

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

### Important Updates

PA State Immigration.....	Pg. 3
Public hearings will occur throughout PA over the summer, similar to hearings seen on a federal level.	
PA Minimum Wage.....	Pg. 5
Minimum Wage legislation will be signed by the Governor on Sunday, July 9 in Philadelphia.	
State Budget.....	Pg. 5
The State Budget passed at 3am Monday morning July 3, 2006 with a 5.8% overall increase.	

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### IMPORTANT DATES

- **July 1, 2006**

Begins **Democracy Summer**, a nationwide effort led by the We Are America Alliance, to help eligible immigrants become naturalized citizens and register new voters - 1 million goal for the nation. Congreso's goal is 1,000 new voters by October 2006. [http://www.cccaction.org/cccaction/waa\\_index.html](http://www.cccaction.org/cccaction/waa_index.html) for more information.

- **July - October, 2006**

**Congreso will register 1,000 voters** in time for the November 7<sup>th</sup> elections. We are part of a non-partisan "Latino Empowerment and Advocacy Project", led by the National Council of La Raza. The project involves 15 other Latino organizations around the country.

- **July 5, 2006**

**US Senate Judiciary Committee's public hearing** on the critical economic importance of Comprehensive Immigration Reform. This hearing focused on business needs and employment-based immigration. See Federal Immigration Reform on Page 7 for more information.

- **July 9, 2006**

**Governor Rendell is coming to Philadelphia** at 2:15pm to sign the minimum wage bill, increasing PA's minimum wage to \$7.15 by next summer. The signing will take place outside Sharon Baptist Church at 3955 Conshohocken Ave. (near City Line and Monument Ave.).

- **July 28, 2006**

**Deadline** for NCLR's Lideres de Hoy essay contest. (See the Newsworthy section!)

- **September 2-3, 2006**

Labor Day weekend - **Large mobilization** for immigration reform, either regionally or in Washington DC (TBD)

- **November 4, 2006**

**Dash for Democracy** 5k Run by Committee of 70: an event to celebrate what democracy means to you. <http://www.dashfordemocracy.org/>

*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 Greater Philadelphia area.*

## Congreso's update on city, state & federal issues affecting the Latino Community *In Detail* - NOTE: NEW UPDATES FOR THE WEEK ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN.

### LOCAL LEVEL- Current Issues

#### Adult Education

##### Summary

The Local News section of the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) highlighted an article on the demands of ESL throughout Philadelphia. The demand for classes far outweighs the funding available to support classes. Philadelphia has the highest percentage of Limited-English Proficient persons in the entire state, at 7.8% of the total population. No mention of funding for classes through CCP was mentioned, nor has an increase of funding been noted in the new State Budget. The Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) is decreasing the availability and increasing the costs of Adult Literacy classes (Adult Basic Education - ABE, GED, and ESL) offered to Latinos in Philadelphia.

##### Congreso's Position

We would like to challenge CCP to increase the contribution to ABE, GED and ESL classes to at least 5% of the citywide budget. Less than 50% of Latinos in Philadelphia have a high school diploma or its equivalent and 50% are unemployed. Without this educational opportunity, Latinos are even more limited in advancing in their education; hence, limiting their employment opportunities.

##### Congreso's Action

- Congreso is stating its case directly to the Board of CCP, and we are meeting with CCP's leadership on this issue on July 5, 2006. More to come on the results.
- Congreso's President, Nick Torres, testified to City Council on March 29, 2006, imploring for an increase in citywide funding and an increase in the allocation designated for adult literacy classes.
- Congreso is working with the larger Latino and other immigration population to encourage demand for increasing funding and availability of courses through CCP.
- As CCP may receive another increase in local funding, Congreso will be working with the City Council to advocate that this new funding stream reach the adult literacy classes.

#### Philadelphia School Budget

##### Summary

Passage of the PA State Budget is expected to positively impact Philadelphia School District's funding level for the new fiscal year, with a Basic Education increase *statewide* of 5.9%. More to come.

The School Reform Commission approved a \$2 billion operating budget for fiscal year 2007, which begins on July 1. A few of the highlights:

1. The central office has provided funding for 129 school growth teachers so that individual schools can free up funds for other purposes.
2. 119 teaching positions are restored overall.
3. Individual schools have been asked to reduce their budgets by 5% across the board.
4. Early childhood education programs (CECL, Pre-K, Bright Future, Head Start, Cradle to Classroom, and Parent Child Home) that currently serve 9,769 children will be expanded by 500 slots are expected to serve 11,000 students by 2008.
5. \$4 million was allocated to complete the standardization of the Pre-K through 12th grade curriculum, which was started in 2003.

To learn more about next year's budgetary highlights:

[http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/communications/press\\_releases/2006/05](http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/communications/press_releases/2006/05)

The Pennsylvania state legislature is still deliberating the state's fiscal year 2007 budget, and there is still a month left in the budgetary process. If the legislature approves Governor Rendell's education budget proposal, the Philadelphia schools will be able to restore some of the cuts made to schools' discretionary budgets.

Philadelphia Schools have also asked the City for \$10 million, for opening up its buildings to City and Parks Department sponsored recreational and other public programs. *This provides opportunity for Congreso to hold its summer school programs in public school buildings. An issue highlighted and resolved in the May 23, 2006 Civic Engagement update.*

## STATE LEVEL – Current Issues

### State-level Immigration

#### Immigration Hearings in PA this summer

Immigration Hearings have been set through the House Republican Policy Committee, as they expect to look at the impact of illegal immigration on Pennsylvania. The Committee is chaired by Mario J. Civera, Jr. (R-Delaware). A hearing is scheduled in Philadelphia for July 25. Other hearings around the state are scheduled for: July 18 in Harrisburg, July 26 in the Lehigh Valley and August 2 in western PA. Recommendations by the committee will be considered by the House in the fall.

#### Hazleton, PA

##### Summary

The Mayor of Hazleton, PA, Lou Barletta had a city ordinance tentatively approved through the City Council last week entitled the “Illegal Immigrant Relief Act”. This ordinance claims that illegal immigrants are destroying neighborhoods, increasing crime rates and lowering quality of life. It most pointedly targets employers and landlords. Penalties include denial of permits and contracts for 5 years and fines of \$1,000 per undocumented immigrant. The ordinance also declares English the official language of Hazleton. Mayor Barletta received a national audience on July 5, 2006 through the Senate Judiciary Committee’s public hearing on comprehensive immigration reform. He was the only representative present who stated that undocumented residents are a detriment, rather than an asset, to our communities.

This ordinance cannot be approved without 3 readings at City Council. The first is scheduled for July 13th @ 7:00 P.M. At this time, they may also have the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> readings at the same time, which will expedite the approval process. City Council meetings are public and are held in Council Chambers on the Second Floor of City Hall.

The issue is receiving national attention. For more background and a national perspective, see

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/19/AR2006061900623.html>

#### Congreso’s Position

Congreso supports the rights of undocumented workers and residents and, hence, opposes the city ordinance under consideration.

#### Congreso’s Action

Congreso is participating in a statewide effort called “the Hazleton Area Latino Taskforce” to defend the rights of immigrants in Pennsylvania and around the country.

## English-Only Legislation

### Summary

The Pennsylvania House adopted English only legislation last week couched through amendments to an insurance bill, HB 1959. The amendment was adopted 122-60. This legislation must now be considered by the PA Senate (and has been drawn up as SB 810), when they return from summer recess in September. The measure would require both the state and local governments to conduct business and use official documents written only in English.

[http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/states/pennsylvania/counties/bucks\\_county/14925229.htm](http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/states/pennsylvania/counties/bucks_county/14925229.htm)

### Congreso's Position

Congreso advocates for fair and reasonable access to government services. Many immigrants new to the United States do not speak or read English fluently. Providing written documents in languages that people understand provides an opportunity for everyone to participate fully in government and participate in the services afforded to eligible recipients. Congreso values freedom of expression but strongly disagrees with individuals who do not support diversity or multilingualism given the history of our country. Individuals who choose to express their viewpoint against diversity and multilingualism send a message that Pennsylvania is not a multi-cultural state, and is not a welcoming place to international visitors or potential residents.

### Congreso's Action

- Congreso led the charge in writing a press statement with the Anti-Defamation League, GPUAC, People's Emergency Center and the Urban League on an English-only issue: the sign at the Geno's Steaks establishment that states that "This is America. When Ordering, Speak English". This statement and other English-only movements are detracting from the national focus on the comprehensive immigration reform debate.
- Congreso encourages calling State Senators during the recess and when they convene in September to advocate for multilingualism. <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm>

## HB 2760 & 2761

### Summary

Several anti-immigrant measures are appearing in the Pennsylvania legislature. Last week, Representative Metcalfe introduced HB 2760, which would make it a third degree felony to knowingly employ an undocumented immigrant, and authorize district attorney's in Pennsylvania to investigate and prosecute violations. On Monday, June 19, 2006, the Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee began considering HB 2760. *According to the General Assembly's Session information, no movement on this bill has been seen since. It will more than likely pick-up again when the Assembly convenes in September.* Federal immigration law preempts any state or local government from imposing civil or criminal sanctions, exactly what House Bill No. 2760 proposes to do. Representative Metcalfe is also expected to introduce another bill which would deny any non-emergency public benefit to illegal immigrants. Another anti-immigration measure is a proposal to ban illegal immigrants from living in Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

HB 2761, called "the Protection of Public Benefits Act" is a bill that would disallow state government from providing welfare, unemployment benefits, education or others government services to undocumented residents unless such services are associated with emergency medical care or expenses related to law enforcement, prosecution or incarceration. As it stands, undocumented immigrants in Pennsylvania are already denied most public benefits (i.e. cash assistance, food stamps, subsidized housing and child care, disability benefits, etc), so the validity and necessity of this bill are in question.

### Congreso's Position

Congreso agrees with PICC that such PA legislation is not legally enforceable, thus consideration of this bill is a diversion of energy that could be expended on other issues like our state budget. Enactment of such a bill would likely subject the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to unnecessary litigation by affected employers. It is a waste of taxpayers' money to defend against legislation that is clearly prohibited by federal law. We are working on employment verification on the federal level.

### Congreso's Action

- The Pennsylvania Welfare Coalition, of which Congreso is a part, has sent a letter to the House Health and Human Services Committee, questioning the necessity and validity of HB 2761.
- Please take immediate action by calling or faxing House Representatives at <http://www.house.state.pa.us/index.cfm>.
- Contact the Speaker of the House, the Honorable John Perzel at 717-787-2016.
- Contact the Majority Leader, the Honorable Samuel Smith at 717-787-3845.

## Minimum Wage Increase – HB 257 & SB 1090

### Summary

Minimum wage legislation has passed both House and Senate!! The final passage will be signed by Governor Rendell this coming Sunday, July 9, in Philadelphia. Although he has publicly stated that he is disappointed that the legislation has been somewhat altered to limit the increase to all Pennsylvanians, it has been a long-standing issue that he has advocated for while in office.

The increase will be to \$6.25 on Jan. 1, 2007 and \$7.15 on July 1, 2007. For workers in companies of less than 10 employees the increase will be to \$5.65 on Jan. 1, 2007; \$6.65 on July 1, 2007 and \$7.15 July 1, 2007.

Once approved, the minimum wage we will be the 21<sup>st</sup> state in the US to raise the wage. NY, NJ, DE, and MD and 16 other states have already passed minimum wage increases. Two-thirds of workers earning the minimum wage are women. 7% of working Pennsylvanians earn this wage.

The Center for Economic and Policy Research highlights how the Federal Minimum Wage (\$5.15) is at its lowest level in 50 years, when adjusted for inflation:

[http://www.cepr.net/pressreleases/2006\\_06\\_19\\_graph.htm](http://www.cepr.net/pressreleases/2006_06_19_graph.htm)

### Congreso's Position

We support the measure as it will assist many families (Latinos) and adults to spiral out of poverty and reach a more livable wage. The current minimum wage 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

- Governor Rendell's office called Congreso, inviting us to attend the Governor's signing of the legislation.
- Congreso is part of the "Raise the Minimum Wage Coalition", led by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project (PUP). PUP did an exemplary job of uniting the coalition and advocating for this increase. Many thanks to all coalition members for a hard-earned victory.

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## State Budget

### Summary

Pennsylvania passed a state budget in the early hours of July 3, 2006. The \$26.1 Billion budget reflects a 5.8% increase, largely due to a \$850 Million surplus the state had from last fiscal year. The areas receiving the largest increases are education and healthcare. Basic education will see a 5.9% increase, State-owned universities 5%, Libraries 23%, State police 19.4%, Mass transit 2% and Subsidized child care a 34% increase. With this success behind them (to date, NJ has yet to pass their budget for the new year), lawmakers are heading to their respective homes for the summer recess. Time will tell how these increases will assist community-based organizations in the

areas of youth development, crime reduction, adult literacy, and assisting TANF recipients to abide by the new work requirement regulations.

### **Congreso's Position**

Congreso supports a budget that strengthens children and families, improves quality and access in child care, and supports school readiness and effective public education.

### **Congreso's Action**

- Thank your State Representatives [http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member\\_information/representatives\\_alpha.cfm](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/representatives_alpha.cfm) and Senators [http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member\\_information/senemail.cfm](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/senemail.cfm) for making the passage of a sound budget a priority for the coming fiscal year. We are happy to see that they have prioritized children and families knowing they need more, not less, support.

## **Marriage Amendment & Domestic Violence**

### **Summary**

The PA Anti-Marriage Amendment (HB 2381) was approved by the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives on June 6, 2006 by a vote of 136-61. On Wednesday, June 21st, the State Senate passed an amended version of the bill that prohibits only same-sex marriages - removing the wording that would have prohibited civil unions or domestic partnerships. The Senate Vote was 38-12. The House and Senate passed different versions of the Bill, so the Anti-Marriage amendment must return to the State House and the State House must vote on whether to concur with the changes made by the State Senate. It is anticipated that it will continue through the approval process when The General Assembly reconvenes in September.

This amendment potentially takes away basic, existing legal protections and benefits for unmarried gay or straight persons. In other states, as soon as similar amendments have passed, they have been used to take away health insurance or even protections against domestic violence. This amendment would constitutionally limit marriage to one woman and one man and would prohibit the Commonwealth and its subdivisions from recognizing a legal status "substantially equivalent" to marriage. In its discriminatory efforts to prohibit same sex marriages and legal unions comparable to marriage, HB 2381 also places Pennsylvania's Protection from Abuse (PFA) Act in jeopardy.

### **Congreso's Position**

Congreso supports the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence in its efforts to protect victims of domestic abuse. Supporters of HB 2381 have been successful in convincing many legislators that Pennsylvania's PFA Act will not be affected by the proposed amendment. House members need to realize that this legislative proposal will hurt unmarried victims of domestic violence. Some households are made up of a couple that is not legally married. If one of the partners in that couple is violated, under this act, they would not be protected under domestic violence legislation. The legislation, as written, would only protect married couples of one man and one woman.

### **Congreso's Action**

- Congreso's own Julie Cousler-Emig, Vice President of Health Promotion & Wellness, wrote on behalf of the Philadelphia Domestic Violence Collaborative and was quoted on the Phillies website June 29, 2006. Surrounding the Brett Myers domestic violence issue, she was quoted as saying "We would like to see the Phillies take us up on our offer to join us in an anti-domestic violence complaint. This is really a chance for them to right some wrongs."
- Call your State Senator and/or Representative <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm> and urge her/him to reconsider supporting the Marriage Protection Amendment.

