




**A Civic Engagement Update  
for the Pennsylvania Latino Community**

**A CONGRESO** Bi-Monthly Publication

**January 16, 2007**



January 16, 2007

Dear Fellow Pennsylvanians:

Happy New Year and Happy Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to our partners and supporters in Pennsylvania. 2007 is a promising year, and the entrée of the New Year brings time to reflect on our achievements of the last year and what we strive to accomplish in the new. We hope you will join us in making the Latino community in Pennsylvania the most vibrant and prosperous possible.

Congreso will focus its advocacy efforts this year on federal immigration reform, juvenile justice, violence prevention, education, and workforce development opportunities. We have chosen these focus areas as they have the greatest impact on prosperity for Latinos in Southeastern Pennsylvania. A recent workforce development accomplishment is the increase in the minimum wage in the Commonwealth, and we are now seeing action in the federal government. Over 400,000 individuals in Pennsylvania alone will benefit from this increase, so imagine its impact across the country.

The Mayoral candidates will have focused campaigns, and the issue that stands on top is violence. Violence in our communities is directly affected by the availability of quality jobs for skilled people and quality education available to all community members. As such, we will be focused on their plans for violence eradication and hope to see a workforce development plan that will take Philadelphian Latinos beyond the minimum wage, into sustainable and fulfilling employment.

Our next Civic Engagement update will focus on efforts in the federal government to rejuvenate efforts to bring about comprehensive immigration change, change that is imperative given the oppressive ordinances continually evolving around Pennsylvania.

In this endeavor and many others, we look forward to your partnership.

Gracias,

Nicholas Torres  
President, Congreso de Latinos Unidos

**Congreso's update on city, state & federal issues affecting the Latino Community shared with community leaders around PA, staff, and other interested parties.**

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**Martin Luther King Day**

**January 15, 2007**

Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve.

You don't have to have a college degree to serve.

You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve...

You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve....

You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Hear it for yourself at <http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

## *Highlight:* US Congress & the 1<sup>st</sup> 100 Hours

### Background

Representative Nancy Pelosi is the first woman to become House Speaker in the US Congress. This is important, as it is representative of all the media buzz about how women, people of color, and people of various religions are increasingly coming into power. Many Latino leaders are included in this mix. NALEO <http://www.naleo.org/> tracks the Latinos around the US that have moved into leadership positions. It is certainly an exciting time.

House Democrats, who are now in the majority, have received much attention this past week, as they have unfolded many legislative initiatives within their “1<sup>st</sup> 100 Hours”. They intend to use this time for legislative work of the new Congress to reform lobbying, push raises to the national minimum wage, implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission and reduce prescription drug costs for seniors and college loan interest rates for students. The Senate has the same agenda but intends to review legislation at a slower pace.

### Minimum Wage

In this edition of the *Congreso* Civic Engagement Update, the focus is on the issue that affects Latinos most directly, the minimum wage.

It is important to highlight the **Pennsylvania Minimum wage** that just increased as of January 1, 2007. Please ensure that you and those you know who earn minimum wage receive an increase to \$6.25/hour as of this date. It will increase again July 1, 2007 to \$7.15/hr. For those who work for an employee with fewer than 10 full-time employees, the increase is different. It increased January 1, to \$5.65/hr, will increase again July 1<sup>st</sup> to \$6.65, and then it will finally catch-up to the standard increase January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 to \$7.15/hr.

We need to make sure the community is aware of this increase and advocates for itself with employers. We can't take it for granted that everyone knows that the increase has occurred. A full-time minimum wage worker will now earn over \$4,000 more per year as a result of an increase of the minimum wage to \$7.15 per hour. In comparison, the average chief executive officer earns 1,100 times what a minimum-wage worker earns.

The increase is a good, first step toward self-sufficiency but according to the Self-Sufficiency Standard, a sustainable wage for one adult living in Philadelphia is actually \$8.48 per hour.<sup>1</sup> And note - this is the bare minimum – for an adult without children - a wage that only considers absolute basic needs. So we still have work to do. We need to continue to stay aware and influence government to increase the wage more frequently. Every nine years is not frequent enough!

In fact, Pennsylvania minimum wage advocate and State Senator Tartaglione's office told *Congreso* recently that she has plans to seek a co-sponsor next week to reintroduce the original minimum wage legislation. Why start over again? Actually she is continuing with *la lucha* because she wants to ensure that the intent of the original minimum wage bill (HR 257) gets passed. The important aspect of the original bill that did not end up passing through the legislature would “**increase the minimum wage by an annual cost-of-living adjustment** calculated by applying the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Communities...” Doing so would increase the minimum wage as costs increase. In a press release published January 12, 2007 Senator Tartaglione noted, “...low-wage workers lost a dollar a day to inflation. State and federal lawmakers have seen fit to protect themselves from inflation through cost-of-living adjustments. It's time to protect all workers from sinking into poverty.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Pennsylvania, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, May 2006

<sup>2</sup> News Release from State Senator Christine M. Tartaglione, January 12, 2007

New Jersey has a minimum wage of \$7.15/hr, and Delaware's minimum wage is \$6.15/hour but will increase to \$7.15/hr as of January 1, 2008.

On a federal level, the House voted January 10 to raise the **federal minimum wage** to \$7.25 an hour. 29 states and the District of Columbia already have minimum wages higher than the federal rate. The bill passed 315-116 and calls for an incremental increase over 26 months. If it's passed by the Senate and signed into law, the minimum wage would go from \$5.15 to \$5.85 within 60 days. A year after that, it would go to \$6.55, and then a year after that it would hit \$7.25. The minimum wage was last increased in 1997. The federal minimum wage was last raised nearly ten years ago. The minimum wage does not increase automatically and it is not adjusted for inflation. In order to raise the federal minimum wage, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate must pass a bill and the President must sign it into law. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation since 1968 (when it was \$1.60 an hour) it would have been \$9.14 an hour in 2005.

Nearly 13 million people would likely benefit from the increase – 5.6 million directly and 7.4 million indirectly. This includes 7.7 million women, 3.4 million parents, and 4.7 million people of color.<sup>3</sup>

As a form of encouragement for federal legislators, studies have shown that **raising the minimum wage does not cost jobs**. States that had raised their minimum wages had more job growth in small business than states with a \$5.15 minimum wage in the period of 1998-2003. Even retail employment grew more in higher minimum wage states. A detailed study of New Jersey after their minimum wage increase in the early 1990s showed the increase had no effect on total employment in the state.<sup>4</sup>

Along with this important measure, Democrats have also said they will "fix" the Medicare prescription drug program by negotiating lower drug prices for seniors. That measure was voted on January 12 and passed. Currently, prescription prices for the top 20 drugs prescribed for seniors are 46% lower for the Department of Veterans Affairs than they are for Medicare Part D Plans.<sup>5</sup> Families USA reports that Medicare Drug Plan prices are actually 58% higher than Veterans Affairs prices. Democrats say they want to halve interest rates for student loans in order to broaden college opportunities. This proposal will also include expanding the Pell Grant program, and permanently making college tuition deductible from taxes.<sup>6</sup> On January 17<sup>th</sup> the House is scheduled to vote on this important measure.

## ¿Y Qué?

The increase is important for the Latino community, as unfortunately, many Latinos work at the minimum wage level. In fact, adults, women (especially single mothers), senior citizens, rural workers, African Americans and Latinos make up a disproportionate number of minimum wage workers. These groups benefit the most from a raise in the minimum wage. 427,000 PA workers benefited directly from an increase in the minimum wage to \$7.15 per hour. Latinos will benefit from the measures that will decrease Medicare prescription drug costs for seniors and reduce loan rates for college students as well.

Latinos make-up approximately 12 percent of the U.S. workforce but represent almost 20 percent of those who would benefit from a minimum wage increase.

