

# **National Hispanic Leadership Agenda**

September 8, 2015

Dear Candidate,

As your campaign for the presidency advances, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) respectfully invites you to speak with our board members about your vision for the nation. As the coalition of America's 40 most pre-eminent Latino nonpartisan advocacy organizations, NHLA should be a critical component of your engagement with the Latino community as a whole. Our board brings together Latino leaders from across the nation; the dialogue you choose to have with us will set the tone for how your campaign is perceived among Latino voters.

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, certain gaps exist between Latinos and the rest of the population, 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.
- **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,

## **MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

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  
Hispanic Medical Association  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Institute for Latino Policy  
National 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

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, we called for, and backed, President Obama's Immigration Accountability Executive Actions announced in November 2014 that 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.
- **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 Hispanic 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 2.6 million previously uninsured Latinos gaining health coverage during the first enrollment period alone. More work remains to be done, including the elimination of repugnant and unnecessary exclusions from potential coverage. We will be looking for answers from presidential contenders on how they plan to promote affordable and accessible health insurance coverage for all.

- **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 and the confirmation of judges who appreciate the role of the courts in protecting civil rights.
- **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.
- **Increase the representation of Latinos in the federal workforce.** It is fundamentally important for the legitimacy of the federal government that it is inclusive of the entire population in its composition and basic functions. The workforce it employs and the companies it contracts with to carry out government services and activities must look like America. Unfortunately, Hispanics have long been under-represented in the workforce and among government contractors. In order to address part of this problem, we established a national program to increase the number of Latino appointees in the executive branch. Additional leadership is needed at the top of the federal government itself to effect change in the civil service and among contracting opportunities.

These priorities are not just important to the Latino community – they are the cornerstones of a strong future for America and its territories. By elevating these priorities in your campaign, you will be able to connect with Latinos across the nation in helping you make them a reality. 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,



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Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement