

Save the Date! 84th National Convention in Las Vegas, June 17-22, 2013



# LULACnews

Spring 2013



## Immigration Reform

**LULAC Committed to Immigration Reform**

**Recognition to Elected Officials**

**Promoting Economic Growth**

**Hispanic Corporate Leadership**

**Coverage of the Legislative Gala**

**Broken Immigration System**

**Latinos Living Healthy**

# A MESSAGE *from the President*

## The Fate of Fair and Just Immigration Reform Rests in Our Hands

Our country has long depended on the work of immigrants to power our economic growth. From the German, Irish and Italian immigrants of the 1800s who helped build the Eastern seaboard and expanded the U.S. westward, to the Chinese immigrants who built our railroads in the later half of the 19th century, to Latino immigrants who have made the United States an agricultural economic power and revitalized our cities and towns in the 20th century; U.S. economic success has always depended on the work of immigrants. As our economy struggles to exit a deep recession, now, more than ever, we need them as much as they need us.



During my term as National LULAC President, we have made the passage of fair and just immigration reform a top priority and we have been working hard to get the White House and Congress to pass immigration legislation that reflects the needs of our community. I along with other civil rights leaders met early on with President Obama in the White House Roosevelt Room to discuss immigration reform, the DREAM Act, and other matters that impact our community. We also attended at the President's personal invitation his major announcement in Las Vegas. As the President concluded

his remarks and stepped down from the podium, I assured him that he had the support of LULAC – his reply – “Good, I am going to need it.”

When I first took office, it seemed as though opposition to immigration reform in Congress was almost insurmountable. Comprehensive immigration reform legislation had been defeated in 2006 and 2007 and President Obama had taken a hard line approach to deporting record numbers of immigrants. I focused LULAC's efforts on getting some positive first steps taken such as passage of the Dream Act and administrative steps that I felt the President could take on his own.

I also made the decision to focus the bulk of our efforts on civic engagement believing that the only way to improve our fortunes in Congress was to organize our community and get them to the polls in record numbers. For the first time, LULAC joined the Latino Civic Engagement Table and LULAC National hired field organizers in multiple states.

The record 12.5 million Latinos that voted last November has completely changed the landscape for immigration reform. Now a bipartisan comprehensive immigration bill is about to be introduced in the Senate and support for immigration reform in Congress is higher than it has been in decades. However, the LULAC family needs to push forward and keep our momentum going. We have to shore up our traditional allies and take advantage of support from unexpected sources such as the conservative members of Congress who are now voicing support for reform.

The last presidential election was a wake-up call to many and support for immigration reform has grown tremendously. In the past election, Hispanics changed the political landscape and made policies such as “self-deportation” a losing proposition. As a result, Republican opposition to legalizing the status of millions of immigrants has evaporated, and this shift is allowing bipartisan efforts

to bring comprehensive immigration reform to the table. A few examples of leading conservative support include Senator Rand Paul's recent effort to make a compelling case to his Republican base to embrace more of a welcoming approach to immigration. In addition, Senator Marco Rubio is part of a bipartisan group of eight senators working on immigration reform.

Immigration reform is not only the right thing to do, a compelling

*Continued on page 3.*



## A MESSAGE *from the President*



*LULAC National President Moran and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.*

case can be made that it is critical to our economy. Per data released by the Social Security Administration, legal immigrants who come to the U.S. over the course of the next 50 years will provide a net benefit of \$407 billion of value to our Social Security system. This is a critically important because we're retiring at rates that are creating huge demands on our labor force.

A recent PEW study indicates that passage of the DREAM Act would add \$329 billion to the economy by 2030! And would support



*LULAC National President Moran and Mayor Julian Castro.*

the creation of 1.4 million new jobs, and generate more than \$10 billion in increased revenue for the federal government. To a nation on the road to recovery from an economic crisis, the economic benefits of immigration reform are unmatched and we should do

everything in our power to ensure that immigration reform passes this year.

LULAC supports comprehensive immigration reform that provides an avenue for undocumented workers to legalize their status and expands the number of legal immigrants allowed into the U.S. We support family reunification and a fair and balanced immigration processes to take into account future flows of workers. We also strongly support the passage of the DREAM Act and Ag Jobs which we believe should be part of any comprehensive bill that passes Congress.

LULAC knows that we must have an immigration policy that accounts for the health, education, and economic inequities that currently exist in our community. Our country has always stood as a beacon of unbridled opportunity for those who work hard and play by the rules. We are encouraged by the progress made thus far on comprehensive immigration reform but will not rest until legislation is passed that addresses all the issues important to the Latino community and our economy.

I have worked hard to ensure LULAC is leading the way with the President and Congress to pass fair and just immigration reform. Right after the November elections, we started the "I Voted for Immigration Reform" ([www.LULAC.org/CIR2013](http://www.LULAC.org/CIR2013)) campaign to remind Congress of the strong Latino vote and the fact that immigration reform is a top concern of these voters.

Over 15,000 postcards have now been sent to members of Congress through this campaign. LULAC has also been the driving force behind the Latinos United for Immigration Reform campaign ([www.LatinosUnited.org](http://www.LatinosUnited.org)) that is mobilizing the grassroots advocates and Latino organizations to ratchet up the pressure for Congress to pass fair and just immigration reform this year. We have also mobilized our councils to hold over 60 immigration town halls ([www.LULAC.org/actnow](http://www.LULAC.org/actnow)) across the country many of which have already been held. We have also created the easiest way for Latinos to contact their members of Congress using the latest in technology and social media ([www.LULAC.org/actnow](http://www.LULAC.org/actnow)). These are just a few of the many activities that LULAC is engaged right now to ensure that, this time, fair and just immigration reform does pass Congress and the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States are legalized and put on the pathway to citizenship.

But fair and just immigration reform cannot pass unless the LULAC membership is fully engaged. I call upon every LULAC member and our allies to take action today! The most important thing we can do is to mobilize our community to contact their members of Congress and demand that they pass fair and just immigration reform now. Meet with your representatives, host an immigration town hall, email a letter, send a postcard, make a call, take action and help make fair and just immigration reform a reality (be sure to go to [www.LULAC.org/actnow](http://www.LULAC.org/actnow) for tools and ideas). Together, we can pass fair and just immigration reform this year!

*Margaret Moran*

LULAC National President



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# LULACnews

League of United Latin American Citizens

1133 19th Street NW, Suite 1000 TEL: (202) 833-6130  
Washington, D.C. 20036 FAX: (202) 833-6135

## National President

Margaret Moran

## Executive Director

Brent A. Wilkes

## Editor

Jossie Flor Sapunar

## Director of Communications

Paloma Zuleta

## Layout & Publishing

Luis Nuño Briones

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# Promoting Economic Growth through Comprehensive Immigration Reform



By: Jossie Flor Sapunar

Restructuring our broken immigration system into an efficient and just process would result in a wide-range of economic effects, including an increase in gross domestic product (GDP), international competitiveness, job

**Comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship would increase GDP by \$1.5 trillion over ten years.**

creation, and wage raises. Coupling the economic implications with the humane aspect of empowering the 11 million undocumented persons that live in the U.S., CIR becomes irrefutable for the wellbeing of America.

Because most immigrants arrive in the U.S. for economic opportunities, they are an integral part of the workforce and therefore impact the economy. Passing comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) with a pathway to citizenship would increase gross domestic product (GDP) by \$1.5 trillion over the next ten years.<sup>1</sup> This compares to a legalization-only process, which would generate \$792 billion over ten years.<sup>2</sup> CIR with a pathway to citizenship reaps the most economic benefits.

Apart from its direct GDP growth, CIR has national spillover effects—like increased international competitiveness, job creation, and wage raises—that would nurture a positive economic environment nationwide. Immigrants started 25% of the highest-growth companies between 1990 and 2005, which indicates the high level of entrepreneurship and the extent of job creation among immigrant Americans.<sup>3</sup> In fact, 40% of Fortune 500 companies, which includes Google, AT&T, and McDonald's, were started by immigrants or their children.<sup>4</sup> The U.S.

1 Hinojosa-Ojeda, Raul. "The Economic Benefits of Comprehensive Immigration Reform." *CATO Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter 2012) (Accessed February 2, 2013) pp. 187

2 *Ibid.* pp. 189

3 "Building a 21st Century" White House (May 2011) (Accessed February 2, 2013) pp. 11

4 Partnership for New American Economy. "The 'New American' Fortune 500." <http://renewoureconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/img/new-american-fortune-500-june-2011.pdf> June 2011 (Accessed February 2, 2013)

would benefit from the growth of new businesses, especially as the economy continues to recover from the 2008 recession. The rate of minority business ownership would continue its upward trend as citizenship from a 2013 CIR bill would open the doors for the legal recourse of business ownership. According to estimates by the Small Business Administration, minority business owners generated \$67 billion of the \$577 billion in U.S. business income last year alone.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, immigration reform would lead to an increase in job creation should the country create an inviting environment for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) employees. The current visa system creates a dearth of permanent STEM workers for the U.S. International students seek to study at the world's best colleges, and after graduating from a U.S. college, they are forced to either leave to more welcoming countries or return home with their technical knowledge since the U.S. offers no system that will lead to citizenship. Studies show that every 100 STEM employees generate 262 American jobs,<sup>6</sup> so nurturing a place in society for these workers is beneficial to our international competitiveness as the country increases its innovation.

Lastly, the pathway to citizenship would result in wage raises that would positively affect the American economy. The White House found that should reform with a pathway to citizenship pass, the real wages of newly legalized workers would increase by \$4,400 a year for the average worker, and \$6,185 a year in high-skilled workers.<sup>7</sup> When aspiring citizens get paid through legal channels and come out of the shadows, they are no longer constrained to receiving meager wages. Employers would provide a fair wage that reflects skill level, matching the living wage of their American citizen counterparts. Higher wages would then translate into an increase of tax revenue, Social Security contributions, and other portions of the American economy.

5 [www.renewoureconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/img/new-american-fortune-500-june-2011.pdf](http://www.renewoureconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/img/new-american-fortune-500-june-2011.pdf) June 2011 (Accessed February 2, 2013)

6

7 "Building a 21st Century" White House (May 2011) (Accessed February 2, 2013) pp. 12

8 Partnership for a New American Economy, Information Technology Industry Council, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "Help Wanted: The Role of Foreign Workers in the Innovation Economy." [www.renewoureconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/stem-report.pdf](http://www.renewoureconomy.org/sites/all/themes/pnae/stem-report.pdf) (Accessed February 2, 2013). pp.5

9 "Building a 21st Century" White House (May 2011) (Accessed February 2, 2013)

## The Human Element: Not Just Goods and Services

In spite of its widespread economic benefits, reform is not merely a technical debate focusing on the economics of international labor supply and demand. The broken immigration system involves more than eleven million people and improves their lives and prospects for success. With CIR, immigrant Americans,

**40% of Fortune 500 companies were started by immigrants or their children. The revenue generated by Fortune 500 companies founded by immigrants or their children is greater than the GDP of every country in the world outside the U.S., except China and Japan.**

who are citizens in everything but legal name, can maximize their full potential, which ultimately circles back and benefits the country in every aspect.

## Education and Health

With a pathway to citizenship, immigrant Americans are able to maximize their education. In-state tuition prices are unavailable to aspiring citizens since they lack that primary requirement even if they fulfill, or exceed, the academic standards. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a temporary patch for the permanent problem of reforming our immigration system since it only offers two-year relief and renewal is not guaranteed.

Aspiring citizens are unable to enlist in the healthcare exchanges offered by the Affordable Care Act. Latinos, in particular, suffer from the lack of access to health care: one in three is uninsured, meaning that the American public ends up paying for emergency room visits for

*Continued on page 6.*



## Economic Growth of Immigration Reform

*Continued from page 5.*

illnesses, including those diseases that could have been prevented if caught early. With healthcare exchanges, more people will have access to health care services. The system creates a “pot” that supports the ability of health insurance providers to offer lower premiums and more services at lower costs, thus expanding coverage and ultimately improving the health of the country.

### Importance of Citizenship

The problem with DACA – and with not passing CIR in general – lies in the absence of a pathway to citizenship. Legislation that purposely excludes this integral component would draw aspiring Americans into a permanent underclass tenderly exposed to countless forms of exploitation. Recipients of legalization status would pay the same taxes as American citizens but would not receive the benefits that the taxes are intended to cover, like tax credits and education and health care benefits. Immigrant Americans would live without electoral representation. People with legalized status are excluded from electing their political representation despite their continued residence. Intentional and permanent disenfranchisement challenges the American spirit of democracy.

Because the immigration system is so faulty and outdated, the U.S. has marginalized 11 million people that are American in every element except legal nomenclature. The people that live in the shadows, however, have risen and expressed that they will no longer tolerate their subservience to the broken system.

Join LULAC in demanding comprehensive immigration reform for the 11 million. Sign LULAC’s “I Voted for Immigration Reform” petition at [LULAC.org/CIR2013](http://LULAC.org/CIR2013) to send your members of Congress a petition to urge for CIR. Call or visit your representative to underscore the critical nature of reform.

Alternatively, you can organize a town hall in your state to educate the public on the importance of immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship. Contact Sindy Benavides at [TakeAction@LULAC.org](mailto:TakeAction@LULAC.org) to take action today!

## Fighting Voter Suppression in Iowa

*By: Joseph Enriquez Henry, Iowa State Director*

Iowa LULAC in 2012 became part of an historic effort in the state both to increase the number of registered Latino voters and to stop the suppression and intimidation of Latino voters at the polls.

With Iowa being considered a swing state in the outcome of the presidential election, Iowa LULAC members believed it was important for Latinos to play an active role in the outcome of the election and in making elected officials realize the growing dynamic of the Latino voting bloc.

In Iowa, the Latino population had increased almost 84 percent from the 2000 U.S. Census to more than 151,500 residents, or 5 percent of Iowa’s 3 million residents, according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

Initially, Iowa LULAC members in mid-2012, led by Council 307 in Des Moines, Ia., conducted what was believed to be the first-ever analysis of the Iowa Latino voting community by analyzing a state database of 1 million Iowa voter records. The analysis was done to create a list of Latino voters who could be contacted to help register family members, friends, and others.

Through the voter identification efforts, LULAC identified about 35,000 registered Latino voters in Iowa. The analysis also showed those voters’ voting habits, both in frequency of voting and party affiliation, age and the geographic areas of the state that were most populated by Latinos. These Latino voters were contacted through an informational postcard mailing and follow-up telephone calls. These efforts not only encouraged them to vote in the November election but also detailed the process to register others.

“There was already a strong Latino voting bloc in Iowa, but we wanted to expand it, which is why we chose to engage those whom we were already registered to help us in the process,” said Joe Enriquez Henry, state director of Iowa LULAC and president of Council 307. “We believe the hard work of LULAC and other advocacy groups in Iowa led to record voting among the Latino voting bloc in the state.”

In addition, Council 307 created a special section on its website to explain how to vote and the voting process. The council also held a half dozen voter-registration drives throughout the Des Moines-metro

area. LULAC Council 10 in Davenport, Ia., also was involved in the project and held registration drives.

But perhaps what became more of an important role was when Iowa LULAC joined with the Iowa American Civil Liberties Union in a lawsuit against Iowa Secretary of State Matt Schultz to stop him from implementing rules that both organizations and others believed would unnecessarily intimidate and suppress Latino voters and others from exercising their right to vote on Election Day.

Last year Schultz attempted to put into place new voting rules that would match up suspected illegal voters in Iowa with a federal immigration database that is known to have faulty information to verify citizenship, which would in turn limit suffrage. Anyone who was suspected of illegally voting would receive notification through the mail with a limited window of time to respond to such allegations. Schultz has used Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation agents to investigate cases of alleged voter fraud even sending agents to individual’s houses.

Enriquez Henry and other Iowa LULAC members testified at several public hearings and before the Iowa Legislature regarding the emergency rules and their opposition to them being put into place.

As of late January, a judge had granted a second stay on an injunction to prevent Iowa’s Secretary of State from implementing these new voting rules.

Iowa LULAC this year has called upon state leaders to fully vet these voting rules and determine whether they are necessary through the proper channels. In addition, Iowa LULAC will be meeting with state and national leaders in the spring to discuss comprehensive immigration reform, and to work with them to make both Iowa and the country a better place for Latinos to live, work, and receive an education.

“The massive Latino voter turnout in the November election proved to President Obama and other elected leaders that we are an influential sector of the population,” Enriquez Henry said. “As a result, we expect that the President and our other representatives in Washington, D.C., will address the needs that affect our people. Likewise, we hope that our elected leaders in Iowa will turn their attention to efforts that are more inclusive to the Latino community.”

# Shop Healthy, Eat Healthy

## Latinos Living Healthy Tidbit

Busy moms often ask, “What’s the best way to find healthier food for my family?” Now it’s easier than ever: Just keep an eye out for the “Great for You” icon on healthy items in the produce section and on Great Value and Marketside products rolling out nationwide later this year. This inspiring icon is part of Walmart’s healthier food initiative, specially made to help customers select the most nutritious food options at affordable prices. These include fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables, fiber-rich whole grains, low-fat dairy, nuts, seeds and lean meats. Other examples of these items include brown rice, 100 percent whole-wheat bread, 1 percent milk, raw almonds and 93 percent lean ground beef. We know you have to balance busy schedules and tight budgets — now this simple tool makes it even easier to plan healthy meals for you and your family.

You can trust that foods labeled with the “Great For You” icon have met rigorous nutrition criteria based on the latest nutrition science from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Institute of Medicine (IOM). The criteria have undergone an extensive evaluation process using thousands of grocery items to help ensure that only those grocery items from food groups that we should eat more of and with nutrients that we should eat more of get the “Great For You” stamp of approval. Specific details on the criteria and a list of healthy recipes using “Great For You” foods can be found at [www.walmartgreatforyou.com](http://www.walmartgreatforyou.com).

“Customers asked us to make healthier food choices easy while keeping prices low,” said Jack Sinclair, executive vice president of grocery for Walmart. “The nutrition experts we engaged told us to make the criteria tough and significant. We feel confident that the “Great For You” icon balances those objectives, and will become an important tool Walmart shoppers can use to fill their fridge and pantries with healthier food at prices our customers can afford.”



## Italian Marinated Green Bean Vegetable Salad

*Serves:* 6

*Prep Time:* 5 to 10 minutes

*Cook Time:* 5 minutes

*Ingredients:*

- 1 lb. green beans, trimmed
- 8 oz. button or baby bella (crimini) mushrooms, quartered
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halves
- 1/4 cup Great Value Fat Free Italian Dressing
- 1/2 cup ripe black olives, quartered lengthwise

*Directions:*

1. Simmer green beans in a saucepan with a small amount (about 1 cup) of water, covered, until just tender, 3 to 5 minutes.
2. Immediately drain and rinse under cold water to stop the cooking.
3. Toss with remaining ingredients.

*Average cost per serving:* \$1.16

*Approximate Total Cost:* \$6.96

This Latinos Living Healthy Tidbit brought to you by:







# LULAC Holds Successful 16th Annual Legislative & Awards Gala, and Advocacy Day!

This year's LULAC Annual Legislative Conference and Awards Gala was a tremendous success for the 84 year old organization! An attendance of over 500 individuals joined LULAC's National President, Margaret Moran, and the rest of LULAC's leadership for two days of advocacy activities. Attendees represented the nation's leading Latino and civil rights organizations, policy-makers,

Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, discussed the challenges and opportunities education reform has in store for the Hispanic community. In addition to discussing the particular aspects of education reform, there was a robust discussion on the potential impact of the sequester on education programs that serve low-income children and ELLs through programs such as Title I and III. Congressman Henry Cuellar, Member of the House Appropriations Committee joined LULAC in its education briefing.

During this year's luncheon, attendees were able to engage in a panel discussion on the topic of online privacy and cybersecurity. President and CEO Marsali Hancock of iKeepsafe, Pablo Chavez, Director of Public Policy at Google, and Fernando R. Laguarda, Vice President of External Affairs and Policy at Time Warner Cable, discussed ways in which Latinos can better protect themselves and stay safe while navigating the web.

On November 6th, 2012, Latino voters made it clear that



*Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, holding up LULAC's "I Voted for Immigration Reform" petitions, urges LULAC members to contact their representatives to obtain immigration reform.*



*Congressman Joaquin Castro, LULAC National President Margaret Moran, and Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer at the 2013 Awards Gala.*

members of Congress, and representatives from private corporations, LULAC kicked off its 16th annual Legislative Conference on Wednesday, February 14th with the State of the League address by LULAC National President Moran. In her address, LULAC National President Moran highlighted LULAC's policy priorities in the area of health education and immigration reform. The policy briefings that followed President Moran's address delved deeper into each of the policy pillars she addressed and prepared LULAC's advocates for their visits on the Hill with members of Congress the following day.

At the Legislative Conference, LULAC members participated in panel discussions that elicited intense and insightful discussions on healthcare inequities, education, online privacy, and immigration reform. The Honorable Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Honorable Raúl Ruiz, U.S. Representative for California's 36th District, provided the opening remarks for the Health Policy panel. Panelists discussed the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the expansion of Medicaid as well as the protection of nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. A brief interruption from a fire alarm did cause an abbreviated "Q&A" session and so, for any participants that were left with pending questions, please send them to [latinoslivinghealthy@lulac.org](mailto:latinoslivinghealthy@lulac.org).

The panel on Education Policy addressed the potential ramifications of the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act as it relates to English Language Learners (ELL). The panelists, which included Moira Lenehan, Senior Legislative Aide to Senator Jack Reed, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee; Charlene Rivera, Executive Director, Center for Equity and Excellence in Education, George Washington University, Co-Convener of The Working Group on ELL Policy; and James A. Ferg-Cadima, Regional



*Tom Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division and nominee for Secretary of Labor, Congressman Raul Ruiz, LULAC National President Margaret Moran, Congressman Raul Grijalva and Mickey Ibarra.*

comprehensive immigration reform was long overdue and that candidates who used anti-immigrant rhetoric would no longer fare well in future elections. Attendees came together to discuss strategies for how to mobilize a broad consortium of Americans across the United States in support of comprehensive immigration reform. The panel was composed of prominent immigration reform advocates

*Continued on page 23.*



# LOS MEJORES *amigos se hacen fuera de* FACEBOOK.



\*Confiabilidad basada en longevidad: registros de camionetas pickup de tamaño completo de 1981 a julio del 2011.

Presentamos la Chevy Silverado de media tonelada. La camioneta más confiable y duradera en el camino. Porque los mejores amigos merecen viajar en la mejor camioneta. PONTE A VIVIR.

Chevy Silverado



# Defining Hispanic Heritage

## Submissions From Across the Country

### A #2 Pencil and the Land of Opportunity

*Larry Aguilar from Fort Myers, FL writes:*

As a small boy growing up in Cuba, I can still remember twirling in my small fingers a pencil I received from an uncle who was living in New York. I was in the first grade and I can still remember reading “Made in USA” in bold black letters on that. To most, that branded announcement may have meant nothing, but to me it meant a world of difference. A world I only knew then from watching movies and cartoons, a world where everything seemed larger, brighter, stronger and more plentiful. Even today a pencil has a very special meaning for me and for what this great country has provided for me and my family. As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage month I am again reminded that it is also a celebration of America, and the many people from many different countries who share the same dream, “The American Dream.”

### Nurturing the Hispanic Identity with Social Justice

*Jessica Fuentes from Berkeley, California writes:*

I am a first generation Latina. A Latina whose identity has been

program for low-income, first generation high school students. Aside from being academically supportive, the program was also a window that introduced me to Chicano/Latino culture through literature and cultural events. For the first time in my life, I was able to identify with the material that was being taught. I found my story reflected in the writings of authors like Sandra Cisneros and Victor Villaseñor. Excitement overpowered me as I realized that the themes mentioned in their writings were issues happening in my Latino community. Through Puente, I was also able to engage in cultural activities that up to high school seemed foreign. Such activities were included Dia de Los Muertos and Mexican Independence Day. The more involved I became in organizing and participating in these activities, the more I fell in love with my Hispanic culture.

I realized the importance of my commitment to the Latino community when I entered UC Berkeley and discovered that Latinos made up less than 15 percent of the student population. Unlike my high school, which was primarily Latino, I was no longer surrounded by familiar brown faces. Although our schools are overflowing with Latinos, our educators still do not understand or have experienced the daily struggles we have gone through. There is a need for



shaped by traces of Mexican culture and an American experience. I was born in Puebla, Mexico, and immigrated to the United States in the summer of 1994, only a few months after my 4th birthday. My mother took a tough decision that changed my life in a way I have just recently begun to realize.

My passion for my Hispanic heritage began with my involvement in the Puente Program. The Puente Program is a college bound

Latino leaders with whom we can self-identify and know that the opportunity for change is more than just a dream.

Throughout my life I have taken upon different roles. Growing up in a predominately Spanish-speaking Latino neighborhood meant that as six years old I found myself becoming a translator for my mother. Later in middle school, I became a role model for my

*Continued on page 11*



# Defining Hispanic Heritage

## *Submissions From Across the Country*

sister. And in high school I became a community leader advocating for DREAM Act students. I know now that through these roles I have become a courageous, determine, and passionate Latina who is already a leader in action. My determination to pursue higher education has allowed me to break down stereotypes and open windows of opportunities for other young Latinos, who, like me, seek a better life. My simple responsibility as a student in a university gives me the opportunity to serve Latino youth as a role model; one whom they know has faced similar obstacles and yet still stands strong. The passion I have for my Hispanic heritage has served as my motivation to engage myself in social change in order for us to keep our traditions alive. Being Latino is something extraordinary and this month we celebrate with our hermanos and hermanas our remarkable heritage.

### **The Lost Ojeda Daughter**

*Sylvia Noemi Contreras from Long Beach, California writes:*

My mother and father married in Tijuana, Mexico. I did not know my father – they separated when I was an infant. Growing up in Los Angeles since the 1960s as an immigrant is memorable. Relocating to Houston in the 1979 provided me a wealth of international opportunities. Being so close to Mexico, travel was fairly easy, except when it involved visiting the Mexican Consulate for permission to leave the U.S. and return. After several trips, I became a naturalized citizen around 1985. Yet, all these years of being home, it felt as if something was missing.

A sense of belonging overwhelmed me in 2009 when I discovered a beautiful oasis, historical landmark #153, Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum. Steering my car up the long driveway, instantly my breath was taken away with what would be the fruit of my search for family roots. The ranch, which re-enacted the Battle of Dominguez Rancho, in the Mexican-American War, feels to be far away, out of town someplace. The ranch's story begins with a Spanish Leather-Jacket soldier (soldado de cuera) named Juan Jose Dominguez. He traveled from Baja California to Alta California with the 1769 expedition of military leader Gaspar de Portola and Franciscan monk Junipero Serra. In 1784, Juan Jose Dominguez earned the first Southern California land grant for his 30 years of military service to King Carlos III of Spain. Eventually, without heirs, the property was owned by his great-nephew, Manuel Dominguez. He built an adobe home that would later become the museum.

My last conversation with my father, Efrain, was in 1979. I had seen him twice before that time. Then in the late 1990's, I searched for him again, without success. In May 2011, I decided to take another stab and pursued another search for my estranged father. I found what I thought might be his new home address. When I

visited, no one was home, but I returned a couple of times. Finally, a neighbor stepped outside. Without offering to say who I was, or why I was inquiring, I asked about my father Efrain Ojeda. When the neighbor kindly stated that Efrain had passed a few years earlier, a lump in my throat unexpectedly formed, as I held back tears. The neighbor and I just stared at each other - she wondering what else to say, me trying to figure out what do or say next. She suggested I return another day when a car was parked in the driveway for someone to help me.

I returned and met my father's widow. Interestingly she shared a little of my father's roots. He was born in a town named San Antonio, but not the one in Texas that I had visited often, not the one between Tijuana, Mexico and Rosarito, Mexico that I found out about in 2010. No, my father was born in the town of San Antonio located south of quaint La Paz, Mexico on Highway 1.

Before I met my father's family, I had been reading a book called "History of Torrance," a town that was part of the 1784 land grant to Juan Jose Dominguez, the Spanish soldier. There were two ships which departed from La Paz, Mexico, to Alta California for the 1769



expedition. The book includes a 1787 payroll record, in which the caption noted Juan Jose Dominguez's name. When I found and read the full-sized copy of that record, I found that the payroll record has listed "Gabriel Oxeda." Further research confirmed that Jose Gabriel Ojeda was part of the 1769 expedition!

It was so exciting. It seemed logical to me, that this Ojeda soldier was a great-great-great-grandfather of mine. My search for roots, for a full genealogy, has grown from a weak curiosity to a full-flamed fire. My drive is unequivocal, immeasurable, that there is a possibility to achieve the impossible.

The value of a company is measured not by its net worth, but by its contributions to the community. LULAC partners with these valuable companies and together, we multiply our effect to improve our country.

### Gustavo Viaño

#### Director of Diversity and Inclusion, McDonald's

*Tell me how your family participates with LULAC. How have your daughters continued their involvement with LULAC?*

Eight years ago at a Wisconsin convention, Silvia Perez invited me to participate with the LULAC Youth. When I invited them to Hamburger University, McDonald's global center of leadership development, I brought my daughter. I have always believed that there was so much power in the youth of the organization. I like that older members mix with the younger members since that structure reflects the organic nature of the Latino family. The drop-out rates are really dramatic: every 26 seconds, a student drops out of school in the U.S. Creating a support structure that will uphold a student's success is critical to improving our country as a whole.

I have been bringing my daughters to the LULAC National Convention ever since then – they participate in the Youth Conference. They met President Margaret Moran and were very impressed by her. Now, things have gotten more interesting because my daughter started a LULAC Council at school that has over 40 members. I feel very connected, very much a part of the organization.

The council is developing a leadership program to help kids after school. There are many families in the area whose parents have two work two or three jobs, which means that the children are left without guidance. My daughter's council is also working with the LGBT Alliance at her school on the anti-bullying issue. The council is working to create a positive environment that can dissuade online harassment and acceptance. Too often, Latino kids are victims of bullying and we can prevent that.

*I see the passion for education and LGBT equality. What issues should the country focus on so that we can be successful?*

Immigration reform is at the top of the list. Our community is coming out of the shadows but we need to work on that so that we can really maximize our full potential.

Economic improvement is also critical. The economic reality is that many parents have multiple jobs to make sure their families



have the resources they need, but the implication is that

We certainly can't overlook health and nutrition. There needs to be broader health education. The country needs to get more active and get involved in physical programs, like the ones that LULAC is hosting. It is critical to keep everyone healthy.

*What advice would you give to a youth that is in danger of dropping out – a youth whose parents are forced to work multiple jobs to sustain the family?*

We have to frame the reality so that it positively affects our community. I would advise youth to find a mentor – more than one if possible. Because they are working, parents are absent from their children's lives, which means that children have to seek their guidance in a trusted and knowledgeable individual. In this manner, the youth can stay motivated and focused, poised to excel academically.

Also, the youth can find a support group – that's why I like the framework of the LULAC Councils. Youth find comfort and guidance in each other.

### Christine Ortega, Manager of Community Affairs and Grassroots, Communications and Strategic Outreach, Southwest Airlines

*Tell me about your roots. Where is your family from?*

I am proud to be the grand-daughter of Juan V. and Dominga M. Medrano, and Silvestre and Florencia C. Ortega. My maternal grandparents were U.S. citizens who came from small villages in Mexico. I was lucky enough to learn Spanish from them—which was my first language—learning English by immersion. My paternal abuela was a spitfire of the first order who lived with us till she passed away. We learned our first colorful Spanish words from her...which still come in handy every



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## Christine Ortega

now and again!

As migrant farm workers, my grandparents handed down their secrets to personal wealth. They revealed that the power of presence when aligned with courage will make a positive difference in life. My family also believed in the power of academic excellence and self-expression, which has been the root of my successful career since my first college job.

I remember my dad, Sylvester, asking my sister about her grades. She usually had a nice array of letters in her report card—not all A's or even straight B's. In a gentle and caring way Dad asked: "Is that the best you can do, mija?" She said "Yes!" My dad replied: "OK. Then, that's great!" I was surprised by this answer – he taught me what's really important: Always do the best I can.

*What was your first job after graduating from college?*

After graduating from the University of Notre Dame, I launched into an exciting television career. I freelanced in media and TV production working my way from a grip to TV producer/director. Working in the San Antonio PBS affiliate, I created the nationally recognized weekly TV series, "Heritage," an innovative video-magazine highlighting Latino culture. The high quality and touching content earned a national PBS nomination in the cultural programming category. From there I only moved up.

*What three things motivate you, Christine?*

What motivates me is being included in the journey.

Transportation is a noble profession. It has transformed our planet in ways that historically, some only imagined and we are lucky enough to live! I work for a great company that understands the importance of people—those who work for and those who fly on Southwest Airlines.

What is important to communities in TX can be very different from those in New York or California. So the key to community-building is to listen to people, be asked to participate, and then contribute. This produces a better understanding of community and one's sense of self-expression. My engagement across the country has led me to a passion for civil rights, education, and social justice. And this has taken many forms in various communities like housing, voter registration, arts and culture.

*That's fascinating! How have you combined your passion for service with your professional goals?*

I have always interwoven the two. I've found that I'm driven by compassion when communities are faced with crises. This was true with community-based groups in New York disaster, where we worked to provide transportation and support for relief workers

after hurricane Sandy, in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, and in Miami after the earthquake in Haiti. After lightning struck and burned down the student dormitory for AAMA House in Houston, Texas, I organized a team of Southwest Airlines Employees who assembled new furniture for the student dormitory on campus. With the collaboration of HACU, I also formulated the Southwest Airlines Take Off! ¡Lánzate! Higher Education Travel Award. Since 2004, this unique national program provides free airline tickets to Latino students or their parents who travel away from home to a college or university. In addition, I support many important national advocacy groups like LULAC to meet the needs of those in this country. The more one gives, the more one lives. The LULAC membership embodies that principle.

*How do you see the relationship with Southwest and LULAC?*

Southwest Airlines helps champion causes that matter most in the daily lives of our customers.

LULAC members, like Southwest Airlines focus on important elements within a community, uplifting good community service work, and highlighting the community partners with a strong mission that benefit our country. We care about each other and focus on the community – that's the Southwest spirit. LULAC embodies this attitude and I hope to continue championing this daily.

## Jason Riveiro, Multicultural Marketing Manager, Sherwin-Williams

*How did you get involved in LULAC?*

Actually, I am a product of LNES. Do you know Roseann Blanco? She was the Director of the LNES Center in Houston where I used to go a lot during high school. That started my involvement and really established my passion for community service. When I went off to the University of St. Thomas, where I served as the founding member of the young adults council on campus. After I graduated from college, I moved up to Cincinnati, and I helped found the first council in Cincinnati. The movement grew and new councils sprung up in the area until I was eventually the state director. There were many accomplishments along the way, including bringing the LULAC National Convention



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## Jason Riveiro

to Ohio. I also served on the National Board of LNES.

*Tell me about the relationship between Sherwin-Williams and LULAC.*

Sherwin-Williams has a large base of Latino customers and many of those customers are small business owners – we are in the business of small business and Latinos are a big part of that. To better serve these customers, we are working to create a more welcoming experience at our stores while reaching them through culturally relevant messaging. One way we are reaching out to the Latino community is via Facebook and Twitter. If readers go to [www.facebook.com/SherwinWilliamsLatino](http://www.facebook.com/SherwinWilliamsLatino), clientes hispanohablantes tendrán una experiencia cultural única en su idioma – we have created a page devoted to Latino Americans entirely in Spanish.

Together, Sherwin-Williams and LULAC fit perfectly. Sherwin-Williams is a company in the community, and LULAC is a community-based organization. We both have great energy and great perseverance. We will keep getting involved in the key national events that LULAC puts together, like the Women's Conference and the Awards Gala. For the Women's Conference, for example, we activated our employee volunteer network – the Sherwin-Williams employees painted the public housing in Puerto Rico for the National Women's Conference.

*Every 26 seconds, a student drops out of school. What advice would you give a student that is on the track to not graduate?*

I would tell that student that, ultimately, what is important is that you pursue your dreams and that you are contributing to the community. That will save you and will give you more than you ever expected. I thought that I was devoting time to LULAC, but in reality I gained a lot more from my work in the community and interaction than I ever gave back. That's key – we have pride in our identity and our roots, which will keep you grounded and will break through the clutter. At the end of the day, all you have is family and those that love you.

**I thought I was devoting time to LULAC, but in reality I gained a lot more from my work in the community and interaction than I ever gave back.**

It's very important to continue our history and to represent our families, regardless of the situation. Our parents came to this country to get a better life for their children. We as Latinos have tremendous pride in who we are as people and we are people that work hard and succeed in life and provide for the families.

*What is your biggest accomplishment?*

This may not have been what you're looking for, but I have a 22-month-old boy. Just raising him and seeing what he turns out to be is and will continue to be my biggest accomplishment. Everything else is second compared to family.

*Any closing notes?*

Yes, a message to companies: I would encourage companies to invest in LULAC because an investment in LULAC is well-spent.

LULAC is very willing to go above and beyond what it promises to do!

## Celeste Carrasco, Director, Federal Public Affairs, AT&T

*You have lived the American Dream. Share your story.*

My family left Argentina when I was 13 years old in 1985. We landed in New Jersey where she has lived my entire childhood. I arrived for eighth grade in a rough high school where about five thousand students attended. There was no specialized education – they were more or less funneling kids through high school. I was thrown into ESL, [English as a Second Language classes]. If you didn't speak English, you went there. It didn't matter what you spoke, English, German, Chinese, you went there.

I quickly realized that there was no path to college in the ESL track – they would keep us entertained from eight to three and then send us home. I knew that this was not the purpose of my parents relocating to the U.S. They wanted to create a better future for us. They expected me to make something of myself – my mom would always talk about college as if there were no alternative. My parents had careers in Argentina: my mom was a nurse, and my dad an accountant, but in the U.S. my mom worked at a lipstick factory, and my dad worked at the airport. They didn't give up their own way to live in a land where opportunities for improvement are available.

So I fought the system. I had to fight to get out of ESL and fight some more to get into a college-prep class. It took a marking period in the ninth grade, but I finally made it out. Of course, I had to work twice as hard as other students. I had to read a book two or three times with a dictionary at my side to understand it, but it didn't matter. It was worth it.

My brother, sister, mom, dad, and I lived in one-bedroom apartment. I studied in the bathroom since it was the only place that was quiet. You do whatever you need to do – don't need all the luxuries in life if there is a desire to succeed.

You tend to excel where English was less needed, I noticed. I received a math scholarship, full-tuition, but I had to quit because my parents had economic difficulties. I came back to Jersey to help my parents. I reapplied after a year and finished at Rutgers.

I started at the bottom at a dial-up company. Once I started with AT&T, slowly I started to climb up the ladder, taking different



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## Celeste Carrasco

opportunities within the customer care world. I went back to school for my Master's, which AT&T graciously paid for – professors were brought into the company to instruct the students. I always remember that my best friend was hesitant to return to school. I told her that she needed to do this with me – “What are you going to do on Tuesday nights? You're going to watch Friends?” I would tell her. “Would you rather know the Friends episode or would you rather have your Master's degree?”

Now she has her Master's degree and thanks me profusely. There really is a difference between having and not having a higher education degree.

My interest has always been that they succeed, however I can help them or encourage them to get an education or look for career opportunities – I can't understand when bosses hinder a person's career path.

When I actually get someone into a different career path – I always tell them to not forget the little people on the way up. My

main goal is helping people succeed. If I had anything to do with that at all, it is a victory for me. When you know that about me from my history – that's how I am today here.

It is the same way with organizations that I work with. Organizations that I interact

with are on my team – your success is my success. AT&T's relationship with LULAC is like that – we're getting stronger by forming long-term partnerships, not fly-by-night passes.

*What would you tell a young Latino /a advocate that is interested in a career in corporate America?*

Corporations are always going to look at you like you're an oddball – conformity is accepted, but let me tell you the secret: everyone is recognizing that diversity is the strength of any team – corporation, group, think tank, no matter how small you want to break it. Diversity doesn't always mean that there needs to be a checklist of African-American, Latino, Asian American, and white person. True diversity comes from diversity of ideas. Bring people that have the same goal in mind and the same common ground and they bring their own point of view to what you are trying to accomplish. There are going to be some corporations that have a strong culture that may not function with an oddball like myself – but you need to find corporations that see the strength in diversity. The corporate world is what you make of it. By bringing a different viewpoint to the table you will be invaluable to that company.

## LULAC Programs Shape the Future of America



### A Student's Reflection on the Ford Driving Dreams Program

*By Jasmine Vidales*

The Ford Driving Dreams through Education (FDD) program has made a great impact on my life. I've learned so much about myself, my family background, my culture, and the future. I don't exactly know what career I want to pursue in the future but what I do know is that nothing is impossible because there are many different ways to be successful, and that's what everyone needs to reach for—success. I think all the FDD students would agree that FDD's main goal is to make sure that everyone is successful. I would recommend everyone join Ford Driving Dreams. We are all just a family, and it's a home away from home. Thanks to this program, I actually learned what it really means to be Latina. I've gained so much knowledge and respect for my ancestors and my parents for getting me where I am today.