Nearly 2.8 million Latinos nationwide would likely benefit from an increase in the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour, and this would give an additional \$4,370 a year to Latino families. The increase could cover many essentials: 2 years of child care, tuition at a community college, heat and electricity for more than a year, a year of groceries or almost a year of rent. Nearly three-quarters of minimum wage workers are adults over the age of 20, and many are responsible for over half of their family's income. Forty percent of minimum wage workers are the sole breadwinners in their families.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Economic Policy Institute, December 2006

<sup>4</sup> Raise the Minimum Wage Coalition Fact Sheet, June 2006

<sup>5</sup> Federal & Foundation Assistance Monitor, December 21, 2006

<sup>6</sup> Federal Assistance Monitor, December 7, 2006

<sup>7</sup> Rep. Baca News Release, July 13, 2006

### **Congreso's Position**

Congreso supports the increases as they will assist many families (Latinos) and adults to spiral out of poverty and reach a more livable wage. \$5.15/hour falls below the federal poverty level, and as such puts a strain on taxpayers through the social welfare system. Without an increase low wage earners cannot invest in education, healthcare, homeownership, or retirement.

### **Congreso's Action**

- Congreso was an active member of the Raise the Minimum Wage Coalition in Pennsylvania.
- One of Congreso's staff, Alida Padilla, spoke at the Minimum Wage Rally with Governor Rendell on December 28, 2006, congratulating the coalition, Governor, and Senator Tartaglione and encouraging the Latino community to advocate for the increase with their employers.

## Immigration

1. Although not included in the first 100 hours of the new House agenda, there's **a new immigration bill being drafted by Senators & House Reps from both sides of the aisle**. Kennedy & McCain are still the chief architects. Rep Jeff Flake, (R-AZ) Arizona, and Luis V. Gutierrez, (D-IL) are chief writers on the House side. Kennedy is even more strategically positioned than last year, as he's the incoming chairman of the Senate Immigration, Border Security and Citizenship Subcommittee. Sensenbrenner, who crafted HR4437, has been taken off of any major Congressional committee. He was the chair of the House Judiciary Committee. President Bush is awaiting the legislation and hopes to get a comprehensive immigration reform bill signed before leaving office in 2008.

Lawmakers are planning to revisit the requirement of those living in the US for less than two years to go back to their countries and then apply, noting the difficulty that presents logistically and in terms of enforcement. **To be granted citizenship, they would have to remain employed, pass background checks, pay fines and back taxes, and enroll in English classes.**

Legislators note **the importance of the Latino vote** in the last election as a catalyst for getting CIR passed.<sup>8</sup> The hard-line legislators, especially in the House, who were against comprehensive immigration reform have either lost re-election or have not been able to retain powerful committee seats in the new Congress (which includes Sensenbrenner, the author of last year's HR4437).

2. Congreso signed onto NCLR's letter requesting that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (**USCIS) reconsider an increase of the naturalization fees charged for processing naturalization and immigration applications.** Fees for naturalization applications may increase as much as 100% or more, raising the fee from the current \$400 to \$600 or even \$1,000. This would prevent citizenship for many low-income immigrants who wish to become U.S. citizens but simply cannot afford to do so. We hope that USCIS and the Department of Homeland Security will be able to find another solution to the financial burden that USCIS feels on its operations. Fees have increased 450% since 1990.<sup>9</sup>

3. In your **advocacy efforts surrounding local anti-immigrant ordinances** around the Commonwealth, make sure to utilize the very extensive toolkit prepared by the Fair Immigration Reform Movement ([www.fairimmigration.org](http://www.fairimmigration.org)), which provides keys to organizing, framing your message and examples that have worked. As of January 3, 2007, there are 32 anti-immigrant ordinances throughout Pennsylvania (16 pending, 8 defeated, and 8 passed), in comparison to 4 in Arizona, where the immigrant population is much higher.

4. House Reps and Senators **reintroduced "AgJobs" legislation on January 10.** AgJobs would give many agricultural workers in this country who lack authorized immigration status the chance to become legal immigrants, ensuring a stable labor supply for agricultural employers. Quite timely, as the extreme necessity for seasonal workers in Pennsylvania was recently highlighted at the PA Farm Show last week. The current guest worker program is cumbersome and does not facilitate the level of hiring needed to keep crops from reaching supermarket shelves. One out of every seven jobs is tied to agriculture, and PA's agriculture industry inextricably relies on immigrant labor.<sup>10</sup> This legislation could affect up to 1.5 million agricultural workers.

