

## A POCKET GUIDE ON SIX IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR LATINO VOTERS

**43 million Latinos in the U.S.  
7.5 million Latino voters in 2004  
Your community needs your vote in 2006!**

This guide identifies six major issues important to Latinos in the upcoming elections:

- Safer Communities
- Economic Opportunities
- Quality Education
- Access to Health Care
- Immigration Reform
- Job Opportunities

With a population of 43 million in the U.S., Latinos are an important part of the country's prosperity, and a growing part of the electorate. Latinos believe in hard work, family, and a strong America. Many politicians recognize our growing voting power, and both Democrats and Republicans want our vote. Unfortunately, many candidates and elected officials do not always take into account the interests of the Latino community.

### If more Latinos participate, that can change!



- Get involved.
- If you qualify, become a citizen.
- If you are a citizen and will be 18 or older by Nov. 7, register to vote!
- If you are registered, vote!

This pocket guide offers a basic tool to speak to candidates and representatives and evaluate their positions and actions on six important areas. For more details on the issues and NCLR's analyses of them, visit [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org).

## THE ISSUES

### 1. SAFER COMMUNITIES



Latinos are law-abiding, hardworking people who want to live in safe neighborhoods – but too little is being done to create programs that prevent crime in our communities. Even though a year in jail costs more than a year in college, many politicians look only at prison, and not at alternative programs that can reduce crime.

#### *A Pro-Hispanic Candidate or Incumbent:*

- ✓ **Supports** a comprehensive approach to reduce youth violence that includes programs for prevention, treatment, intervention and suppression, and better options than just throwing young people in prison.
- ✓ **Supports** effective programs that help ex-offenders who paid their debt to society become good citizens and in that way, help prevent crime.

### 2. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES



Hispanics play an important role in the economic prosperity of the nation. Latino consumers have almost one trillion dollars in buying power, pay billions in taxes to the federal government every year, and send billions to our families in Latin America. More needs to be done to help Latinos build their wealth.

#### *A Pro-Hispanic Candidate or Incumbent:*

- ✓ **Supports** putting more money into housing programs to help more Latinos buy homes.
- ✓ **Supports** strong federal laws that help people pay a fair price for their home, and reduce bad lending practices known as predatory lending.
- ✓ **Supports** fixing the remittance market so that the money we send to our families is not lost because of hidden fees.

- ✓ **Supports** programs that help people save money for the future, like Individual Retirement Accounts, retirement pensions, and tax credits to build savings accounts.

### 3. QUALITY EDUCATION



Latinos see education as the key to a better future. We are concerned that only about half of Latinos graduate from high school, and support greater investment in public schools and funding for early childhood education, bilingual services, and access to higher education. These improvements are also important for the nation; with more than ten million Latino children in public schools, our children will be a significant part of our country's workforce.

#### *A Pro-Hispanic Candidate or Incumbent:*

- ✓ **Supports** the creation of preschool programs close to Latino communities.
- ✓ **Supports** programs with well-prepared, bilingual teachers and staff who can communicate with parents in Spanish where needed.
- ✓ **Supports** the "DREAM Act" to help immigrant students go to college.

### 4. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE



While Latinos contribute to the nation's economic health through our hard work, too many of us do not have access to health care and health information. Almost one-third (32.7%) of Latinos do not have health insurance, and that number is growing. Many Latinos also encounter language barriers that prevent access to services.

#### *A Pro-Hispanic Candidate or Incumbent:*

- ✓ **Supports** more access to quality health care and more money for public programs such as

Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance.

- ✓ **Supports** better health care services for Latinos with limited English speaking skills.

## 5. IMMIGRATION REFORM



The U.S. immigration system is broken and needs reform. What we have now results in separating families, people dying at the border, and no

channels for immigrants to become legal. This system also hurts honest businesses that need more workers, while it benefits bad employers and "coyotes" who exploit immigrants.

**A Pro-Hispanic Candidate or Incumbent:**

- ✓ **Supports** comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level that includes: 1) a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants; 2) a way to keep families together; 3) a guest worker program to allow needed immigrant workers to enter the U.S. legally; and 4) an effective way to enforce the new system and make the country safe.
- ✓ **Opposes** anti-immigrant policies that divide communities and create intolerance.
- ✓ **Opposes** patchwork legislation at the state and local levels that does nothing to fix the real problem.

## 6. JOB OPPORTUNITIES



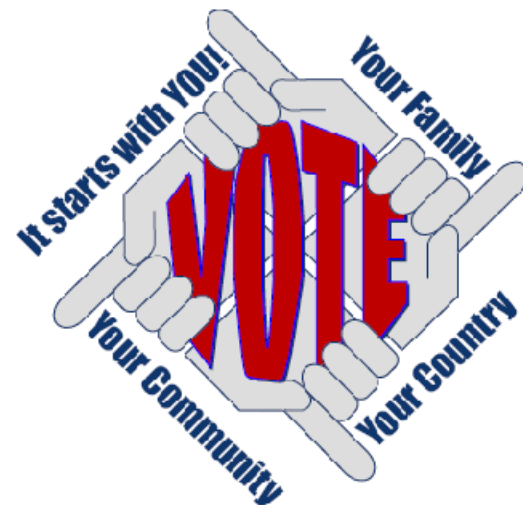
Hispanics are 13.5% of the U.S. population and a similar part of the U.S. workforce. Unfortunately, many Latino workers are stuck in jobs offering little to no benefits, lower wages, and few opportunities to move up.

**A Pro-Hispanic Candidate or Incumbent:**

- ✓ **Supports** job training programs that help Latinos move out of entry-level, low-wage jobs.

**NCLR**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

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Are you a citizen?

Will you be 18 or older on Nov. 7?

**REGISTER TO VOTE!**

If you are already registered

**VOTE ON  
NOVEMBER 7!**

To register to vote online, visit:

**[www.nclr.org/vote](http://www.nclr.org/vote)**

Prepared by:  
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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA