

Compromiso Demócrata con el Pueblo Latino

★ The Hispanic Community ★ and the Democratic Party: Working Together for America's Future

Democrats know that Hispanic values are America's values. Democrats fight for policy initiatives that not only benefit millions of Hispanic Americans, but at the same time make America even stronger for future generations. Democrats support an agenda that will enable Hispanic families to achieve the American Dream.

In contrast, beyond photo-ops and political rhetoric, Republicans have done little or nothing to advance Hispanic priorities. For example, the Administration proposed a budget that failed to adequately fund education programs that aid Hispanic students; failed to advocate fair and equitable immigration laws; failed to support small business initiatives that assist Hispanic entrepreneurs; failed to provide real tax relief for Hispanic families; and failed to provide adequate health care for working Hispanics.

Democrats have a different vision for America's future, one that reflects time-tested American values and the voices of the hard working majority of Hispanic Americans, not just the elite few.

Supporting Hispanic Economic Empowerment and Providing Economic Security

Democrats call for immediate action – based on the same economic policies that resulted in the Hispanic unemployment rate dropping from an average of 11.6% in 1992 to an average of 5.8% in 2000 – to rebuild the American economy and create good paying jobs for Hispanics. In order to build wealth for Hispanics and encourage economic growth, we must provide real tax relief for low-income and middle class families.

Democrats are committed to ensuring that the Small Business Administration has the resources needed to ensure that Hispanics have access to the capital needed to start and grow their small business. Democrats also seek to expand and reform the existing unemployment insurance program, increase the minimum wage, restore access to critical Temporary Assistance for Needy Families services for legal immigrants, and provide the necessary skills training and English language instruction for the Limited English Proficient population under the Workforce Investment Act.

Providing Real Resources to Support Real Reforms and Educational Opportunities

Democrats will continue to oppose Republican attempts to undermine public education. Democrats want to strengthen public schools by providing the funds states need to carry out education reforms signed into law over a year ago, including funds for bilingual education, dropout prevention, parental involvement, and migrant education. Democrats will continue to fight for the funds needed to ensure teacher quality and reduce class sizes, expand after-school opportunities, and fund Head Start programs so that all children enter school ready to learn.

Democrats will also fight to increase funding for Hispanic Serving Institutions of higher education, adequately fund GEAR UP, provide increased funds for Adult English as a Second Language programs, and make college more affordable for Hispanic students by increasing the size of Pell Grants.

Ensuring Access to Health Care for Hispanics

Hispanics are more likely than any other group in the U.S. to be uninsured and to have difficulty obtaining access to health care. Democrats are committed to increasing coverage for Hispanics by expanding CHIP and Medicaid to legal immigrants, ensuring language access in health care settings, providing a tax credit for small businesses that offer health coverage to their employees, and allowing states to cover parents of children enrolled in CHIP and Medicaid and to cover low-income pregnant women in CHIP.

Democrats will fight to eliminate health disparities by working to reduce the number of uninsured and underserved minorities. Democrats will also provide adequate funding for Medicaid, CHIP, and state fiscal relief. We will work to ensure that millions of low-income and minority infants and children have improved access to nutritious food by reauthorizing and improving the child nutrition laws, and treating and preventing mental health disorders and substance abuse. Democrats will also increase access to information about available services, resources to cover those services, and adequate infrastructure to provide services in a culturally competent manner.

Making New Progress on Civil Rights

Democrats remain steadfast in our commitment to civil rights by working to strengthen the enforcement of existing civil rights laws, ensuring that every eligible citizen has the right to vote and that their votes are counted, expanding hate crimes protections, and responding to the injustices of racial profiling.

Increasing Hispanic Representation in Government and the Courts

Democrats are committed to ensuring that Hispanics have the opportunity to serve at all levels of government and are present at the decision making table. Democrats will continue to make diversifying the federal government and the federal bench a top priority.

Promoting Family Unity, Fundamental Fairness, and Economic Opportunities for Immigrants

Since the tragic events of September 11, immigrants have been under a tremendous amount of scrutiny. Democrats know that the richness and diversity of our country has been strengthened by innovative ideas and skills from new Americans. Democrats believe our immigration laws must reflect our core values of family unity, fundamental fairness, and economic opportunity.

Democrats will continue fighting to extend Section 245(i), provide due process reforms, ensure refugee protection, and provide for earned legalization. Democrats will also work to give states flexibility in determining who receives in-state tuition and student assistance, and amend current immigration law to allow these students to become permanent residents. Democrats are working to ensure that as the new Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) subsumes the functions of the INS, the quality of services provided to immigrants and refugees is improved and the integrity of the naturalization process continues to be a priority.

Reestablishing Our Historic Commitment to Latin America

Democrats believe that continued economic development and democracy in Latin America is of vital interest to United States national security. Democrats are committed to working to reestablish our nation's partnership with Latin America's people and leaders, and will continue to support robust U.S. leadership for economic development, democracy, and security throughout the hemisphere.