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## Education

1. Looking for new reasons to advocate for better education in your community? New research from the RAND Corporation and the National Corporation on Aging reveals that **increases in educational attainment contribute to a longer lifespan**<sup>11</sup> It is more important than race, healthcare, and income. In one study, life expectancy at age 35 was extended by as much as one and a half years simply by going to school for one extra year. Note that the compulsory starting age for school in Pennsylvania is 8 years old. What a difference we would see if children were obligated to start school at 5 or 6. As a group, less educated people are less able to plan for the future and to delay gratification. Better educated people tend to make better choices about lifestyle, diet, exercise, savings, and other factors that prolong life. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/03/health/03aging.html>

<sup>8</sup> Rachel Swarns, New York Times, December 26, 2006

<sup>9</sup> National Immigration Forum Update, December 29, 2006

<sup>10</sup> Philadelphia Inquirer, January 12, 2007

<sup>11</sup> New York Times, January 3, 2007

## Education (cont.)

An interesting mystery to this study is the fact that Hispanic immigrants generally live longer than their white counterparts, even though income and education levels and access to healthcare are lower for this demographic. One potential reason is that Hispanics tend to smoke and drink less alcohol than other demographics.<sup>12</sup>

2. **Latino males have the lowest on-time graduation rate of any group in Philadelphia: 29.3-38.2%.** This fact was also highlighted in Congreso's testimony to City Council on December 11<sup>th</sup>, when the drop-out crisis was addressed. City Council will hold another meeting on the drop-out crisis February 6, 2007 where Congreso will speak again. The hearing is open to the public for observation.

3. **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)** Act is 5 years old and up for reauthorization this year. The President's office outlines highlights as a result of the legislation: "As of 2006, for the first time all 50 States and the District of Columbia have accountability plans in place as well as reading/language arts and mathematics assessments for grades 3-8, plus one assessment in high school. The percentage of classes taught by a highly qualified teacher has risen to 91 percent. The gap between Hispanic and white 9-year-olds in reading narrowed by 7 points, to an all-time low. The gap between Hispanic and white 9-year-olds in math narrowed by 8 points, to an all-time low."<sup>13</sup> Critics of NCLB state that the measures of accountability have not been supported by sufficient funding.

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## 4. Economic Self-Sufficiency

See the Highlights section for a detailed summary of the Minimum Wage increase vote in the US Congress and the bill passed in Pennsylvania which took effect January 1, 2007. Remember – **The State Minimum Wage increased to \$6.25/hour as of January 1, 2007.**

Remember to adjust your budgets, encourage Latinos earning minimum wage to advocate for themselves to ensure an increase AND celebrate the first increase in nine years! If you know of someone in Philadelphia unjustly being denied an increase in their wage, Community Legal Services may be able to assist. Call 215.981.3707. The Philadelphia Unemployment Project, at 215-557-0822, is also willing to assist if you do not get \$6.25/hour starting on Jan. 1. The wage increases again July 1, 2007 to \$7.15. For more information, link to:

## Health

1. **Healthcare coverage** is a very high priority on the new Congress and on the PA Governor's agendas. Of the 133,590 uninsured children in Pennsylvania, 108,042 are eligible for Medical Assistance, free CHIP or reduced-cost CHIP.<sup>14</sup> As such, *Congreso* signed onto a letter sent through the PA Welfare Coalition that asks the new Congress to focus on SCHIP (the monies states receive to cover low income children in healthcare plans) and to boost the amount given to families for food stamps. Governor Rendell is seeking to 'cover all kids', including children who were previously unable to receive CHIP because of family income levels. For more information about receiving these benefits, go to [www.chipcoverspakids.com](http://www.chipcoverspakids.com) (en español tambien) or by calling 1-800-986-KIDS.

2. *Congreso* was one of more than 100 organizations who recently signed onto a letter authorized by the Pennsylvania Welfare Coalition, focused on sending an initial and **strong message to the PA Congressional delegation that we are dedicated to making children, youth and families a top priority** when budget choices are made and important pieces of legislation are reauthorized. The letter focused most on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and the Food Stamp Program. <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/home/schip.asp> gives details about the SCHIP program, important as the funding for this program directly affects PA's CHIP program and healthcare coverage for our children.