Hopefully the program is still around in the future because this is definitely something I'd love my own children to be a part of. I have a lot of confidence in myself, since FDD also helps with speaking to a group and participating in discussions. The mentors



show that they really care and they want to know all about you even though it is for school, it seems like they really enjoy being a part of our little family. All my mentors are amazing, and they're always there for me whenever I need help. They're always checking up on me to make sure I'm ok—in school and personally. I definitely trust all of my mentors. School-wise, FDD's Tutoring Days are extremely helpful because everything I don't fully understand in school is fully explained to me by the tutors.

I'm grateful that I found something as great as Ford Driving Dreams. I'm actually extremely lucky.



# Eliminating the Leaks in the Latina/o Educational Pipeline

## Curtailing the Factors that Inhibit Academic Success

By: Félix Cuma, LULAC National Programs and Policy Intern

Until this day, my parents always say “¡Échale ganas!” when I talk to them about my future academic goals. I never took my parents’ advice for granted and always worked hard in school. I knew going to college would be the way to prosper in this country. I am truly proud that I am the first one in my entire family to graduate from high school and enroll in a four-year university. Unfortunately, not all my Latina/o peers at high school have had the same opportunities.

As I made my way through the educational pipeline, I noticed that Latina/o peers were disappearing from school. According to academic scholar Tara Yosso, the educational pipeline depicts the drop rate of Latina/o students from elementary school to graduate school by illustrating the serious, persistent “leaks” that result in the low rates of degree completion. According to the Education Trust, only 60% of Latina/os graduate from high school. Out of 100 Latina/o students, 17 will go to community college, and one will transfer to a four-year university. Out of ten (including the transferred student) Latina/os going to four-year college, only eight will graduate. By the end of the pipeline there are about 1% of Latina/o students earning a doctoral degree. The Latina/o educational pipeline contains leaks that prevent Latina/o students from prospering academically. The leaks are a result of the unequal elementary and secondary conditions, limited college opportunities, and educational isolation in graduate school.

### Unequal Elementary and Secondary Conditions

When going through the Educational Pipeline, Latina/o students face unequal K-12 school conditions. First, Latina/o students are usually enrolled in racially-segregated, overcrowded schools with under-qualified faculty members with sparse resources. Second, Latina/o students are often put into remedial classes, which inhibit rigorous academic enrichment. For example, as a freshman in high school, I was placed in a remedial English course that limited my ability to think critically. While others were reading classical English literature, I was trapped reading books at a lower grade level. Third, standardized tests, such as the High School Exit Exam, result in an inadequate evaluation of disadvantaged students. These standardized tests provide privileged students with higher scores while disadvantaged students perform poorly. For example, in California, students with disabilities are still required to take the exit

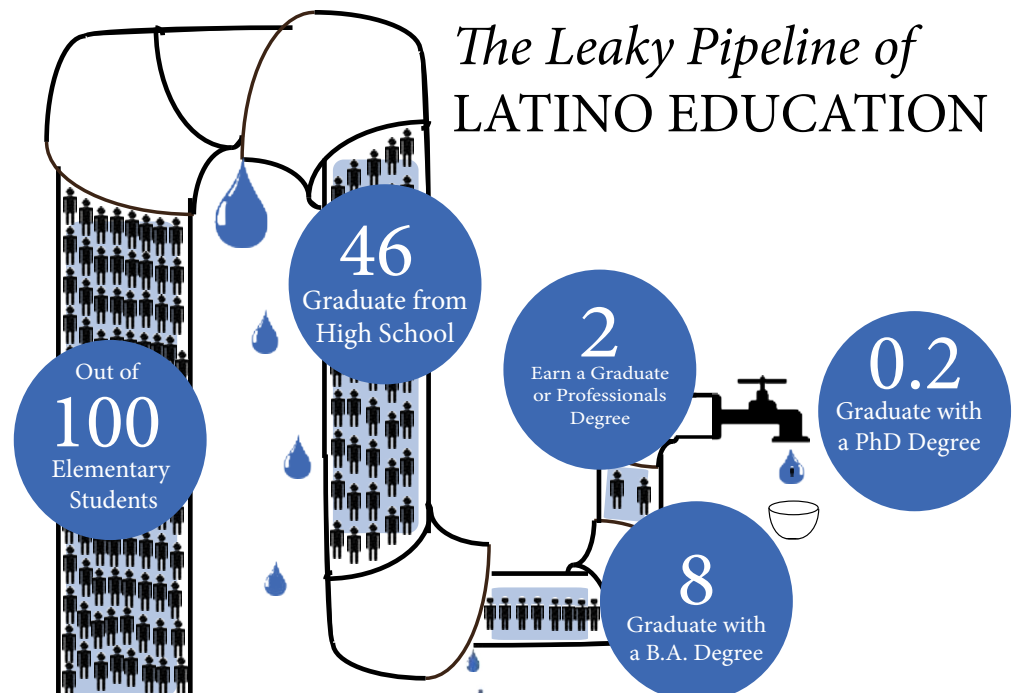
exam in tenth grade even though they are at a different learning level than privileged students that have access to better resources and better qualified teachers. The challenges for the 60% of Latina/os that graduate from high school increase as they progress through college.

### Limited College Opportunities

One of the main challenges that Latina/os face is the high level



Felix Cuma



of stress that, out of various contributing factors, often results from their status as first-generation students. Because tertiary education is a new experience, first-generation college students lack the proper guidance to successfully navigate the collegiate environment. Mariela Dabbah states in her book “Latinos in College” that first-generation

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# La Educación de Nuestros Niños Comienza en la Casa

Por la Dra. Arnhilda Badía

Cuando se plantea cómo educar a nuestros niños y jóvenes, LULAC enfatiza que el aprendizaje no empieza en las aulas sino en la casa ya que los padres son los primeros maestros de sus hijos. Mientras más temprano los padres se involucren en el proceso educativo de sus hijos los resultados serán mejores. Como dijo el filósofo genovés Jean-Jacques Rousseau: “Un buen padre vale por cien maestros.”

La tarea de los padres empieza cuando el bebé nace y su labor continúa durante toda la vida. La misión de los padres es ayudar a sus hijos a que se desarrollen hasta convertirse en individuos de bien y exitosos en la sociedad en que viven. La educación familiar requiere varios elementos fundamentales como: la confianza, el conocimiento mutuo, la constancia y el común acuerdo en las metas. No basta con decir algo para que el niño lo haga, sino que hay que involucrarlo para que comprenda las decisiones tomadas. Los niños absorben todo lo que sucede a su alrededor, de ahí la importancia de que los padres se den cuenta de que sus hijos los imitan para aprender. Recordemos que “Una buena familia, comienza con un buen ejemplo de los padres.”

Hay que enseñar a los hijos a evaluar sus estudios para su desarrollo intelectual, dirigiendo su atención hacia sus metas. El científico estadounidense de origen alemán Albert Einstein aconsejó: “Nunca consideres el estudio como una obligación, sino como una oportunidad para penetrar en el bello y maravilloso mundo del saber.”

El idioma es más que un medio de comunicación. Investigaciones realizadas demuestran que los niños aprenden mejor cuando se les enseña en su lengua materna sobre todo en sus primeros años como escolar. Sin embargo, con mucha frecuencia, los padres no les enseñan a sus hijos en su primer idioma por temor a que se confundan o no aprendan bien en el idioma del país en que viven, en este caso, el inglés. Por el contrario, estudios realizados sobre este tema indican que la enseñanza en la lengua materna permite al niño desarrollar mejor sus destrezas las cuales se transfieren más tarde al segundo idioma.

El aprendizaje en su propio idioma, en sus primeros años como estudiante, no es un lujo, sino un derecho fundamental de acceso a las oportunidades educativas. Para facilitar a que los niños sean bilingües y biculturales se deben escoger programas que los ayuden a desarrollar ambos idiomas. Unos de los mejores programas que ofrecen las escuelas públicas es el programa de dos idiomas conocido como “Dual Language” o “Two-Way Immersion.” La escritora cubanoamericana Alma Flor Ada, afirma con razón que “el que habla dos idiomas, vale por dos.”

Junto con el idioma, los niños aprenden sobre su cultura. Los niños deben tener confianza en lo que son y son sus padres los que pueden infundirles orgullo en su herencia cultural. Es importante enseñarles a aceptar a otros y a ver más allá del aspecto físico o cultural, fijándose en el carácter, la moral y los valores. Al respetar las diferencias culturales, los padres darán a sus hijos el ejemplo del comportamiento esperado y éstos no crecerán prejuiciados. Como expresó el célebre político mexicano Benito Juárez; “el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz.”

Al participar los padres en la educación de sus hijos, la transición

del hogar a la escuela se hace más fácil y eficaz. Análisis de resultados académicos indican que los niños cuyos padres participan en su educación, tienen mayor posibilidad de graduarse de la escuela secundaria y de continuar la educación superior. No importa si



los padres no saben inglés para poder participar en actividades escolares. Las escuelas públicas tienen traductores especializados para ayudarlos. Si queremos ser parte del proceso, podremos hacerlo. Sigamos el lema del gran activista político César Chávez: “Sí se puede.”

Y para terminar, siempre debemos tener en cuenta que “una buena educación es la mejor herencia que pueden darles los padres a sus hijos.”

*Acerca de la Dra. Badía*

*La Dra. Arnhilda Badía cuenta con más de 35 años de experiencia en la enseñanza de idiomas. Se graduó de Meredith College y obtuvo su maestría y doctorado en la Universidad de Carolina del Norte, Chapel Hill. Recibió un título de posgrado de la Universidad de Harvard.*

*La Dra. Badía es autora de varios libros de textos para la enseñanza del español, así como para la enseñanza de cívica y ciudadanía. Uno de sus libros sobre el tema de la importancia de los padres en la educación de sus hijos, La clave para el éxito de sus hijos, fue publicado en el 2009 por Ediciones Aguilar.*





# LNESC's Legacy of Educational Excellence



For almost 40 years, the LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc. (LNESC) network has chipped away at the educational inequalities that plague the Latino community. Through fourteen education centers, our staff delivers programs to break down barriers that exist between high-need students and high school diplomas,

## Literacy

Through our network of 14 Young Readers programs, LNESC provides cutting edge literacy programming to k-2nd graders. Our Young Readers network leverages passionate teachers, technology like iPads, and engaged corporate partners like P&G, Target, and Verizon to improve reading outcomes for high need students with limited reading time outside the classroom.

## Scholarship Assistance

Since 1975, LNESC has awarded over \$20 million in scholarship support to disadvantaged students across the nation. Through the LULAC National Scholarship Fund (LNSF), LNESC works with corporate partners and LULAC Councils to

ensure money isn't an obstacle to higher education. According to Eluterio Vargars, one of our Verizon LNSF scholarship recipients, "The scholarship has been helpful not only to me but to my family as well. As a first generation college student, my family has always struggled financially with putting us through a higher education. This scholarship has helped in so many ways that I can't even explain."

Thanks to LNESC's hard work, there are more students excited to read in Miami, FL, more students entering their freshmen year at universities across the nation, and fewer parents wondering how they will pay for college. We take pride in these accomplishments as we approach our 40th anniversary and continue on our mission to change lives and build Latino communities, one student at a time.



*Washington Youth Leadership participants with U.S. Army, which provides LNESC students with top-notch leadership programming.*

college degrees, and jobs in highly skilled fields. LNESC has served over 500,000 disadvantaged students, sent over 150,000 students to college, and provided over \$20 million in scholarships to make college a reality for students living in some of the country's poorest communities.

Our hard work is paying off according to recent data from the Pew Hispanic Center. For the first time, the number of 18- to 24-year-old Latinos enrolled in college exceeded 2 million and reached a record 16.5 percent share of all college enrollments. We are now, for the first time, the largest minority group among the country's four-year college and university students. This trend is due, in part, to the success of organizations like LNESC and our work to build private and public partnerships for the benefit of high-need students.

Throughout our history, LNESC has achieved amazing results working in a wide range of educational areas; including college access, literacy, and scholarship assistance.

## College Access

LNESC was recently awarded 12 federal Upward Bound and Talent Search grants to provide thousands of students with academic and college access counseling. These Upward Bound and Talent Search programs are essential components of LNESC's strategy to closing the achievement gap in the Hispanic community. Nationally, 91% of Upward Bound participants who graduate from high school enroll in a post-secondary degree program the year of their graduation, compared to 41% of students not in an Upward Bound program.



*(GM Science Corps program exposes students in Dallas, TX to STEM related careers and college majors)*



# Teacher Reflections:

## Cultivating Life Long Readers and Learners through the Young Readers Program

*By Jason Resendez with contributions from Yolanda Rubido, Beth Baumgartner, and Laura Munoz-Velazquez*

Right now in 14 high-need communities across the U.S., LNESc's network of passionate teachers is working hard to instill a love of

from Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble, Target, and Verizon. Our Young Readers program has improved the lives of thousands of students in communities in Texas, Florida, Georgia, California, and many more. In 2011 alone, 97 percent of participants increased their reading proficiency by at least one grade level. This

impact is made possible by LNESc's corporate partners and by its network of highly skilled teachers.

I asked some of our dedicated teachers to reflect on their time with the Young Readers program and below are some of their thoughts on how the program has changed the lives of their students.

After working with the Young Readers Program for two years now, I can honestly tell you that it is a wonderful program and I love it! It allows for our Hispanic ELL students ranging in different levels, the opportunity to learn, enhance and reinforce reading and reading skills. Our program was capped at 25 students this year, and throughout the year we had other students and parents asking how they can join and participate. The love for the program is evident in the student's eagerness as they ask their other teachers every day... "Is there Young Readers today?"

