

May 14, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

On behalf of [UnidosUS](https://unidosus.org), I write to urge you to support appropriations legislation that improves and advances health, education, and workforce priorities for Latinos and their families.

UnidosUS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves as the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Since 1968, we have challenged the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos through our unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico. We believe in an America where economic, political, and social progress is a reality for all Latinos, and we collaborate across communities to achieve it.

Latinos face significant disparities in health insurance coverage, with nearly 18% uninsured. This hinders access to medical care and our ability to combat transmissible diseases. We urge you to promote health equity for Latinos by including the following provisions in your appropriations legislation:

- **\$1.6 billion for the National Immunization Program.** This program supports the immunization efforts of state and local health departments, community-based vaccine confidence campaigns, and the larger health system infrastructure to collect and report real-time immunization data. This initiative is especially important for Latinos, who experience significant **immunization gaps**. Considering that the U.S. spends nearly **\$27 billion** a year treating illnesses that would have been prevented if individuals received recommended vaccines, robust funding for this program is an investment with much greater returns.

By 2030, **one in three students** in the U.S. will be Latino. Latino children are the largest and youngest group of color in our nation's schools, and they face significant obstacles to receiving a quality education, including a lack of equitable academic support, inaccessibility to high-speed

internet, and language access. These realities require robust funding for programs that develop our educational infrastructure and promote academic excellence, including:

- **\$2 billion for the English Language Acquisition Program (Title III, ESEA).** This program helps ensure English learner (EL) students have access to the resources they need to attain English language proficiency and meet the same challenging academic standards that their non-EL peers must meet. EL students make up one in ten of all k-12 public school students. However, funding has not kept pace with this growing student population of [5.1 million](#). It is crucial to support EL students through this program at a time when multilingualism has grown more important for individuals' and our nation's success.
- **\$200 million for Postsecondary Student Success Grants (PSSG).** Today, Latinos **account** for one out of every five postsecondary students. Despite these gains, Latinos complete college and graduate school with a degree at lower rates than other groups, contributing to long-term disparities in debt, wealth accumulation, and economic security. This funding would help provide evidence-based academic and culturally relevant services that support student retention and completion.
- **\$150 million for the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration to establish a career pathway in immigration legal services.** Current **data** highlights a shortage in immigration legal assistance, hindering access for many to navigate the immigration system. To address this, funding will support on-the-job training for staff at community-based immigration legal service providers. The goal is to create upward career paths for underrepresented groups, including people of color, immigrants, and 18-24-year-olds, by providing in-demand credentials through the Department of Justice's Recognition and Accreditation Program. This comprehensive pathway combines education, skills training, and job placement opportunities.

It is time for Congress to deliver for our country's 62 million Latinos who, for too long, have been disproportionately excluded from key federal priorities. To that end, we urge you to fund these critical health, education, and workforce programs.

Sincerely,



Eric Rodriguez
Senior Vice President
Policy and Advocacy
UnidosUS