

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

State-level ImmigrationPg. 2
 Congreso testified July 27th. See the attached testimony for details.

Voting Rights ActPg. 6
 President Bush reauthorized the legislation that protects minority and Limited English Proficient voters!

Federal Minimum WagePg. 7
 Take action to keep an increase of the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 separate from estate tax cuts.

Federal BudgetPg. 9
 The Senate Appropriations Committee has passed its version of the Labor-HHS-Education bill.

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Important Dates

- **July - September, 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 10, 2006. http://www.cccaction.org/cccaction/waa_index.html for more information. We are part of a non-partisan "Latino Empowerment and Advocacy Project", led by the National Council of La Raza. The project involves 17 other Latino organizations around the country. If you want to become involved, email shiplerk@congreso.net or call Kristin at 215.763.8870 x1505.
- **September 7, 2006**
Large mobilization and rally for immigration reform, in Washington DC – more details to come.
- **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. 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 BOLDED & IN GREEN.

LOCAL LEVEL- Current Issues

None for this issue.

STATE LEVEL – Current Issues

State-level Immigration

Immigration Hearings in PA this summer

Yesterday's hearing in Western Pennsylvania concluded a series of four public hearings on State Immigration Reform. Testimonies, etc. can be found on the House Republican Policy Committee's website at www.pagoppolicy.com.

The hearings examined the impact of “illegal immigration” on Pennsylvania. The Committee is chaired by Mario J. Civera, Jr. (R-Delaware). **Congreso testified on July 27, 2006, and a copy of our testimony will be sent with this update. Recommendations by the committee will be considered by the House in the fall. The hearings were quite polarized with strong sentiment on both sides of the issue. Congreso testified from a pro-immigrant stance, highlighting the importance of remembering that it is the system that is broken, not the people who contribute economically and culturally to this state. Other areas of our testimony focused on the effect that the proposed legislation and ensuing sentiment have discrimination against the broader Latino community and the damage that English-only legislation would have on our community as well.**

In response to the lack of action on the federal level, the PA House of Representatives have introduced multiple pieces of legislation:

1. *House Resolution no. 799*
 - Calls on the President and Congress to “secure all borders of this nation to protect American citizens from the dangers of unlawful invasion and illegal immigration;”
2. *House Bill no. 2760*
 - Makes it a 3rd degree felony to knowingly or intentionally employ an “illegal alien”
 - Empowers the Attorney General to investigate and enforce.
 - Defines “illegal alien:” as “a non-citizen of the United States who is violating Federal immigration laws and is providing compensated labor within this Commonwealth”.
3. *House Bill no. 2761 - Public benefits*
 - Provides that “no public benefits shall be expended on, and no public benefit shall be provided to, any illegal alien” with exceptions for:
 1. Emergency medical care
 2. Law enforcement, prosecution, incarceration and related expenses
4. *House Bill no. 2819*
 - Amends tax reform code
 - Provides that no wages or remuneration for labor services of \$600 or more per year may be claimed and allowed as a deductible business expenses for state income tax purposes unless the individual is an authorized employee (regardless of whether 1099d or not)
 - Exceptions – business exempt from employment verification; person hired prior to Jan. 1 2008; person not directly compensating/employing the individual; wages paid to a person who holds and presents a valid DL or ID
5. *House Bill no. 2820 –a multi-subject bill*
 - Requires public employers to register and participate in “the Federal work authorization program to verify information of all new employees”

Congreso Civic Engagement Update – 08.04.06

- Public employers can't contract with contractors who do not use the "Federal work authorization program" – same as GA bill
 - Prohibits contractors and subcontractors with state from contracting with anyone who does not register and participate in EVS program
 - Authorizes PA state police to enter into a MOU with DOJ/DHS to engage in enforcement of immigration law
 - Requires determination of nationality of person charged with felony or DUI – if a foreign national, a determination of lawful status in US is to be made
 - Regulates provision of immigration assistance
 - Requires state and local agencies to verify lawful presence of any one 18 and over who has applied for state or local public benefits (as defined in section 411 of the PRWORA). Certain exceptions are provided
6. *House Bill no. 1314* (from 2005 session)
- Provides that "an employer shall not employ any alien who is not authorized to be employed under the provisions of relevant Federal law"
 - Gives district attorneys and attorney general power to investigate and enforce.
7. *HB 1959: English-Only Legislation*
- The Pennsylvania House adopted English only legislation at the end of June 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 is being promoted as a way for both the state and local governments to conduct business and use official documents written only in English (which therefore saves on printing costs).
- http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/states/pennsylvania/counties/bucks_county/14925229.htm

Congreso's Position

Congreso understands the State's frustration, in terms of the stalled immigration reform on the federal level. Much of immigration law is determined at the federal level, though; hence, we need to continue to press for comprehensive reform within our federal government.

In reference to HB 1959, 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.