3. **Ryan White legislation on the federal level (HIV-AIDS funding) was reauthorized at the end of December.** State flexibility and minority focused funding are new focus areas. They include:

- Expand Resources For Women, Infants, And Children. It supports the provision of family-centered care for women and children with HIV/AIDS, including the provision of support services such as referrals for inpatient hospital services, treatment for substance abuse, mental health services, and other social services.
- Codify The Minority AIDS Initiative. African-Americans accounted for 49 percent of all HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed in 2005. The Minority AIDS Initiative provides funding for activities to evaluate and address the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS and disparities in access, treatment, care, and outcome on racial and ethnic minorities.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> El Hispano, January 10-16, 2007

<sup>13</sup> Press Release, Office of the Press Secretary, January 8, 2007

<sup>14</sup> Cap for Kids Update, PCCY, January 7, 2007

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/12/20061219-4.html>

## Safety & Violence

1. Legislators are keeping with **persistent efforts to curb gun violence in Pennsylvania**. Rep. Evans (D. Phila) and Rep. Chris King (D-Bucks) are two of the lawmakers who are re-introducing a safety and security bill package. The package was first introduced as part of the state House's Committee of the Whole last fall. A polling of residents in Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware and Chester counties last August indicated widespread support for tougher laws and prevention programs to reduce violent crime. Among the most popular measures were those to ban military style assault weapons, provide more funding for police departments to hire officers and buy equipment, and require gun owners to report lost or stolen weapons within 24 hours. More information coming soon.

2. Looking to combat crime in your neighborhood? Look at this website to assist in generating ideas. See the **Philadelphia Youth Aid Panel** link, as they are seeking volunteers. We need to ensure Latino participation, so that our Latino youth are averted from getting into the juvenile justice system.

<http://www.phillyneighborhoods.org/Crime-Phila/crime-phila.html>

3. Congreso and partner organizations are looking to expand the **Latino Juvenile Justice Network** in Philadelphia. We collaborate with the Juvenile Law Center and the Philadelphia Police Advisory Commission to protect our youth. There is another LJNN in Reading, PA. The LJNN seeks to identify issues and approaches for juvenile justice reform specific to Latinos. If you are interested in joining either the Philadelphia or the Reading partnerships, contact Kristin Shieler at [shiplerk@congreso.net](mailto:shiplerk@congreso.net).

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## Electoral Participation

1. Pennsylvania General Assembly Leadership is changing hands. **Representative Dennis O'Brien (R-Phila) will be the new Speaker of the House** – our “Nancy Pelosi”, so to speak, in Pennsylvania. He won the seat by 8 votes, 105-97. This was a surprise change in leadership for two reasons: 1) Democrats gained a very slim majority in the Pennsylvania House after the final results of the 159<sup>th</sup> District in Chester County were decided. Only 27 votes decided which political party would have control of the House. Again, showing the power of just a few votes!, and 2) originally, it was thought that Rep Perzel (R-Phila) or Bill DeWeese (D) would carry the leadership position in the House. But with a lot of maneuvering, the House of Representatives decided that O'Brien would be able to build better bridges between the two political parties. As a follow-up measure, Rep. Perzel received a new speaker

emeritus leadership role. Historically, O'Brien is a staunch child advocate, but has not supported gun control.

**2. Philadelphia has important races upcoming in 2007!** Follow [www.thenextmayor.com](http://www.thenextmayor.com) and [www.seventy.org](http://www.seventy.org) for detailed information. The major races will be for City Mayor and City Council, but there are also elections for City Commissioner, Trial Judges, and Sheriff and more.

<http://www.seventy.org/electioninfo/upcoming.html> details which offices are included in this year's elections and what the responsibilities of each office are.

**Philadelphia Mayoral hopefuls for the 2007 election include declared candidates Rep. Dwight Evans, Michael Nutter, US Rep. Chaka Fattah and Tom Knox.** US Rep. Bob Brady and Union Leader John Dougherty have yet to declare their candidacies. All of the Mayoral candidates and City Council hopefuls will compete in the May 15, 2007 primary election. There are no Republican Mayoral candidates to date.

**3. President Bush will deliver his State of the Union address on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and his 2008 federal budget request will be delivered on February 6<sup>th</sup>.** Both are very important, as they determine how discussions will be shaped around priorities in federal government. We need to ensure a strong domestic agenda in the federal government, as it in turn affects state and city budgets, and hence, our families.

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## Housing/Energy

Governor Rendell, Senator Fumo and Representative Evans have made **\$500,000 available to customers who are facing utility shutoffs**. If in Philadelphia, your local Neighborhood Energy Center will soon know if you can receive assistance with these new monies.

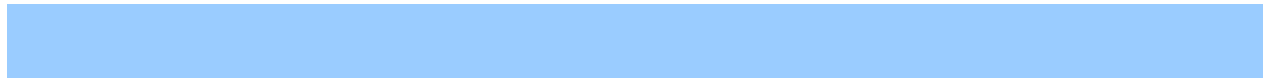
<http://www.pgworks.com/assistanceprograms/energycenters.htm>.

The Philadelphia Campaign for Housing Justice, of which Congreso is a part, has recently had a **success in having City Council reconsider a legislative measure creating Inclusionary Affordable Housing in Philadelphia**. As originally written, Councilman Clarke's bill would have mandated that all developers building more than 20 units set aside up to 15% of units as “affordable.” The Clarke bill defined affordability as 80-150% of Area Median Income, approximately \$57,000-108,000 for a family of four. During the hearings, the PCHJ testified that such income targets would exclude nearly 70% of Philadelphia's households. So now City Council has formed a working group to reconsider the income targets, which will hopefully include low-income and working families.

## State Budget

To see **the progress that Pennsylvania has made in utilizing our state resources** half way through the fiscal year, take a look at the attached link. Our 5.8% increase is lower than the 7.0% average around the country. More than half of the increase was for education, including PreK-12, Higher Education & public libraries, but this increase is also below the national average.

[http://www.budget.state.pa.us/budget/lib/budget/BudgetProcess/2007\\_Dec\\_Briefing\\_Web.pdf](http://www.budget.state.pa.us/budget/lib/budget/BudgetProcess/2007_Dec_Briefing_Web.pdf)



## Important Dates

- **January 17, 2006, 6pm**

The Philadelphia Unemployment Project will begin showing a Wednesday Night Series of Showings of ***EYES ON THE PRIZE, AMERICA'S CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT***. The series begins Wednesday, January 17 at 6 PM at AFSCME DC 47, 1606 Walnut Street in Philadelphia. This is the first of 10 weekly showings of "EYES ON THE PRIZE" followed by discussions on the lessons we can take from the great organizing of the civil rights movement and what we can learn from it for today's struggles for justice. A light dinner will be provided. Please email or call PUP at 215-557-0822 to RSVP.

- **January 23, 2006 2pm**

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is holding a ***quarterly USCIS/CBO meeting*** held at their office at 1600 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130. The new pilot citizenship test will be discussed at the meeting. Confirm your attendance by e-mail or by calling 215.255.4837.

- **February**

Exciting opportunity for youth! ***Summer 2007 Internships are available at the Governor's Office of Policy & Planning in Harrisburg***. They are seeking up to five students with an interest in public service and government for on-the-job summer internships. These prestigious internships offer students the opportunity to work on policies that better the lives of the people of Pennsylvania, while learning valuable skills that will prepare them for a variety of careers, most especially policy and public service. Preference is given to those students with demonstrated outstanding writing, research, and computer skills. They will attempt to help successful intern candidates find stipends from outside sources, but are unable to guarantee paid internships for all five positions. Students are encouraged to begin looking for outside funding early in the semester. For more information about Governor Rendell's policy agenda, see <http://www.governor.state.pa.us/> Interested candidates should reply by email to Patricia Grim, Senior Policy Manager, at [pgrim@state.pa.us](mailto:pgrim@state.pa.us) or (717) 772-9068 with a resume and brief cover letter describing why you are applying for an internship and identifying which of the following policy area(s) interests you the most. (Education, Economic development & workforce, Criminal justice, Land use and environmental issues, and Health care reform). They will accept up to five interns and decisions will be made on a rolling basis beginning in February 2007.

