



Janet Murguia, President

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Dear Mr. President:

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., and the undersigned members of the NCLR Affiliate Network write to express our grave concern regarding the current budget climate. The continuous cutting of domestic social programs come at great cost to the Latino community. We insist that substantial and directed investments in Latino priorities be included in your fiscal year (FY) 2007 budget proposal, and that cuts to effective programs that help Latino and other low-income communities be taken off the table.

As members of the Affiliate Network, we represent a diverse group of organizations working to improve the quality of life for Latinos in the U.S. Many of us provide direct services to the Latino community through federal funding. We help our children succeed in school by operating successful Head Start programs. We teach at and administer charter schools. We help bridge the gap in health care by educating the Latino community about disease prevention and healthy lifestyles, and by operating community-based health clinics. We help bolster the workforce by providing job training and increasing the number of skilled workers in the labor force. We also build wealth among Latinos by offering housing counseling and aiding community members in their entrepreneurial pursuits. Reducing or eliminating federal funding for programs that aid our work will severely hinder our ability to provide critical resources that help improve life opportunities within Latino communities.

Latinos represent the largest racial and ethnic minority in the U.S., yet face challenges in accessing health care, climbing the economic ladder, and obtaining a quality education. For example, in the same period that Congress proposes to make deep cuts to Medicaid and to change the entitlement structure with threats of waivers and block granting, the uninsurance rate among Latinos is higher than any other racial and ethnic group at 32.7%. In fact, from 2003 to 2004, four hundred thousand more Latinos became uninsured. Furthermore, even as Latinos represent a significant and growing segment of the U.S. workforce, more than 1.2 million remain unemployed and looking for work. Moreover, limited access to preschool programs result in Latino youth falling behind their peers throughout their school careers, leading to alarming high school dropout rates; yet, we have witnessed deep cuts to major programs that help these students succeed, such as Even Start.

The majority of budget cuts that have already been passed, chip away at important safety-net programs and endanger the economic security and well-being of our country. For

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instance, cuts to low-income programs disproportionately fall on the backs of children. Approximately one in five U.S. children is Latino and will have to bear the burden of such cuts, limiting opportunities to reach his or her potential. In addition, rather than moving toward a long-term solution to control the deficit, the funds from these cuts to vital programs will be used to pay for excessive tax cuts for Americans with high levels of education, substantial health care coverage, and significant assets. Under this scenario, the Latino community will lose twice, because many of the tax cuts will not reach Latinos, despite their high presence in the workforce, while the programs that improve their quality of life will be endangered.

No longer can the White House and Congress make token gestures that do not provide sufficient resources that help all Americans succeed. Latinos need real investments, and we intend to hold accountable those responsible for advancing harmful budget cuts in the months to come. We strongly urge your administration to include in the FY 2007 budget proposal resources that strengthen and preserve programs for low-income communities. Further, we urge that you look to revenue sources that strengthen our economy, rather than programs cuts that depress it.

Sincerely,

National Council of La Raza

Affiliate Network Members

Academia Cesar Chavez Charter School
Alianza Dominicana, Inc.
Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans
Association House of Chicago
Aurora Weier Educational Center
Calexico Community Action Council
California Association for Bilingual Education
Campesinos Unidos
Carlos Rosario International Career Center, Inc.
Centro Campesino Farmworker Center, Inc.
Centro Hispano of Dane County
Chicano Federation of San Diego County
Chicanos Por La Causa - Tucson
Committee for Hispanic Children and Families
Community Child Care Council of Santa Clara County (4C Council)
Community Housing Resources of Arizona
Conexión Américas
Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc.
Council of Latino Agencies
El Pueblo, Inc.
Everglades Community Association, Inc.
Galaviz Academy

Hands Across Cultures, Corp.
HBC Services, Inc.
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Minnesota (HCCM) Foundation
Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation (HOPE, Inc.)
Home Education Livelihood Program - HELP New Mexico
Housing America Corporation
Housing for Mesa
Housing for Nevada
Idaho Migrant Council
KIPP Houston High School
La Causa, Inc.
Latin American Community Center
Latin American Youth Center
Latino Family Services
Latino Leadership, Inc.
MAAC Project
Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Health Care, Inc.
Mi Casa, Inc.
Mi Casa Resource Center for Women
Near Northside Partners Council, Inc.
Nevada Hispanic Services, Inc.
Northwest Communities' Education Center
Organización Cívica y Cultural Hispana Americana
Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana
Rural Opportunities, Inc. – Rochester
San Diego County SER/Jobs for Progress, Inc.
San Ysidro Health Center
Sea Mar Community Health Centers
Servicios de La Raza, Inc.
Siete Del Norte CDC
Southwest Key Program, Inc.
Texas Migrant Council
United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS, Inc.)
Vecinos Unidos, Inc.
Watts/Century Latino Organization

Cc: Members of Congress