Thanks to the Young Readers

Program were able to participate in an extra hour and a half of extended school time, twice a week from September through May. Students are provided with the extra exposure to literature and comprehension skills that they may not get at home. The results of the program are evident in our student's love of reading, their eagerness to participate, and their major improvements on reading evaluations. – Yolanda Rubido, Carlos Finlay Elementary School; Miami, FL (sponsored by P&G and Target)

"It is always hard to express in words how the Young Readers program has impacted my students and, through them, me. The program is invaluable in fostering a love of reading. It is amazing to watch the children, like little sponges, begin to look forward to and LOVE reading time. They read to themselves and they read to each other. As a teacher who witnesses these changes on a daily basis, I feel very thankful." Beth Baumgartner, Roberts Paideia Academy; Cincinnati, OH (sponsored by P&G)

"The program made a big impact in improving student reading skills. For some students it actually made a difference in being able to move to the next grade level for the new school year. The students made significant growth in basic phonics skills, reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers and parents from other schools learned about the Young Readers Program and expressed the desire and need to have the program for their students too." Laura Muñoz-Velazquez, Calaveras Elementary; Hollister, CA (sponsored by P&G)



Photo by Luis Nuno Briones

LULAC National President Margaret Moran and Melanie Healey, P&G Group President - North America, read to Young Readers students at LNESc P&G Young Readers Corner in Cincinnati, Ohio.

reading in K-2nd graders through an interactive and innovation driven program called Young Readers, a model that has won praise



Photo by Luis Nuno Briones

Young Readers student Armando his mom Teresa Izquierdo talking about the program at the 2011 LULAC National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio.





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## La Voz de los Líderes

By: *Arielle Nava Villa, Las Vegas LULAC Council #11100*

I am the daughter of Raul Nava Villa, granddaughter of Ernesto Nava Villa who was the son of Francisco “Pancho” Villa, General del Norte in the Mexican Revolution. My great-grandfather is sometimes labeled as a bandit, thief, and rebel; however, he fought valiantly for his people and his country. He believed that he could make a difference, and with that drive he made history. He grew up poor and didn’t have too much in the beginning, but that was just the start of something great. This goes to show that it doesn’t matter where you come from, you have the power to change history. Now, I’m sure that many of you have causes and issues that you are passionate about, that is why you are LULAC members. Eventually, Villa found his passion, he found his calling in assembling and leading a peasant army out of nothing. To overthrow a corrupt government that repressed its people, one that didn’t care if they starved to death,



*Arielle Nava Villa, Las Vegas LULAC Council #11100*

if they lived or died. Villa along with Emiliano Zapata, pushed for change with both of their armies, Villa from the North and Zapata from the south. Villa was successful at winning almost all of his battles. He was able to reallocate land and stabilize the economy in the North. His effort and strong will to do what was right made him a hero. He made his country a little bit better for the vast amount of poor who lived there. In 1923 he died, not in battle, but from enemies who killed him while he was traveling in a car in Parral, Chihuahua.

Now, my grandfather, Ernesto, never met his father. He was just two years old when his mother took him to New Mexico in search of a refuge from the revolution. When Villa died in 1923 and my grandfather was eight, his mother revealed his father’s identity: General Francisco Villa. She told him to never tell anyone who he was, in fear that Villa’s enemies in Mexico or the U.S. would try to kill him. So he kept that secret from everyone, even most of his family, for eighty years. Then on a trip to Mexico about 12 or 13 years ago, my father, Raul, asked if he could tell someone at the hotel they were

staying at in Parral. Because my grandfather said that because he was an old man the secrecy no longer mattered, and my dad told the janitor. He, in turn, called the owner, who happened to be an author on a book on Pancho Villa. He turned out to be the head of the yearly festival in Parral that celebrates Villa and the revolution. He was so excited to hear about their story and invited them back to go to the festival. In 2002, I traveled with my father and grandfather to Mexico to attend the festival. This was their first time going back since they revealed who we were. But this wasn’t just a regular trip: it was like stepping back in time, like a history lesson. Unlike most 12 year olds, though, I was interested in learning the history of the Revolution and of my great grandfather.

We visited Villa’s house in Torreon, the jail he was held in, cities where he battled, and of course where he was killed. He wasn’t just that mysterious man in the photos anymore: he was real. He was my great grandfather, and I felt him within me. From then on I went to every Villa related event possible with my father and grandfather, constantly learning, listening, and filming everything. My grandpa, Ernesto, reminds me of what Villa must have been like. I never saw him turn down an opportunity to help someone, he was always there. He would always tell me, “M’ija, you can achieve anything you put your mind to, and always, always, always work hard.” I am lucky enough to have had someone tell me that because not everyone is so lucky. If you were never told that, let me tell you now. You can achieve anything that you put your mind to with hard work. It doesn’t matter where you come from or where you’ve been. What matters is now, and where you want to be in the future. Each and every one of you is special and has the power to create the change you want to see.

I have known about LULAC for a long time and it amazes me at just how much the organization does for the community. Though LULAC was organized by men 83 years ago, events including men and women came years after its founding. Today, however, the women form this notable organization’s leadership. Women are known to represent people for love, family, and community. Today’s women leaders can be compared to the historical part of my family and my great grandfather, General Francisco Villa. His Adelitas were women warriors, fighting for justice and equality right alongside the men in Villa’s army.

Today women are still fighting for justice and equality—many being women of LULAC. History is repeating itself in other forms and my encouragement to be a leader, as young as I may seem to everyone, is because I am motivated by women just like the LULAC women in leadership.

I wish that I could have lived during my great grandfather’s time, fighting to represent the unrepresented and giving to the poor, because I would have been there, right beside him. Although he definitely had his own way of claiming justice, we thank all LULAC members for continuing the struggles to assure the true representation that we as Latinas and Latinos deserve.

History tells us of the many accomplishments women have made; we must not allow any accomplishment to be overlooked, as they tell the story of women who have stood firm in their beliefs. Many of those women were the Adelitas who took a lead and did not allow anything to get in their way. Las Mujeres de LULAC, you definitely inspire me, and as the young woman ambassador for the Las Vegas LULAC Council, I will take a lead in encouraging more young Latinas to become part of the LULAC leadership team.



## LULAC Eliminating the Leaks in the Latino/a Educational Pipeline

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Latina/os also suffer from stress because “pressure comes from feeling a big responsibility for being the first to raise the bar to a higher level.” Because Latina/os are, in general, in low-income brackets, parents often face difficulty financing their children’s college tuition, thus, forcing Latina/o students to have jobs. Latina/os that work to sustain themselves in college often have a hard time balancing their academic and work responsibilities, which limit them from baccalaureate opportunities that enrich their collegiate experience and result in academic success. Many of these opportunities include attending professor office hours, academic counseling, tutoring, and academic activities.

### Educational Isolation in Graduate School

The few students that seek a doctoral degree face educational isolation and alienation. Since less than 1% of Latina/o students end up going to grad school, there is a feeling of being invisible, potentially feeling like an outsider and/or an imposter. This occurs especially when graduate programs are racially exclusive and omit Latina/o histories and perspectives. These experiences cause Latina/os to doubt themselves and to reconsider pursuing their graduate degree.

LULAC, however, is mitigating the contributing factors that comprise the early stages of the Educational Pipeline. Their programs aim to eliminate the leaks that hinder students from earning a higher education. LULAC in collaboration with the Ford Motor Company Fund, for example, offers the “Ford Driving Dreams through Education Grants” to provide educational programs that increase high school graduation rates among Latina/o students. With this grant, LULAC Councils have the flexibility to design programs and curriculum that take into account their respective education issues, resources, and support systems specific to their communities. LULAC Youth and Young Adult Leadership Programs also currently provide academic curriculum that helps Latina/o students develop leadership and career advancement skills. These programs outline the best courses of action for scholarship and financial aid application as well as personal statement and resume composition. Latina/o students also have the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills by engaging in community service, issue-based education, and advocacy training.

LULAC invites you to join our efforts to eliminate the leaks in the Educational Pipeline. Through LULAC, you can build opportunities for disadvantaged students to excel in life.

¡Échale ganas!

*Photo by Lufi Nardo Briones*

## Legislative & Awards Gala



*Continued from page 8.*

including Josh Bernstein, Director of Immigration Policy at Service Employees International Union, Allison Herwitt, Legislative Director for Human Rights Campaign, and Angela Kelly, Vice President of Center for American Progress. Lastly, attendees were asked to take action and join LULAC in the “I voted for Immigration Reform” campaign which can be found at: <http://lulac.org/CIR2013/> or to organize a town hall by contacting Sindy Benavides at [TakeAction@LULAC.org](mailto:TakeAction@LULAC.org).

At the Awards Gala, LULAC paid tribute to highly respected leaders who have made strides in increasing access and bringing critical reform to the areas of immigration, education and civil rights. The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, U.S. House of Representatives received the National Legislative Award for his commitment to health care, immigration, education and employment opportunities. The Honorable Ray LaHood, Secretary at the United States Department of Transportation, also received the National Legislative Award for his commitment to improving public transportation, airline safety procedures and sustainable communities. The Honorable Joaquín Castro, United States Congressman representing the 20th congressional district in the State of Texas received the National Presidential Award for his commitment to increasing educational opportunities for the Latino community. LULAC also recognized Utah State Senator Luz Robles with the Outstanding Achievement Award for her commitment to immigration reform, work place safety and education. And, Tom Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice, was recognized with an Outstanding Achievement Award for his commitment to upholding the civil rights of all Americans.

On Thursday February 14th, LULAC’s advocates stormed Capitol Hill and met with over 35 Democratic and Republican elected officials in both the Senate and United States House of Representatives to address LULAC’s policy priorities in the areas of health, education, comprehensive immigration reform and Puerto Rico Status.





# Deferred Dreams: the Search for Immigration Reform

By Jessica Fuentes, LULAC  
National Health Policy  
Intern

On June 15, 2012, President Barack Obama announced that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would not deport eligible undocumented youth, and that instead these youth would be given temporary work permits. As of October 10, nearly 180,000 youth have applied to this program referred to as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and many more are still expected to apply, according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

As an undocumented-soon-to-be-college graduate myself, the news of being able to work legally in this country that I know as my home almost brought me to tears. To my single working mother, the news was miraculous; but to me, an eight year long DREAM activist, the news was heart-wrenching. Yes, it is a step forward, but unfortunately it is only a small step and not at all comprehensive of what we need.

With the news of deferred action came many unanswered questions. Would I be eligible for a driver's license? Could I get health insurance through my employer? Would I be able to travel outside the country? Only recently have these questions been addressed and, to the disappointment to many Dreamers, the answer to these questions is an overpowering NO.

Although some states, such as California, have taken the initiative to grant driver licenses to qualifying DACA youth, other states, such as Arizona, have clearly stated they do not support the program nor do they plan to grant additional benefits to recipients. Overall, each state has the power to determine how and what benefits deferred action beneficiaries will have access to. In terms of healthcare access, however, the federal government has already made it clear that DACA recipients will not be eligible for health care under the new Affordable Care Act.

On August 28, 2012, only a couple of months after the announcement of DACA, the Obama administration

released two official policy announcements changing federal rules by excluding DACA individuals from affordable health care. As a result of the federal changes, individuals granted deferred action under DACA will remain excluded from almost all affordable

healthcare insurance options. In other words, DACA beneficiaries will still be treated as undocumented, even though they are otherwise considered lawfully present.

Due to the federal restrictions, DACA beneficiaries will have the same





# Deferred Dreams: the Search for Immigration Reform



limited access to healthcare services as undocumented immigrants, which means

unless their state has elected the federal option to provide these services regardless of

been fortunate to receive health insurance through my university, but that health insurance will soon be gone. I will be graduating this fall and after this semester is over, the only way I will have access to health insurance will be from an employer willing to offer me a plan.

Yes, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a step forward, but unfortunately it is followed by an immediate step backward. Denying comprehensive immigration reform is detrimental to 11 million aspiring Americans.

Thanks to DACA, thousands of eligible DREAMers will now have the opportunity to begin their careers without the fear of deportation, but we are still in need of a comprehensive reform. Providing immigrant youths the opportunity to work while denying them access to other benefits, such as buying health coverage, undermines their ability to fully participate in and contribute to the society and economy.

As part of the oldest Latino civil rights organization in the United States, LULAC members have the power to push for a comprehensive immigration reform with the "I Voted for Immigration Reform" Campaign. Go to <http://LULAC.org/CIR2013> to sign up for LULAC to send a postcard to your member of Congress saying you demand comprehensive immigration reform.

The 2012 elections were just around the corner and although I avoid thinking about it, my mind cannot help but recall the night of November 4, 2008, the day President Obama was declared the winner of the presidential election. I cried that day and so did many of the other DREAMers sitting around me. Four years ago President Obama promised us the passage of the DREAM Act. As we hopefully await his promise, I, along with fellow LULACers and DREAMers, continue to educate and empower our communities to become advocates and leaders in the DREAM movement and for immigration reform as a whole.



they:

- Cannot get health insurance under Medicaid or CHIP (low-income medical programs available to other immigrants), unless their state has a separate, state-funded program.
- Do not have access to prenatal care

the woman's immigration status.

- Cannot apply to the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan, unless the state where they reside has a separate state-funded high-risk plan available regardless of status.
- Will not be able to buy private,

comprehensive health insurance in the Exchange after January 1, 2014.

For someone like me, these new restrictions means the difference between a minor cold and a full blown virus that can go undetected due to lack of medical services. Unlike thousands of undocumented students, I have





# Our Civil Rights Battle: Protecting the Right to Vote

By *Sindy M. Benavides, Director of Civic Engagement & Mobilization, LULAC*

On February 27, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Shelby County v. Holder*, a case challenging the constitutionality of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). The VRA is a landmark law that outlaws discriminatory voting practices that disenfranchised racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. Section 5

of the most fundamental responsibilities of civil rights. Universal suffrage and civic engagement are at the core of our democracy and what moved so many of our founding fathers and mothers to come to America.

And so as we experience these outrageous tactics, we have an obligation to lift our voices and take action. No longer will it

open your outlook calendar online, or simply have a few minutes to add an event on your phone, add the Election Day for your state (and primary dates too). Just like you may circle your birthday or the birthdays of your loved ones, remember to also circle the day you vote. Celebrate your voice and history!

I could not end this article without asking

you to take another action. This is my direct ask for you: share your story with us. We want to learn about your experience and what motivates you to take action and vote. Let us know who or what influenced you to be involved in moving our community forward. Our goal is to share our experiences and share the legacy and influence of our ancestors. Let's lift our voices, remember our history, and make sure the world is listening.



of the VRA establishes a process known as “preclearance” that is followed in 16 states.

This challenge to the VRA is yet another maneuver that undermines our growing electorate. In 2012, more than 12 million Latinos voted, now a solid voting bloc at 10% of the U.S. electorate - and might I add growing! We are now relevant across all states because even in states where we may be less than 5% of the electorate, we have the power to swing an election. And let's remember that the right to vote is one

suffice to stand on the sideline as a spectator. As a community and as Americans, whether a New American or 5th generation American, we must incorporate standing in line to vote into our busy schedules as an invitation to celebrate our history as Americans. And let us not forget the power that aspiring Americans will have in the years to come as they pledge alliance and citizenship to our country.

Next time you walk by your calendar on the wall, paper calendar on your refrigerator,

To share your story: Email [vote@lulac.org](mailto:vote@lulac.org) with the subject line: Celebrate My Story. If you would like to keep anonymous, please let us know. If not please include your name, city, state, and LULAC Council # if applicable.

*Hacia adelante siempre!*



## Voices From Around the Country



Ever since I was a small kid my parents told me that through hard work and dedication anything was possible. Unfortunately, my home town of Cananea, Sonora, Mexico faced economic hardship because the local mine closed down in 1991. This caused many economic problems for business owners like my father. My father decided to bring the family to Tucson for better job opportunities.

With DACA, I have been given the opportunity to keep dreaming. This 2-year work permit will allow me to apply for any job I want. It is not comprehensive immigration reform, but it's a start for a bright future. I will now be able to work as a software engineer and also go back to school to get a Master's in Business Administration from a top university.

Ever since its introduction 11 years ago I had hope of the DREAM Act passing. At last the political climate has changed so that a complete overhaul of the immigration system can be a reality. The time for immigration reform is NOW. Please pass this critical legislation and let fellow DREAMers and their families keep dreaming of a successful and productive future.

*By: Jose Alfaro, DREAMer*

My parents moved here not because of lucrative goals, but for the mere well-being of their children. Time and again they tell

All of us have a dream, and we may very well be able to reach it when Congress finally passes comprehensive immigration reform. Only then will this country achieve the promise that we all should be allowed to go on the journey for the “Pursuit of Happiness.”

On June 15, 2012, the President announced that certain persons who came to the United States as children and met

can completely come out of the shadows. DACA has served as a litmus test that highlights the need for relief for millions of aspiring Americans.

Maria Pérez, for example, sought help in her small town in Texas. She sent in her application. Not too long ago Maria called and was very excited saying that she had received her work permit. She would no longer walk in the shadows and keep the secret that she is undocumented. Maria, a student with a 3.75 GPA, is now able to seek post-secondary education. She can work legally and help her parents. This is the America I know and love.

Let's galvanize for students like Maria who want to feel the full breadth of what this nation has to offer. The 2012 elections showed that Latinos have the political power if they seize the moment and make their demands. Sign the petition at <http://LULAC.org/CIR2013>.





# Unidos for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

## *Continuing Civic Engagement*

By: Ulises Gonzalez, Civic Engagement Manager

Our economy stands to greatly benefit from immigration reform. Today, the U.S. benefits from \$551.6 billion in economic activity from unauthorized immigrants working in this country, according to the Immigration Policy Center. In this past election, 65% of voters supported giving undocumented immigrants working in the U.S. a pathway to citizenship. Though several Members of Congress have announced their support for this critical issue, no one has yet presented a piece of legislation on the floor. These postcards serve to highlight the elements of immigration reform that are critical to the well-being of our community - components that (1) provide a roadway to citizenship, (2) include family reunification, and (3) address employment-based immigration demand by restructuring the system that issues employment visas must be included in the bill.

This past March 2013, LULAC hosted a town hall in Las Vegas, Nevada. In collaboration with community partners, during the town hall, LULAC updated and informed families about the importance of immigration reform. During the town hall we educated over 100 families, collected petitions, called our representatives, and received outstanding media attention.

Join LULAC to engage and mobilize our community to take action for immigration reform! LULAC National has developed a "Tool Kit" with information and templates to guide our leaders and volunteers to hold events in your local community. Read it at <http://LULAC.org/toolkit>!

### Take action now by:

- Organizing a town hall in your local community in the coming



*LULAC National President Moran Presents Remarks at Immigration Reform Town Hall at UNLV (March 16, 2013) Las Vegas, Nevada*

weeks;

- Organizing in-district meetings with your federal elected officials;
- Collecting petitions in support of immigration reform;
- Organizing phone banks in your neighborhood;
- Partnering with the media to increase awareness about immigration; and
- Utilizing social media to increase awareness about immigration and get others involved.

**To get involved please contact:** Ulises A. Gonzalez, Civic Engagement Manager at 916-551-1330; or Sindy M. Benavides, Director of Civic Engagement & Community Mobilization at 202-833-6130. You can also email us at [TakeAction@LULAC.org](mailto:TakeAction@LULAC.org)



# To Senators and Representatives, States Should Not Cut Education



*By: Evan Santos, Staff Intern to LULAC National President Moran*

There are very few people who would argue about the importance of excellence in education. An education can open doors to opportunities that would have never been possible were it not for the knowledge and preparation that one received while in school.

It is for this reason that we call to attention the challenges facing public schools in the United States. With the fluctuating economy and uncertain times, it is more important than ever for our nation to receive the proper education and training that will allow them to acquire good jobs and produce the revenue to restore and maintain a healthy economy.

The education system represents one of the most influential agencies of socialization in the lives of children. Expenditures for public elementary and secondary schools totaled \$597.5 billion in fiscal year 2010, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Unfortunately, budget cuts have had rapid negative effects on the quality of the education our students are receiving.

Using Texas as an example serves to magnify the severity of the problem of public education. In Texas, legislators cut more than \$5 billion in public education financing to balance the state budget in 2011, according to the Texas Tribune. Many school districts

resorted to teacher layoffs, resulting in increased class sizes. This growing class size led to erosion of educational quality standards, especially among the most vulnerable schools with students of low socioeconomic status.

In Texas, public school students have become mainly Latino and amidst this massive demographic shift, the schools face more challenges

than ever before while on a tight budget. The current makeup of Texas public schools shows that 48.6% of those in public schools are Latino with 47.1% at risk of dropping out and 58% economically disadvantaged. This is not only seen in Texas but on a national level. In fact, government statistics reveal that 1/5 of children in schools are Latino. The issue lies in that Latino children in the U.S. are more likely to come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds than other children, requiring more investment in their education.

There is no doubt that during the time of an unstable economy it is heavily debated on where funds should be allocated to address the many challenges our country faces. With this in mind, the key issue in public school education revolves around how and where funds are allocated. State government has primary control of the distribution of funds, while federal revenue is supplementary, since it constitutes less than 10% of all school revenue.

States need to close the funding gap between districts by spending a just amount on education among districts whose population consists of high minority and high poverty students. Aside from Texas there are states that have funding gaps of over

\$1,000 per student and are at a severe disadvantage with regard to providing ample resources, such as proper facilities, books, learning technology, and, most importantly, quality teachers and staff.

With insufficient funds many schools cannot afford to hire a teacher with experience that can produce high results.

Students that attend a high-minority school are more likely to receive a lower-quality education than their peers that attend a school with low minority concentration. In addition, students of low-income families are disadvantaged when measured against their peers in that they have a much higher dropout rate.

The consequences of funding gaps in public school district are real and well documented. Latinos have the highest dropout rate in the United States with a staggering 27%. Quite simply, a school without sufficient funds is unable to teach their students. Funds need to be allocated so that Latinos and other minorities have the proper materials and environment for them to succeed.

Beyond these issues, inadequate funding affects educational opportunities such as: per-pupil expenditures, teacher support ratio, textbooks, quality librarians & nurses and also any extracurricular or wrap-around programs. By under-investing in our highest-needs students, we have allowed the achievement gap to expand even though we as a country know that a high-quality education is essential for success in the 21st century. Adequate funding, of course, is not the definitive answer to the problems of public education, but it is certainly a necessary step in closing the equality gap and moving this country forward.

Despite the many multidimensional challenges, Americans know that it is essential for United States gets its education system back on track. It is not just about the students in public education; it is something that will eventually have a significant impact on everyone in this country one way or another. Each class of dropouts has an annual financial impact. While a quality education provides a strong foundation for everyone, quality education for all collectively provides a strong foundation for the entire country.

To learn what LULAC is doing to reduce the dropout rate, visit [LULAC.org/education](http://LULAC.org/education).

**Latinos have the highest dropout rate in the United States, with a staggering 27%.**

**In Texas, legislators cut more than \$5 billion in public education financing to balance the state budget...which led to an erosion of educational quality standards.**



# JFK'S Last Night Recalled as Key Event for Latinos

By: Russell Contreras, Associated Press

President John F. Kennedy was supposed to just stop by and wave hello.

Instead a group of eager Latinos persuaded him to come inside and speak to a packed room of Mexican-American civil rights activists. And then he persuaded his wife, first lady Jacqueline Kennedy, to address the crowd in Spanish.

It was Nov. 21, 1963. Hours later, the president was dead, his assassination overshadowing the significance of a speech that can be seen as the birth of the Latino vote, so instrumental in 2012 in helping re-elect the first black president, Barack Obama.

To historians, Kennedy's appearance at the Rice Ballroom in Houston was likely the first time that a president officially acknowledged Latinos as an important voting bloc.

Though there are no plaques marking the historic occasion, the event is a touchstone for activists even if the spot where Kennedy sat and heard a band play Mexican ballads and where the crowd yelled "Viva Kennedy!" is now a refurbished ballroom in a loft apartment complex that often plays host to weddings.

"That evening ... that's where it began," said Ignacio Garcia, author of "Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot" and a history professor at Brigham Young University. "But because very few people know about the meeting, it's like it never happened."

The surprise visit came after Mexican-Americans in Texas, New Mexico, California, Arizona, Illinois and Indiana helped Kennedy win critical swing states in 1960, thanks to an unprecedented voter registration drive in Latino communities. Independent "Viva Kennedy!" clubs sprang up. Sen. Dennis Chavez, D-N.M., and Texas legislator Henry B. Gonzalez of San Antonio, a future congressman, began speaking in Hispanic neighborhoods across the country and positioned themselves as the first recognizable national Latino political figures.

Just as in 2012, Republicans in 1960 did little to woo Latinos to support their presidential candidate, Richard Nixon. Latinos also identified with Kennedy, who was Catholic and Irish-American, a member of an ethnic group that had battled discrimination similar to what Latinos faced in the segregated Southwest.

On Election Day in 1960, Kennedy won 85 percent of the Mexican-American vote.

But during Kennedy's first months in office, Latino leaders

expressed dismay that the president had failed to appoint Hispanics in his administration. Chavez even openly criticized Kennedy for his lack of appointments; other leaders embarked on a letter-writing campaign over the slow movement on civil rights.

Sensing another close election in 1964 and hoping to ease tensions, Kennedy visited Texas in November 1963. Advisers suggested that he at least pay a quick visit to Mexican-American activists at a Houston gala sponsored by the League of United Latin American Citizens, then the largest Latino civil rights group in the country.

"The Secret Service told us that he may stop by, but not to advertise it because it wasn't part of his official schedule," said Alexander Arroyos, 76, who was an officer in LULAC at the time. "We could spread it through word of mouth. No one believed us."

Then Kennedy showed up.

The president was greeted at the door by Macario Garcia, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service during World War II. Inside the ballroom, Kennedy and the first lady found an enthusiastic crowd of World War II veterans, civil rights advocates and future elected officials.

Kennedy spoke briefly about foreign policy in Latin America and the importance of LULAC. The first lady told the crowd in Spanish



that Texas had a deep history with Latinos. The crowd responded with chants of "Viva Kennedy!" A band played a ballad in Spanish as photographers took photos of the Kennedys and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and his wife, Lady Bird Johnson.

Before that moment, historians believe that no president had ever acknowledged Latinos as a voting bloc, said Emilio Zamora, a

*Continued on page 31.*



# JFK'S Last Night Recalled as Key Event for Latinos



*Continued from page 30.*

historian at the University of Texas at Austin.

President William Taft, who served from 1909-1913, may have met with a tiny group of Latino activists in El Paso, Texas, Zamora

for Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, D-N.Y., during the 1968 Democratic primary in California.

In 2000, then-Texas Gov. George W. Bush, a Republican, was able to edge Democrat Al Gore, thanks in part to receiving about 40 percent of the Latino vote, according to various estimates.

"The Latino vote did not come of age the night Obama was re-elected," said Garcia. "It came of age Nov. 21, 1963."

The reason the Latino vote is attracting attention in 2012 is that Latinos are now the largest minority group in the U.S. and voter participating rates are up, Garcia said.

Voter participation for eligible Latino voters has gone from 3.7 million in 1988 to an estimated 12.5 million in 2012, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. That number could double within two decades, the center said.

Arroyos said most of the older activists shrug off the pronouncements that Hispanics are finally influencing national

elections even though his generation helped give birth to the Latino vote. Still, he said even those who are still alive and remember that Kennedy speech probably don't even know what role they played that eventually led to the voting numbers in 2012.

"I didn't know that evening was so historic," said Arroyos. "I was just happy that he dropped by and just didn't say hi."

