



National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

February 15, 2018

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Re: NHLA Vote Recommendations on Amendments 1955, 1948 and 1959 to H.R. 2579 and Serious Concerns Regarding Amendment 1958, Senate Immigration Debate

Dear Senator:

We write on behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of 45 leading national Latino nonpartisan civil rights and advocacy organizations, to strongly urge you to vote to protect immigrant youth and to reject the nativist policies the White House is advancing. NHLA recommends a “yes” vote on Amendment 1955, and a “no” vote on Amendments 1948 and 1959 or any similar legislation. **NHLA will closely monitor these votes, and any other similar votes on these matters, for inclusion in future NHLA scorecards evaluating Senators' support for the Latino community.** Further, while we will not be taking a position on Amendment 1958 at this time, we have serious concerns with this legislation and demand that they be addressed in a deliberate fashion before being sent to the President.

NHLA urges the following vote recommendations:

- **Vote “yes” on Amendment 1955:** The USA Act of 2018, a bipartisan and bicameral proposal, advances a fair compromise. It provides a path to citizenship for Dreamers but creates enhancements to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our border operations. Unlike other legislation offered on the issue of border security, this bill maintains the safety and well-being of individuals, particularly Latinos and other people of color, living in the border region.
- **Vote “no” on Toomey Amendment 1948:** The Stop Dangerous Sanctuary Cities Act would deem all local law enforcement officials effectuating a detainer as a federal DHS agent. This provision would essentially expand the troubled 287(g) program, but without the use of a formal agreement or training requirements to ensure local officers understand the constitutional and statutory protections that exist for all individuals, including immigrants. Forcing localities to comply with detainer requests opens the door to rampant racial profiling and discriminatory policing practices, and overrides the judgement of local officials to adopt policies that foster trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities. It would also strip necessary public safety and community development funding from jurisdictions in order to coerce local law enforcement agencies into taking on the responsibilities of Federal immigration officers.
- **Vote “no” on Amendment 1959:** The Secure and Succeed Act represents the worst of our public discourse today by advancing the nativist White House agenda and catering to the most fringe elements of our society. In exchange for relief for some Dreamers, the amendment demands a high ransom in return. Among many troubling provisions, it allows for a largely unchecked slush fund for DHS, increases militarization of the border, erodes due process rights by expanding the use of mandatory detention, turns away children seeking safe haven, eliminates the

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Alianza Americas
- American G.I. Forum
- ASPIRA Association
- Avance Inc.
- Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
- Farmworker Justice
- Green Latinos
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
- Hispanic Federation
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Inter-University Program for Latino Research
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- LatinoJustice PRLDEF
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- MANA, A National Latina Organization
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- Mi Familia Vota
- National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures
- National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
- National Association of Hispanic Publications
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network
- NALEO Educational Fund
- National Association of Latino Independent Producers
- National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
- 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/o Psychological Association
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
- Presente.org
- SER Jobs for Progress National
- Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
- UnidosUS
- United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
- United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
- U.S.- Mexico Foundation
- Voto Latino

Diversity Visa Program, and makes dramatic cuts to legal immigration. Legislation that embraces the President's misinformed and narrow-minded view of our country's immigration system has no place in a serious debate and must be rejected outright.

- **Serious Concerns on Amendment 1958:** This bipartisan amendment provides a much-needed pathway to citizenship for Dreamers but includes an unreasonable age cap for eligible recipients, and prohibits parents of Dreamers that entered without inspection from adjusting status through the Dreamer child. It also provides \$25 billion for unnecessary and ineffective border security measures, a colossal waste of money given the expected increase in the deficit partly as result of recent tax cuts, and would have huge repercussions on our economy. Any legislation that appropriates or authorizes immigration enforcement dollars must have the appropriate safeguards in place to ensure that communities do not pay the price of increased criminalization and militarization on the border and in the interior. We are also concerned with the elimination of family-sponsored immigration visas for lawful permanent residents who will be unable to sponsor their adult unmarried children, and are troubled with the codification of enforcement priorities laid out in the bill. This legislation must provide protections to regulate an out of control administration.

The U.S. Senate can truly make meaningful change in the immigration landscape by supporting efforts to provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers and TPS holders who have contributed so much to this country. Any attempts to exploit the Trump-made problem before us, the expiration of DACA and the rescission of TPS for so many, in order to advance a Stephen Miller and John Kelly immigration agenda, will face the backlash of the Latino community and American public. **We strongly urge you to support the McCain-Coons proposal in the form of Amendment 1955, and to reject Amendments 1948 and 1959.**

Please contact NHLA through Andrea Senteno, of MALDEF, at asenteno@maldef.org, or Laura Esquivel, of Hispanic Federation, at lesquivel@hispanicfederation.org, with any questions regarding this letter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Hector E. Sanchez Barba
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, Executive Director
NHLA Chair



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



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