

**UPDATE TO NCLR BOARD, CBA AND AFFILIATES**  
**IMMIGRATION REFORM DEBATE**  
**MAY 11, 2006**

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) has been deeply engaged in the immigration reform debate as legislation makes its way through the Senate. Many of you have also been active in the extraordinary community mobilizations that have been taking place around the country which have done so much to create momentum at this critical time. In an effort to keep you informed, NCLR's policy staff has prepared an update on national and local activities. We hope you find it useful.

**LEGISLATIVE STATE OF PLAY**

- Legislation could move forward this month. Senators Frist and Reid are reportedly negotiating on the two key process concerns which kept a bill from moving forward at the end of March. The first concerns the number and types of amendments which will be offered to an immigration bill, and the second concerns the process by which a Senate bill would be reconciled with the unacceptable bill which passed the House last December (H.R. 4437). It is our understanding that a bill cannot proceed to the floor unless both of these process concerns are resolved.
- If there is an agreement to bring a bill to the floor, the most likely vehicle is the Hagel/Martinez compromise which emerged at the end of March. It appears that this proposal has strong support in the Senate, but NCLR and its coalition partners continue to work to improve several key provisions which might limit the number of immigrants who are able to legalize, and others which would severely curtail civil rights and liberties.
- As we work for these improvements, NCLR believes that it is imperative for a bill to be moving forward; without momentum toward comprehensive reform, the door is still open for the House to send pieces of H.R. 4437 to the Senate as attachments to must-pass appropriations bills. Under this circumstance, these provisions would be very difficult to defeat.

**NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOBILIZATION**

The peaceful rallies, vigils, and other activities that have taken place around the country have had an enormous impact on this debate. NCLR is working with a range of organizations at the local and national levels to build on these mobilizations in a number of ways. In particular:

- Last month, NCLR launched "LEAP to Action," a voter mobilization project that is partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) in 15 states to promote citizenship, voter registration, and voter participation. As part of this effort, NCLR unveiled a series of materials on its website which are designed for

Affiliates to use in organizing citizenship and voter engagement efforts in their communities. Please go to [http://www.nclr.org/section/pol\\_participation/](http://www.nclr.org/section/pol_participation/) for more information about these valuable resources.

- In addition, NCLR has formally announced its participation in the newly-formed We Are America Alliance, a nationwide alliance of key immigrant, grassroots, labor, local, statewide, and national organizations which plans to organize a variety of activities in the coming months to promote comprehensive immigration reform. We encourage you to consider participating as well; materials and ideas are available at <http://www.weareamericaalliance.org>. Please understand that this is a loose confederation of organizations which is being led largely by local groups; NCLR is working to coordinate as closely as possible and will share as much information as we can as it becomes available.
- The first activity that this new alliance is organizing is a lobby day on May 17. We realize that this leaves very little time to plan, but if you are interested in participating, please consider organizing meetings with the members of your congressional delegation either at home or in Washington, DC.
- The We Are America Alliance has also announced its plans to implement a Democracy Summer with the goal of registering as many as one million citizens to vote and encouraging those who are eligible to become citizens to take this important step.
- There is also a discussion under way about a major mobilization for Labor Day. We will share as much information as we can about this as more details become available.

Please visit NCLR's website, [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org), for updated materials on the legislative proposals and community activities. We will continue to send you updates as the issue develops.

Thanks, as always, for all of your hard work.