**Immigration Reform – S. 2611/2612, S. 2454 & H. 4437**

**Summary**

Movement on passing legislation for immigration reform did not pass through before the summer recess. The focus on this issue throughout the summer will come through the form of public hearings around the country. A public hearing, convened by the Senate Judiciary Committee, occurred in Philadelphia July 5<sup>th</sup> at the National Constitution Center. Continued negotiation between both Chambers will be possible when they reconvene in September. If Congress does not act this calendar year, the House and the Senate will have to begin anew in 2007 (with potentially, newly elected legislators) should lawmakers want to pursue immigration changes.

Highlights from Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>'s public hearing include:

Speakers

*Mayor Bloomberg, New York City:* There are over 500,000 undocumented workers in New York City, and taking them out of the city would be devastating to the economy, especially in terms of restaurant workers, hotel employees and taxi cab drivers.

*Mayor Barletta, Hazelton, PA:* He is sending his city ordinance, entitled “Illegal Immigrant Relief Act”, as an example for other cities around the country. This ordinance will criminalize landlords and employers for providing assistance to undocumented residents in Hazelton.

*Commissioner Johnson, Philadelphia Police:* Less than 1% of homicides in Philadelphia are perpetrated by undocumented residents.

*Representative Hershey (R-Chester):* There exists an absolute reliance on immigrants for farm work in PA, and agriculture is the largest industry in our state. The issue of status should be handled by federal officials; not by employers.

*Rev. Luis Cortes, Esperanza, USA:* 8 out of the 12 million undocumented residents in the US are Latino. Many of them are of families with mixed-status. 3 million children, who are citizens, would be directly affected if their family members were made to leave the country. It's a family values issue.

*Senator Specter (R-PA):* He sees the issue as a bicameral responsibility (both a responsibility of the House and of the Senate). And as witnessed by the presence of Senator Kennedy as the 2<sup>nd</sup> convener of the public hearing in Philadelphia, it's also a bipartisan responsibility. Overwhelmingly, the consensus of the speakers at the hearing was the need to explore solutions to have immigrant workers come to the US to work legally in industries where there are large gaps of labor: agriculture and service industries being the most prevalent.

S. 2611, the immigration bill passed by the Senate, will go into conference committee with H.R. 4437, the House immigration bill when the Congress resumes in September.

**The Senate's Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill:**

Highlights

The bill recognizes the value of the work of our undocumented population and provides many more legal opportunities for family unification and for immigrants coming here to work.

- Legalization program: An estimated 8 to 8.5 million undocumented immigrants will be able to come out of the shadows and be put on a path to permanent residence.
- AgJOBS included: A million undocumented agricultural workers would be put on a path to permanent residence through provisions targeted to these workers.
- DREAM included: Undocumented immigrant students will be put on a path to citizenship and so will be able to continue on to college along with their classmates.
- Significant increase in family visas: The family-based immigration system will be updated to speed family unification. It is expected to clear the backlog for family unification in approximately six years.
- Significant increase in employment visas: Employment-based visas are more than doubled to more realistically allow immigrants to come legally in the future to work.

- A new temporary worker program: The bill provides temporary visas to allow 200,000 persons to come legally each year and take jobs that are not being filled by American workers. This program includes worker protections, gives workers the ability to change employers, and provides a path to permanent residence for those who want to stay.

*(The various legalization provisions and provisions for future flow may apply to the same individuals, so the above numbers cannot be added together, because the total would include some double-counting.)*

### Lowlights

The bill contains many enforcement provisions that are symbolic, mean-spirited, unworkable, and will do little to make our country secure or our immigration system orderly.

