and where many troubling and outright illegal employment practices exist. He has had the opportunity over many years to adopt employment practices and promote policies that would help low-wage American workers in this industry and other sectors of the economy improve their jobs and opportunities. He has had the opportunity through his companies' advertising campaigns to promote a nation where all people are treated with respect.

Instead, Mr. Puzder has consistently chosen to adopt practices and policy positions that are at odds with the needs and aspirations of American workers. Mr. Puzder has opposed efforts to raise the minimum wage; criticized efforts to provide such workers with health insurance; opposed efforts to hold fast-food companies responsible as employers for violations of the minimum wage at their franchises; opposed overtime pay reform; and, regarding immigration reform, promoted guestworker visas as a solution to filling jobs rather than treating workers as full-fledged immigrants who have an opportunity to earn citizenship. Mr. Puzder has requested his company to broadcast ads that objectify women as sex objects and yet he would oversee the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor and the enforcement of anti-discrimination requirements in workforce programs.

Mr. Puzder is not an appropriate choice for the position of Secretary of Labor, a position that should be filled by a qualified candidate who inspires confidence in the commitment and ability to fulfill the Department of Labor's mission. NHLA therefore urges you to vote against Mr. Puzder's confirmation as Secretary of Labor.

Sincerely,



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American Advancement
Chair, NHLA



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President,
Farmworker Justice
Co-Chair, NHLA Economic
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Eric Rodriguez
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