*Reprinted with permission from the Associated Press.*

said. President Dwight D. Eisenhower likely shook hands with some Mexican-American voters in a campaign visit to South Texas in 1952. "But I think no president had ever publically thanked Mexican-Americans in that manner," said Zamora.

Fifteen hours after the historic meeting, Kennedy was dead.

Band members who had played for the president the night before wept as the news unfolded. When Arroyos heard about the assassination, he told his boss at an import company he was too upset to work. Arroyos rushed to collect from friends as many photos as possible of Kennedy's visit at the Rice Hotel as he could for a future edition of a LULAC newspaper.

On Election Day 2012, analysts routinely spoke of Latinos finally awakening as a "sleeping giant" by giving Obama around 70 percent of their vote. But Ignacio Garcia said that assessment ignores how Latinos have influenced presidential elections for more than 50 years.

In 1960, for example, their overwhelming backing helped put Texas and New Mexico in Kennedy's column during the tight race against Nixon. The Republican's campaign did not have a presence in Mexican-American neighborhoods and did not have a Spanish language TV ad, unlike Kennedy, who tapped the first lady for it. Kennedy also made promises to appoint Mexican-Americans to his administration.

Johnson enjoyed support from Hispanics who campaigned for him during his landslide victory in 1964, and Mexican-Americans came out strongly





## En Route to Immigration Reform and the American Dream

By Christopher A. Galeano, LULAC National Immigration Policy Intern

The political climate surrounding immigration reform completely changed after last year's elections. Latinos decided to no longer tolerate the anti-immigrant rhetoric and inhibitive policies that have for years been prevalent in the media and in Congress. Harnessing our political power in November, we decided to pointedly elect representation that adhered to our progressive views on key issues, including immigration reform.

I say this, though, with some hesitation because comprehensive immigration reform is an American issue—not just a Latino issue. Today, it is more important than ever to realize that all facets of American society—social, political, and economic—have benefited from immigration. Whether it is the immigrant entrepreneur developing the next great business idea in Silicon Valley, or the DREAMER working her way through college, or the immigrant farmworker working the fields to provide a future customer with a plate of fruit salad, immigrant Americans have contributed to the diverse socioeconomic fabric that has made America such a unique country since its independence over two hundred years ago.

As an immigration policy intern for LULAC, I have been able to participate in advocacy work on Capitol Hill that has further reinforced my motivation in voting for representatives that support this critical issue.

With my internship, I directly encountered opponents to immigration reform. At panel discussions and congressional committee hearings, I heard arguments that mitigate, negate, and outright deny the importance of passing this critical legislation. With these experiences came the realization that there will be road blocks, but nothing we face is so insurmountable that it cannot be overcome with dedicated advocacy and civic participation.

I was empowered to schedule an individual meeting with my representative. Although Representative Buck McKeon has a historically conservative stance on immigration, he was receptive to my input. He acknowledged the urgency of passing realistic immigration reform this year and noted the importance of correcting the negative stigma surrounding immigrant Americans.

At the first hearing on immigration reform with the House Judiciary Committee, I witnessed Mayor Julián Castro's personal testimony and identified with his personal narrative. Stories like his – like mine – completely rely on immigration reform. My mother and stepfather were brave enough to begin new lives in the United States. Even though my mother eventually gained her citizenship, my stepfather remains undocumented, which creates financial hardship for our family. Living in a mixed-status home has compelled me to hold employment even though I am a full-time student. Through this experience, I work towards a better life for them and for my community as a whole.

I have chosen to be an advocate for immigration reform and to exercise my civic duty to ensure that Congress and the public know that immigrant families, like my own, have a right to live and prosper in this country. By implementing immigration reform we can realize the full strength of this country.



## LULAC Seizes National Dialogue on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

By Manuel Rendon, LULAC National VP for the Youth

On October 4, 2012 LULAC continued the push for comprehensive immigration reform by holding a successful Immigration Summit in Washington, DC. The summit was geared towards highlighting the complications with our current immigration system and the overwhelming need to finally implement immigration reform.

In December of 2012, LULAC announced its “Latinos for Immigration Reform.” In seizing the moment LULAC is doing exactly what needs to be done: we are taking control of the immigration discussion. The fact is that for years the immigration debate has been dictated by extreme discourse that has been largely negative and misleading. I commend LULAC for taking a stand to say that this is our issue and for taking the discussion in a positive direction. This is the time to be solution-oriented, and implementing comprehensive immigration reform is the way to do that.



Photo by Luis Nufia Briones

Immigration is a domestic policy issue and a foreign policy issue. It is a social issue and an economic issue. We in LULAC believe that by reforming our immigration laws in a humane and practical manner, we would be honoring the promise of our nation as well as strengthening its economy. A recent PEW study indicated that passage of the DREAM Act alone would generate \$329 billion to our economy by 2030 and add more than \$10 billion in increased revenue for the federal government. Although remittances are falling they continue to be vital for the entire North American continent. We must also remember that the world is changing very rapidly and we have to move forward with such an issue. Barricading ourselves from the world with fences and walls is immoral and impractical. The Berlin Wall fell and the Great Wall of China is now a tourist attraction. We, as Americans, should know this is not the solution and we, in LULAC, believe that we can do better.

I strongly encourage LULAC councils nationwide to host their own immigration summits in their respective communities in order to bring the dialogue to their own backyards. This is and has been our issue since I joined LULAC as a youth member, and if we want to legitimately shift the momentum in our favor, we need to lead the discussion.



# Voter ID Laws and the Voting Rights Act: Disenfranchising Underrepresented Communities



By: Anthony Flores, LULAC Policy Intern

Voter suppression is a strategic electoral maneuver to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging people from exercising their right to vote. Throughout 2012, policymakers in over thirty states introduced bills that required voters to show valid photo identification at the polls in November. Out of the thirty states, Indiana, Kansas, Georgia and Tennessee voters must provide proof of identification before voting in an election. Nevertheless, if a voter cannot provide proof of identification, he or she may vote on a provisional ballot, which records a vote when there are questions to eligibility. Over twenty-six states have enacted non-photo identification requirements that required voters to provide a valid form of identification prior to voting. Voter identification laws have a long-term impact that would, in effect, disenfranchise minority groups.

Virginia enacted a non-photo identification that required voters to show any one of the specified forms of identification such as a Virginia voter registration card, Social Security card, Virginia driver's license, a copy of a current utility bill or a concealed hand gun permit. If a voter fails to show one of the forms of identification then the voter will be offered to provisional ballot in which he or she must submit a copy of one of the forms of identification to the electoral board no later than on the third day after the election. Indiana enacted a strict photo identification that will require voters to provide proof of identification before voting in an election that must be issued by the United States or the state of Indiana. California voter ID legislation was considered in 2011 but was not enacted for the November election. By looking at these three states, the threat of voter suppression on minority and low income groups is a major concern because more than three quarters of the states attempted to pass voter ID laws that determine voter eligibility.

Months before the 2012 November election, there was voter misinformation on the voter ID laws. In some Pennsylvania counties, there were signs showing misleading information that can turn down voter turnout, particularly minority groups. According to

the Department of State, the voter identification advertising campaign was utilized to educate the voters about future elections. The problem with this tactic is that it created confusion among the voters and thus they were less likely to vote in November.



*LULAC Ohio hosts voter registration drive to promote electoral participation.*

A group called "True the Vote," an organization affiliated with the Tea Party, was present in numerous polling locations throughout the United States to monitor the polls in what they perplexingly deem as "election integrity." This scare tactic serves to dissuade newly-naturalized citizens and other eligible citizens to vote since their right to vote would be questioned. Ultimately, they have affected the outcome of the election by suppressing the vote of the minority groups.

LULAC has been actively engaged in legal actions to ensure its members are not disenfranchised. Recently LULAC filed action against Harris County, TX for unlawfully rejecting voter applications through discriminatory action against Latino and African American applicants. From 2009 through 2012, Latino and African American application rejection rate was higher than the Anglo-American rate in the country. LULAC proposes that Harris County utilized discriminatory practices against minority groups who qualify to vote. LULAC will not stand behind those who deprive eligible voters of their constitutional right to suffrage. Our goal is to ensure that all eligible voters have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

With so much at stake in elections, legislators should not dictate which eligible citizens should be able to vote. Legislators are elected to represent their constituents. As it is written in the Constitution, "We the people" have the right to exercise our civic duty to vote as citizens of the United States. Every vote counts.



*LULAC Eastfield encourages civic participation for the November 2012 Elections.*



# Hispanic Health on the Hill

## LULAC's 16th Annual Legislative Conference Connects Legislators and Advocates

By: Alana Sutherland, Health Program Coordinator

This year LULAC celebrated 84 years of public service and civil rights advocacy at our Annual Legislative Conference and Awards Gala. During the State of the League Address, LULAC's National President Margaret Moran spoke about the state of health among



*LULAC National President Margaret Moran, Congressman Raul Ruiz, Lashawn McIner, MD, MPH of the American Heart Association, and Oralia Dominic at the Health Policy Panel.*

Latinos, comprehensive immigration reform, and reforming America's education system, outlining major policy priorities for the organization and providing a rallying call for members to actively participate in advocacy opportunities during the Advocacy Day and meetings with congressional offices as one of the event's many activities.

The first day of the Legislative Conference offered panel discussions on healthcare inequities, education, online privacy, and immigration reform. To begin these sessions the first panel, Health Disparities, Reforms and Exchanges, was introduced by The



*LULAC health advocates meet with Senator Gloria Negrete McLeod in Washington D.C.*

Honorable Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Honorable Raúl Ruiz, U.S. Representative for California's 36th District. Their opening remarks Unfortunately

were cut short by a fire alarm in the hotel, but after a brisk walk, the audience settled back in for the health policy panel. Panelists discussed the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the expansion of Medicaid as well as the protection of nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Federal and State policies will have heavy impacts on the health of many Americans in the coming year and LULAC will provide guidance and education for Latino communities across the country

to ensure that our peers are represented in, and take full advantage of, new programs available with health care reform.

The following day, with gained knowledge of new policy priorities, a group of LULAC National Board members visited 30 congressional offices, specifically 8 offices to discuss health priorities in detail and to share personal accounts of how each of these priorities affects their communities and neighborhoods directly. LULAC is appreciative for the time and cooperation of these members of Congress and their staff who shared their commitment to supporting these health equity issues:

### House of Representatives

- Congressman Jim Costa, California's 16th District
- Congresswoman Gloria Negrete McLeod, California's 35th District
- Congresswoman Ann McLane Kuster, New Hampshire's 2nd District
- Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge, Ohio's 11th District Senate
- Senator Johnny Isakson, Georgia
- Senator Pat Roberts, Kansas
- Senator Mark Udall, Colorado
- Senator Bernard Sanders, Vermont

These meetings and events set the stage for the 2013 program development of Health Education Ambassadors who will work closely with the LULAC National Office to address specific health topics. The first guidance manual will be issued to provide a framework for community education events to raise awareness and increase participation through the implementation of the Affordable Care Act in 2014. To register as a Health Education Ambassador visit the Latinos Living Healthy web page. In the coming months, additional program materials will be made available for topics including chronic preventable diseases, hunger and food insecurity, rural health issues, as well as a special curriculum for youth and young adult members.

### In Other News:

Lisa Pino, a long-time ally of the Latinos Living Healthy program has been appointed to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. Lisa served USDA since her appointment in May, 2009 as Deputy Administrator of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for the Food and Nutrition Service. Prior to joining the Administration, Lisa was a legal aid attorney in Arizona for Hispanic farm workers, and has spent more than a decade serving low-income individuals and families in housing, education, labor, and immigration. Lisa has been awarded for her commitment to public service, and continues her dedication to service at USDA. LULAC congratulates Lisa Pino on her new appointment and her outstanding achievements in supporting Latino health from within one of the country's most important health agencies.





## LULAC Council No. 1 Celebrates Community Leaders During LULAC Week

About 250 people attended LULAC Council No. 1's Outstanding Leaders event, which has highlighted those making a difference in the community since its inception 17 years ago. Ten individuals dedicated to the community were recognized, including Terry Mills, president of the local chapter of the NAACP.

"You have two groups fighting the same battle at the same time coming up with the same victory, and it's victory for the people," Mills said.

Special attendees included LULAC National President Margaret Moran; state Rep. Todd Hunter, R-Corpus Christi; U.S. Rep. Blake Farenthold, R-Corpus Christi; and state Rep. Abel Herrero, Robstown, who provided the keynote speech. He focused on his efforts to make public education the state's top priority.



*LULAC National President Moran and Former LULAC National President Tony Bonilla.*

## LULAC Implores Administration to Address Puerto Rico Status Issue

In January, LULAC National President Moran sent a letter to President Obama urging the Administration to acknowledge the results of the electorate in Puerto Rico. In February, President Moran and other LULAC Board Members met with the Obama Administration to urge them to afford full civil and political rights for all Americans, which includes Puerto Rican citizens. Because the Administration has yet to act, President Moran sent a follow-up letter to the President in April, again reiterating, with a heightened sense of urgency, that the Puerto Rican people deserve a prompt and affirmative response to the preferences of the electorate. She encouraged the President's Task Force on the Status of Puerto Rico to recommend to the President and Congress necessary steps to implement the people's wish. President Moran, in addition, requested a formal process of public hearings regarding how to proceed in Puerto Rico's continued process of self-determination. We will continue to advocate for Puerto Rico's right of self-determination.



## Founding LULAC Youth Council 2088

Out of a hostile atmosphere for the Latino community in Santa Maria, California, a new group of young leaders was born. Imagine a town of less than 110 thousand people where 65% of the population is Latino or Mexican American where there isn't a single representative or elected official in City Council, Chamber of Commerce, or even school district board member that is Latino. To make matters worse the local police department has killed eight men within nine months. The youngest person killed was only 19 years old; the oldest was a 71 year old Vietnam veteran. It came to a point that the atmosphere in town was very tense. The Latino community rose and took the issue to the streets. The members of our Local LULAC council # 3187 decided to organize a local Youth Council to protect and empower our local youth.