- Some undocumented ineligible for legalization or unlikely to come forward: An estimated 2.5 million to 3 million undocumented immigrants will not be eligible to legalize or may be afraid to come forward because they arrived after the bill's cutoff date, or because certain provision in the law will make it risky for some undocumented immigrants to reveal themselves.
- Language hurdle to legalization: Undocumented immigrants who are legalizing will have to meet the same requirements for English and Civics knowledge as someone who is applying for citizenship.
- Flooding of FBI lookout list with non-criminal immigrant names: The bill would require that information on immigrants who are confirmed to be out of status be put in the National Crime Information Center database. This database is used by local police to find wanted criminals and the bill will flood the database with hundreds of thousands of names of immigrants who have not committed a criminal act.
- Punishment out of proportion to crime: the bill contains a number of provisions that will trip up immigrants even if they commit only minor offenses and expose them to indefinite detention or permanent exile from their families and adopted country.
- Wall and National Guard on the border: The bill calls for at least 370 miles of fence on the U.S.-Mexico border, and codifies the President's request to put National Guard troops in border regions in support roles for border enforcement officials.
- Reduced access to justice: A number of provisions in the bill will reduce the ability of immigrants to have their day in court when subject to a bad government decision including arbitrary or indefinite detention.
- Put asylum seekers in harms way: The bill would subject asylum seekers to prosecution if they use false documents as their last resort to gain entry into the U.S. as they are fleeing persecution as well as summarily return them to face further persecution without fair judicial process. [check with Shoba as this may be in the managers amendment]
- Undermine the ability of government agencies to communicate with immigrants: A provision added to the bill making English the national language will make it more difficult for the federal government to effectively communicate critical information ; and
- Undermine Public Safety: Having state and local police enforce complicated immigration laws would discourage immigrants from coming forward to report crimes whether they are the victim or a witness.
- Penalize legalizing immigrants paying back taxes: A last-minute amendment to the bill creates significant hardship for many legalizing immigrants by denying them access to a number of tax credits -- including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) -- for the years prior to 2006. Immigrants who have to pay past tax obligations as part of the legalization process could face prohibitively high tax payments, potentially putting legalization out of their reach.

### **Congreso's Position**

Congreso opposes Anti-immigrant enforcement-only proposals like Sensenbrenner-King (HR 4437) and advocates that the final bill for comprehensive immigration reform includes:

- A means for the 12 million undocumented to earn legal status and citizenship
- A legal way for new workers to work in the United States
- A removal of delays that keep family members apart for years

### Congreso Civic Engagement Update – 07.05.06

- Targeted and effective enforcement that respects humanness and liberty of expression
- Discouragement of local police enforcement of federal immigration laws
- Inclusion of due process, and
- Exclusion of indefinite detention.
- We must ensure protection for immigrant victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or trafficking. The current bill will cut these victims off from immigration relief created by the Violence Against Women Act 12 years ago.

### Congreso's Action

- Continue discussions on the issue throughout the summer, while the House and Senate are on recess. Call local offices and continue to advocate for movement and attention to comprehensive reform. (See the above highlights and lowlights of proposed legislation). Senator Specter 215-597-7200, Senator Santorum 215-864-6900 and your House representative <http://www.house.gov/>.
- Congreso has sent Senator Specter a letter of thanks for his leadership in ushering comprehensive reform forward.
- We recognized National Lobbying Day for Immigration Reform on Wednesday, May 17 by mobilizing our staff to call, write, or visit our local offices for our US Senators and US Representatives.
- We gathered approximately 100 staff and clients on May 1's "A Day Without an Immigrant", calling everyone to action by dedicating their time to doing at least one thing to help an immigrant.
- We also participated in the National Day of Action on Immigrants Rights on April 10, with approximately 25 staff and clients.

