

# A POCKET GUIDE ON SIX IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR LATINO VOTERS

**45.5 million Latinos in the U.S.  
7.6 million Latino voters in the last  
presidential election.**

**Your community needs your vote in 2008!**

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

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

With a population of 45.5 million in the U.S., Latinos are an important part of the country's prosperity, and a growing part of the electorate. Latinos believe in hard work, family, and a strong America. Many politicians recognize growing Latino voting power, and both Democrats and Republicans want the Latino vote. Unfortunately, many candidates and elected officials do not always take into account the interests of the Latino community.

**Change starts with you! Make your vote count!**



- Get involved.
- If you qualify, become a citizen.
- If you are a citizen and will be 18 or older by November 4, register to vote!
- If you are registered, vote!

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

## THE ISSUES

### 1. SAFER COMMUNITIES



Latinos are hardworking people who desire to live in safe neighborhoods, but too little is being done to create programs that prevent crime in our communities.

Even though a year in jail costs more than a year in college, many politicians look only at prison, and not at alternative programs that can reduce crime.

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

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

### 2. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES



Hispanics play an important role in the economic prosperity of the nation. Latino consumers have almost \$1 trillion dollars in buying power, pay billions in taxes to the federal government every year, and send billions to their families in Latin America. More needs to be done to help Latinos build wealth.

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

- ✓ **Supports** helping struggling families save their homes from foreclosure.
- ✓ **Supports** strong federal laws that help people pay a fair price for their home and that reduce bad lending practices known as predatory lending.
- ✓ **Supports** fixing the remittance market so that the money Latinos send to their families abroad is not lost unnecessarily to hidden fees.
- ✓ **Supports** programs that help people save money for the future, such as Individual Retirement Accounts, retirement pensions, and tax credits to build savings accounts.

### 3. QUALITY EDUCATION



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

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

- ✓ **Supports** high-quality family literacy and early care and education programs for young Latino children and their families.
- ✓ **Supports** programs with well-prepared bilingual teachers and staff who can communicate with parents in Spanish when needed.
- ✓ **Supports** the "DREAM Act" to help immigrant students go to college.

### 4. ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE



While Latinos contribute to the nation's economic health through their hard work, too many do not have access to the care and information they need to stay physically and mentally healthy. Almost one-third (32.1%) of Latinos do not have health insurance, and millions more cannot get standard health care services that every American needs.

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

- ✓ **Supports** health care reform that will create pathways to coverage for everyone in the U.S.
- ✓ **Supports** more access to quality health care and will commit to improve the availability of health care in Latino communities.
- ✓ **Supports** greater enforcement of civil rights in health settings.

## 5. IMMIGRATION REFORM



The U.S. immigration system is broken and needs to be reformed. The system in place now results in families being separated, people dying at the

border, and no channels for immigrants to become legal. This system also hurts honest businesses that need more workers, while it benefits bad employers and “coyotes” who exploit immigrants.

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

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

## 6. JOB OPPORTUNITIES



Hispanics are the fastest-growing segment of the workforce, representing 14.1% of U.S. workers. Yet, many Latinos are stuck in jobs offering little to no benefits, low wages, and few opportunities to move up. This is

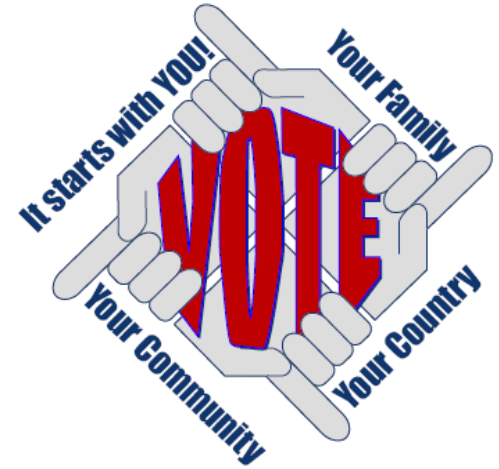
especially harmful during these times of economic hardship, when Latino unemployment is rising more quickly than that of other groups.

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

- ✓ **Supports** job training programs that help Latinos move out of entry-level, low-wage jobs.
- ✓ **Supports** putting more money into programs that integrate English-language learning and skills training.
- ✓ **Supports** expanding unemployment insurance to cover more workers during an economic downturn.



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NOVEMBER 4!**

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