- **February 14, 2007**

Stay tuned for more information about the ***February 14<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Event and 101<sup>st</sup> minute***, looking to commemorate all of the successful work in the past and we work that lies ahead in the Delaware Valley around federal immigration reform. Put the date on your calendar!

- **January – February 2007**

University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Inquirer have partnered to form the initiative called "***Great Expectations: Citizen Voices on Philadelphia's Future***." This effort will bring together ordinary folks, civic leaders and experts for dialogues to name and frame the chief challenges facing Philadelphia, identify possible solutions, and suggest which ones to our Mayoral candidates that hold the most promise. See <http://www.fels.upenn.edu/greatexpectations.htm#forums> to make your voice heard and attend the forums.

- **January – April 2007**

"***Public Conversation Series 2007***" will be intriguing conversations at U Penn on issues of concern, including Public Safety, Poverty, and the Justice System; Welfare Reform; and School Reform and Equitable Development. Contact Kristin for the schedule, sent with the Congreso Update 12.22.06.

*If you have any other information that would be important for Congreso to include, please email the Director of Civic Engagement, Kristin Shipler, at [shiplerk@congreso.net](mailto:shiplerk@congreso.net). We want to represent and advocate for all issues affecting Latinos in the SE Pennsylvania area.*

## Important Links

### GOVERNMENT

- **US Senator Specter** <http://specter.senate.gov/>
- **US Senator-Elect Casey** <http://casey.senate.gov/>
- **US House of Representatives** <http://www.house.gov/>
- **PA General Assembly** <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/index.cfm>
- **Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs (GACLA)**  
<http://www.gacla.state.pa.us/gacla/site/default.asp>
- **Philadelphia City Council** <http://www.phila.gov/citycouncil/index.html>
- **US Citizenship and Immigration Services** <http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>
- **Pennsylvania Office of the Victim Advocate** (resources statewide for programs that serve victims of domestic, child, elderly abuse and others) <http://www.pbpp.state.pa.us/ova/site/default.asp>

### NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- **Congreso de Latinos Unidos** (Multi-service, social service and civic engagement organization for Latino communities in Philadelphia) [www.congreso.net](http://www.congreso.net)
- **ENPYS – Eastern North Philadelphia Youth Services Coalition** (a group of community-based organizations located in Eastern North Philadelphia to coordinate services and ensure that children and families have access to resources, information and support services) [www.northphillysos.net/](http://www.northphillysos.net/)
- **National Council of La Raza** (Latino advocacy) [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)
- **National Immigration Forum** (national immigration issues) <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>
- **Pew Hispanic Center** (Latino research & statistics) <http://pewhispanic.org/>
- **We Are America Alliance** (Federal immigration reform) [www.weareamericaalliance.org](http://www.weareamericaalliance.org)
- **Committee of Seventy** (Philadelphia-based electoral information) [www.seventy.org](http://www.seventy.org)
- **The Next Mayor's Project** (informative to learn about the Philadelphia Mayoral candidates and how the public wants them to prioritize the issues!) [www.nextmayorproject.org](http://www.nextmayorproject.org)
- **The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities** (fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals) [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)
- **Pennsylvania Budget & Policy Center** (a project focused on state tax, budget, and related policy matters, and effects on working families) <http://www.pennbpc.org/>
- **The Children's Advocacy Project of Philadelphia** (over 200 resources to help families in need) [www.cap4kids.org/philadelphia](http://www.cap4kids.org/philadelphia)
- **Metropolitan Philadelphia Indicator's Project** (social, environmental and economic indicators that portray the quality of life in the region's communities) [www.temple.edu/mpip](http://www.temple.edu/mpip)
- **The Next Great City** (dedicated to creating a positive future for Philadelphia by advocating for policies that enhance environmental quality, strengthen neighborhoods and increase our economic competitiveness. *Congreso has endorsed this effort.*) [www.nextgreatcity.org](http://www.nextgreatcity.org)