### News-worthy

1. **REGISTER TO VOTE!!** Congreso is involved as the Pennsylvania representative to National Council of La Raza's "Latino Empowerment & Advocacy Project", and we have the goal of registering **1,000 voters** in time for the November elections. If you, your family members or clients have changed names, addresses or haven't voted in a while, you need to register again. If you haven't registered before, you need to do so. Your voice matters, and we have important elections in Pennsylvania this year. Come to Kristin Shipler, Director of Civic Engagement, to fill out your registration form. Contact her at [shiplerk@congreso.net](mailto:shiplerk@congreso.net) or at 215.763.8870 x1505.
2. The Children's Defense Fund recently published a report on gun violence called: **Protect Children, Not Guns** [http://www.childrensdefense.org/gunrpt\\_revised06.pdf](http://www.childrensdefense.org/gunrpt_revised06.pdf) One highlight: more children and teens died as a result of gun violence in 2003 than the number of American fighting men and women killed in hostile action in Iraq from 2003 to April 2006.
3. The Center for Law and Social Policy and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities have published an important resources entitled: **Implementing the TANF Changes in the Deficit Reduction Act: "Win-Win" Solutions for Families and States** found at <http://www.clasp.org/publications/tanfguide.pdf> This will assist CBOs as they consider how to change their TANF programs in response to the TANF changes in the Deficit Reduction Act.
4. Philadelphia Safe & Sound's 2006 Philadelphia Report Card reports on the **well-being of our city's children**: <http://www.philasafesound.org/>
5. PathwaysPA has released the 5th Edition of their **Self-Sufficiency Standard** which can be used as a tool for assessing wage adequacy among low-wage, working families in Pennsylvania. See the full report at [http://pathwayspa.org/policy/FINAL\\_PA-2006\\_full%20report5-15-06.pdf](http://pathwayspa.org/policy/FINAL_PA-2006_full%20report5-15-06.pdf). Service providers can use this report Service providers can use the Budget Worksheet with clients to help them take the following steps toward building self-sufficiency: 1) Assess present financial status; 2) Determine preliminary eligibility for work supports (food stamps, child care subsidies, EITC, Medical Assistance, CHIP, etc.); 3) Link to COMPASS, Pennsylvania's online benefits gateway; 4) Develop a realistic family spending and savings plan; and 5) Begin to identify a pathway toward self-sufficiency through education and training.
6. To give comment to the national, **public debate on Federal Healthcare**, go to [www.citizenshealthcare.gov](http://www.citizenshealthcare.gov). They are seeking input on the interim recommendations that were developed based on healthcare forums that were held around the country.

7. The Department of Health & Human Services has issued **guidelines** for states to implement a new requirement, effective July 1, that persons applying for **Medicaid** actually document their citizenship (rather than checking off a box that verifies they are citizens). The new documentation requirement is mandated by Section 6036 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) and is intended to ensure that Medicaid beneficiaries are citizens without imposing undue burdens on them or the states. [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicaidEligibility/05\\_ProofofCitizenship.asp#TopOfPa](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicaidEligibility/05_ProofofCitizenship.asp#TopOfPa) ***It is important to note that non-citizens still have the same rights to Medicaid and will follow the same eligibility rules that were in place prior to passage of this law. Non-citizens should NOT be denied Medicaid based on failure to produce proof of citizenship.*** As of July 1, the same may be required of children in foster care.
8. Read NCLR's new 20 Frequently Asked Questions about **Hispanics in the US**: [http://www.nclr.org/files/1466\\_file\\_FreqAskedQuests\\_6\\_06\\_FNL.pdf](http://www.nclr.org/files/1466_file_FreqAskedQuests_6_06_FNL.pdf)
9. The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and Allstate are once again recognizing Hispanic youth who make a difference in their communities with the second **Líderes de Hoy national essay contest**. Twelve winners will be chosen this year – six from high school and six from college. One grand-prize winner from each age group will receive a \$10,000 scholarship for educational expenses. The ten remaining students will each receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Deadline is July 28!! <http://lideres.nclr.org>
10. The Pennsylvania legislature has passed a bill to deliver \$ 1 billion in **property tax cuts** to the people of Pennsylvania — the largest local tax cut in the commonwealth's history. This will especially benefit the elderly. <http://www.governor.state.pa.us/governor/cwp/view.asp?a=3&Q=445952>

## Important Links

### GOVERNMENT

- US Senator Specter <http://specter.senate.gov/>
- US Senator Santorum <http://santorum.senate.gov/public/>
- 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>

### NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- National Council of La Raza (Latino advocacy) [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)
- National Immigration Forum (national immigration issues) <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>
- Committee of Seventy (electoral information) [www.seventy.org](http://www.seventy.org)
- Nationalities Service Center (immigration services) <http://www.nationalitiesservice.org/>
- We Are America Alliance (immigration reform) [www.weareamericaalliance.org](http://www.weareamericaalliance.org)