We chartered our local LULAC Youth Council in September of 2012. 14 young brave souls of very different backgrounds, from a seventh grader to a set of senior twins, make up our new and proud Santa Maria LULAC Youth Council # 2088.

Our first trip as a council was taking part of a historical day in our nation, the day when President B. Obama named a national park and monument in honor of our beloved community leader Cesar Estrada Chavez. Finally the youth council has been working very hard in applying for a grant to provide educational workshops to our local youth dealing with the effects of domestic violence and the harm of marijuana use at an early age. Our vision is to provide these two workshops to adults at our National LULAC convention in Las Vegas.



*Albergue Entre Familia toy donation improves children during the holidays.*

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## LULAC of Waukegan Empowers Students with Science

LULAC of Waukegan hosted the Little School of Electricity to teach elementary students about the electricity in efforts to engage students in the STEM fields. Students replicated an electric model similar to the original constructed by Thomas Edison himself. After completing the program, students received a certificate for completing the program.

## LULAC Council 11041 Scholarship Process Goes Digital



Washington DC LULAC Council 11041 completed the 2012 scholarship process relying nearly exclusively on modern technologies. Ten scholarships were awarded to local District of Columbia students, with more than forty awarded in the past five years. The honorees range from entering freshmen in community colleges and local universities to advanced degrees at Harvard, Berkeley, and USC. Some students have been encouraged and empowered to continue in college by receiving scholarships two, three, and four years in a row.

LNESC, the educational arm of LULAC, administers the LULAC National Scholarship Fund, whose National Program Manager is Marianna Moron. LNESC sends the scholarship documents, the Partnership Agreement and the Student Application, in PDF format. This allows local councils, counselors, students and families to download them and even fill them out right online. Each step is laid out with specific guidelines and timelines, enabling LULAC Councils to maximize the impact of their efforts in their communities. LNESC staff and the council work collaboratively through the entire process.

Council 11041 Scholarship Chair Millie Garcia sends out introductory letters and the Student Applications to more than twenty-five public high schools, private high schools, colleges and universities. As scholarship applications are received, they are scanned for submission to the selection committee members of the Council. Each application is read by three readers, who each review six applications, and the students with the highest scores receive the scholarships. LNESC staff is notified by the council and awardees and

non-awardees are notified expeditiously. The entire process is done within a very short timeline.

Council 11041 is proud of its efforts over the years. Mrs. Ada Peña, LULAC DC State Director, recently presented awards to student winners at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School. All award recipients are invited to a scholarship wrap-up and fundraiser hosted by President Alex Rodriguez and Council Secretary Bettie Baca. Under Rodriguez's leadership, every member of the council works to ensure that LULAC Council 11041 continues to provide scholarships to deserving and inspiring DC students.



*Pinning Ceremony for Señoritas en Acción Youth Council #16006 in Wisconsin.*

## Iowa LULAC Hosts First Advocacy Day in Des Moines

Iowa LULAC this summer and fall has embarked on a statewide campaign to educate Iowans about Latino voters and to further engage Latinos in the voting process.

First, Iowa LULAC members conducted what is believed to be the first-ever analysis of the Latino voting community in Iowa by reviewing more than 1 million voter records. About 35,000 Latinos were identified as being registered to vote in Iowa. The analysis showed a breakdown of Latino voters by age, sex, voting history and residence.

Iowa LULAC has now taken that information and sent postcards to about 28,000 Latinos in the state who are registered to vote in order to inform them about LULAC and its position on the issues of education, immigration, jobs/the economy and healthcare. In addition, Iowa LULAC has asked these voters to help the state council register more Latinos to vote and has included information about how to register to vote on the postcard.

In addition, Iowa LULAC has created a new website to educate Latinos and other Iowans about the organization. The website also includes information about how and where to register to vote, how to form a LULAC council and data about Latinos in Iowa. The website can be accessed at [www.lulaciowa.org](http://www.lulaciowa.org).

Iowa LULAC State Director Joe Enriquez Henry also has traveled

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to various parts of Iowa and has conducted several television, newspaper and radio interviews to speak out against voter suppression and to educate the public about Iowa LULAC's efforts.

Iowa LULAC has also hosted its first lobbying day at the Capitol this week. While the group has worked on issues at the Legislature over the years, the breakfast and lobbying day show a more concerted effort going forward.

## Bati Embodies the LULAC Mission Abroad

After her passionate experience at last year's National Women's Conference, Bati continues her LULAC membership recruitment in Ethiopia. She keeps the 'love and inspiration' that she found within



the LULAC membership and puts it forward at her newly established senior nutrition center. In the center organic lunches would be served to the rural elderly that had no food at home during the day. Also, the center provides diabetes education and prevention which is a chronic disease in Ethiopia.



*In efforts to encourage higher education, LULAC Council 12113 delivers scholarship to academic over-achiever.*

## Orange County LULAC Foundation Center Opens in Southern California

LULAC California State Director, Benny Diaz, is pleased to announce the grand opening of the Orange County LULAC Foundation Center in Garden Grove, California. The grand opening took place on February 22nd, 2013, which marked the establishment of the first LULAC office located in Southern California. The new center will assist Orange County's blossoming Hispanic population by providing information, assistance, and educational services to the community.

Located next to Garden Grove's City Hall, the Foundation will host workshops to keep the community informed of their civil,



immigration, and education rights, and will maintain an on-site technological center to help visitors learn and develop computer skills. The Foundation will also use the new center to organize charitable endeavors, including toy drives, food assistance programs, voter registration drives, and fundraisers to support LULAC scholarships and community events.

The OC LULAC Foundation also plans to develop a legal department, naming California attorney, Kimberly Olson, the Center's Legal Director. With the assistance of other attorneys and legal interns from the area, the legal department will aim to provide legal services to the surrounding community in the areas of employment and civil rights.

The establishment of the Foundation's new center and legal department in Orange County seems fitting in light of the fact that Orange County served as the forum for one of LULAC's most famous civil rights victories. In the case of *Mendez v. Westminster School District*, LULAC members challenged the establishment of segregated schools in Orange County and successfully persuaded the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal to end the segregation of Hispanic students in all California schools. LULAC will continue legal action by addressing issues involving civil rights and political representation in addition to providing community programs.

The Orange County LULAC Foundation Center is located at 11277 Garden Grove Blvd., Ste 101-A, Garden Grove, CA, 92843.



# Affirmative Action in the United States

## Fisher v. The University of Texas at Austin

*By Silverio Ramirez, LULAC National Education Policy Intern*

Two years ago I moved from Houston, Texas, to Washington, D.C. to attend college. Similar to many of my peers, it was the first time I would be away from home for long periods of time to embark on the adventure that is figuring out how to do laundry without changing the size and color of your entire wardrobe in one wash. Nonetheless, as any Texan who has been to D.C. will tell you, it does not take a college student moving into the district to notice how different the two places can be. I first noticed big differences, like the fact that hardly anyone drives a car and would instead prefer to crowd into the subway, or that people are obsessed with cupcakes and instead of taco stands.

It was in the little things within my university's community, however, that I began to realize how far I truly was from home. Hardly anyone I met spoke a foreign language as their native language, a large part of the total student population belongs to upper-middle class America, and most students come to college to continue a line of educated family members. As a first generation college student who emigrated from Mexico not too long ago, the private east coast college life was definitely a new experience.

I soon came to realize that my university experience, defined by my dive into a completely different cultural world than what I was used to, is not uncommon across the United States. Universities all over the United States are composed primarily of homogenous student populations. It is reported by the Pew Research Center how out of all of the bachelor's degrees conferred in 2010, over 70% of them went to white students. In comparison, only 10% of those year's degrees were received by African Americans, and 9% by Hispanics.

Not surprisingly as this achievement gap between minority and white students becomes more evident, affirmative action programs—policies that factor race into the admission process—have become more common in the United States. Consequently, the American judicial system has become increasingly involved in interpreting affirmative action policies. In 1978 the United States Supreme Court heard *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, a case which eventually ruled universities may not establish quota system for any one race. Further, in 2003 the Supreme Court heard *Grutter v. Bollinger* and ruled that universities can have a race-conscious admission process for underrepresented minority student applicants in the interest of academic diversity.

In October 2012, the Supreme Court took on the case of *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*. In this case, Abigail Fisher, now a Louisiana State University graduate, argues she was denied admission to the University of Texas at Austin in the name of less qualified minority students. The University is arguing two things. First, diversity in their student population is something they will always seek in their admission process, and, second, the University believes Fisher would have not been admitted even without the race conscious program they have based on her academic record.

Enrollment data from the last four decades seem to suggest that as affirmative action policies become more common in the

United States, and more discussed in the United States Supreme Court, the better it is for minority students seeking enrollment at higher education institutions. The National Center for Education statistics reported that in 1976, two years before the *Bakke* decision, enrollment rates for all minorities in American universities stood at 15.4% with 9.4% and 3.5% of African Americans and Latinos being admitted, respectively. By the year 2000, enrollment rates for minorities increased to nearly 30% (28.2%), and enrollment for African Americans and Hispanics stood at 11.3% and 9.5%, respectively. Today, almost a decade after the *Grutter* decision, 36% of all enrolled students in American universities were minorities, with 15% of African Americans and 13% of Hispanics being enrolled.

While there are those who would argue that there many factors that have led to an increase in minority enrollment in the United States not directly related to affirmative action policies, alternative explanations to this trend do not take way from the fact that there is still a gap in overall education achievement between whites and minorities in the United States. When you look at overall education trends of minorities today, 36% of the white population between



the ages 25 to 29 have at least a bachelor's degree, while only 18% of African American and 12% of Latinos have the same degree attainment. Additionally, given the support that the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Teach for America, the American Council on Education, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the American Association of University Professors and the American Educational Research Association, and other prestigious educational organizations have given to the University of Texas and its affirmative action policies in this case, it is clear that there is unequivocal interest from the educational community to continue affirmative action policies.

Whatever the court decides, this case has the potential to influence affirmative action policies not only in Texas, but across the United States. If Fisher's claims are supported, it is likely universities will have to revisit their policies on race-conscious admissions and adjust them based on what the court rules.



# Affordable Internet Access: Closing the Digital Divide

By: Dahida Vega, Technology Program Manager

LULAC is a founding member of the Broadband Opportunity Coalition (BBOC) which was founded in 2009 with the purpose of digital adoption. With One Economy, the BBOC has created an unprecedented national partnership committed to broadband

**80% of Fortune 500 companies only list their job opportunities online, which affects opportunities available to Latinos, a population with the highest unemployment rates.**

adoption. We created sustainable information and an ecosystem that overcame barriers to broadband adoption and leverage technology to produce enhanced socioeconomic outcomes. Over the last three years, as a founding member, LULAC focused on the following initiatives: the Digital Connectors program, a public service announcement (PSA) awareness campaign, and community outreach programs.

## The Digital Connectors Program

LULAC teamed up with 10 of our Empower Hispanic America with Technology community technology centers to implement the Digital Connectors program. This program consisted of a high-intensity technology curriculum that trained students from ages 14 to 21 to become Technology Ambassadors. The students participated in a school year long program, meeting on average three times per week to complete modules focused on leadership development, media literacy, financial literacy, community mapping career exploration, video production final project, and community service projects.

Though the program required a high level of commitment, students received rewarding leadership opportunities as they hosted digital literacy trainings to underserved communities. LULAC graduated 133 Digital Connector Ambassadors in 10 states, who, in turn, provided 9,300 hours of digital literacy community trainings. Apart from

**77% of teachers give homework assignments that require computer use, which indicates the crucial role that computer access has in lowering student dropout rates.**

instrumental career development skills, students earned a \$500 dollar stipend, a laptop, and program memorabilia.

## The Public Service Announcement Campaign

Secondly, our effort to promote broadband adoption focused on an award-winning public service announcement campaign. LULAC worked arduously with a creative agency to develop, design, and produce a PSA campaign that resonated with the needs of the Latino community.

The awareness campaign was distributed via TV, radio, and print. The message disseminated throughout the campaign highlighted the critical nature of broadband access at home for the success of a family:

- 1 80% of Fortune 500 companies only list their job opportunities online, which affect job employment opportunities available to Latinos, a population with the highest unemployment rates.
- 2 77 % of teachers give homework assignments that require computer use, which indicates the crucial role that computer access has in lowering student dropout rates.

The PSA reached 10 million people in 14 months, surpassing our goal by 250%.

## Community Outreach

LULAC, in partnership with local community organizations, hosted three hands-on training events. We took our expertise and collaborated with various partners to offer town hall events with computer training. Our efforts targeted the west coast, southwest, and midwest regions of the country with workshops in Los Angeles, Dallas, and Chicago. During the events we trained over 200 community members with basic digital literacy training. LULAC enhanced their commitment to promoting digital inclusion in Latino communities by hosting needs-specific trainings in online safety, social media, email access, and online communication.

LULAC pledges to continue its work in promoting Broadband adoption in underserved Latino communities, primarily through our partners and our 55 community technology centers. Additionally, we have become a partner of Connect2Compete, a coalition whose main task is to bring affordable Internet access to low-income communities as well as to provide curriculum that can help with digital literacy training at home. Whether you are a family of five, a single parent, or a recent college graduate, Internet access is a given necessity—not a luxury. Every person deserves affordable access.

**The Broadband Opportunity Coalition (BBOC) is made up of the Asian American, Justice Center, LULAC, NAACP, NCLR, and the National Urban League.**

# driving a brighter future

Ford Motor Company



Ford is proud to continue partnering with LULAC National and the LULAC Councils network on the Ford Driving Dreams through Education grants program.

Thank you for your commitment to education and for helping  
Latino youth stay the course to graduation!