In reference to HB 2761, 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

- **Congreso thanks Roberto Santiago of El Concilio and all others who supported us at the hearing on July 27th at the National Constitution Center.**
- **Congreso encourages calling State Senators during the recess and when they convene in September to advocate for immigrant & Latino rights for all residents of Pennsylvania.**
<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm>

- **Consider doing the same by calling or faxing House Representatives at their home offices at <http://www.house.state.pa.us/index.cfm> .**
- 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.
- 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.

Hazleton, PA

Summary

From the Pennsylvania Immigration & Citizenship Coalition (PICC): Congressional Research Service, a non partisan independent research group, released a study finding that many aspects of the Hazleton law are unenforceable and that the ordinance is unlikely to survive court challenge. They believe that at least part of the ordinance is pre-empted by federal law and that it is likely to lead to discrimination that violates federal employment and housing laws.

U.S. Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-PA) whose district includes Hazleton, requested that the Congressional Research Service study the Hazleton ordinance. Mayor Barletta ran against Kanjorski for the seat in 2002. Kanjorski was one of two PA Democrats to vote for HR 4437 (federal enforcement-only immigration bill) December 2005.

The Mayor of Hazleton, PA, Lou Barletta and the Hazleton City Council passed a city ordinance July 13, 2006 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. To see the city's website, which houses Barletta's reaction to July 13 and the final ordinance, see http://www.hazletoncity.org/home_frameset.htm.

A very similar measure, which excluded English-only legislation passed unanimously last week by the City Council of Riverside, NJ. Other similar measures are being considered in PA in the towns of Allentown, Mt. Pocono, Shenandoah, and Hazle Township. Many pro-immigrant groups, such as the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund are challenging these measures, stating that they infringe on the exclusive federal power over immigration.

Congreso's Position

Congreso supports the rights of undocumented workers and residents and, hence, opposes the provisions laid out in city ordinance. Additionally, this ordinance is causing fear and polarization of the Latino community in general. Many Latinos reside and work in the town legally and have added to the social and economic vibrancy of Hazleton. Approaching legislation from an anti-immigrant, criminal point of view damages the community as a whole and is not a solution to immigration reform.

Congreso's Action

- **Congreso supports PICC in their recommendation to call Representative Kanjorski at one of his district offices: Mount Pocono (570) 895-4176, Scranton (570) 496-1011, Wilkes-Barre (570) 825-2200. If you live in his district make sure to tell him you are a constituent.**
 - **Thank him for his efforts to discredit the Hazleton approach**
 - **Tell him that the Hazleton ordinance and similar proposals demonstrate the need for comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to legal status.**

- **Express your disappointment in his December vote for HR 4437 and ask him to support a more comprehensive approach in the future.**
 - Congreso attended the city council meeting (although was not permitted in due to space capacity), alongside El Concilio, Eastern North Philadelphia Youth Services Coalition composed of the leadership of the 18 primary Eastern North Philadelphia non profit organizations and the Dominican Cultural Association. Congreso was able to share written testimony from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), supporting the immigrant community. MALDEF is now coordinating with the National Council of La Raza to track similar efforts around the country.
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FEDERAL LEVEL Current Issues

Voting Rights Act – HR 9

Summary

SUCCESS!! The Voting Right Act was signed by President Bush last week.

The Voting Rights Act was put forward unanimously on July 20, 2006 by the Senate Judiciary Committee (as S2703), led by Senator Arlen Specter. Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) and Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH), led the charge in bringing H.R. 9 to the floor. The Voting Right Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006 (“VRARA”) ensures full and fair access to the voting process for all citizens. The VRARA renews and restores key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This piece of legislation has served as a tool to greatly diminish electoral discrimination against Latinos and other ethnic and racial minorities. Section 5 of the VRARA prohibits intentionally discriminatory voting practices and voting changes preventing minority voters from electing their chosen candidates. Renewal of Sections 4(f)4 and 203 of the Voting Rights Act made certain that jurisdictions with large limited English proficient communities provide language assistance to Latino, Asian American, American Indian or Alaska Native citizens throughout the voting and registration process.

Federal Minimum Wage - HR 5970

Summary

Last night, before closing for the August recess, the US Senate voted down (56-42) the combined Minimum Wage/Estate Tax Cut bill that passed the House. 60 votes were need to pass the measure. Both PA Senators, Specter and Santorum, voted in favor of the legislation, while our neighboring Senators from DE and NJ voted against it. It will be taken up again by the Senate in September.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted 230 to 180 July 29, 2006 on a bill that makes significant cuts in the estate tax while raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 over 3 years. 11 of Pennsylvania's Representatives voted. Representation was divided on a partisan basis as six Pennsylvania Republican Representatives voted in favor for the bill and five PA Democrats voted against it. Note that this increase is \$.10 more than the recent increase passed into law in Pennsylvania. Many see it as an electoral ploy since conservatives can lay claim to an increase in the minimum wage at the same time as potentially cutting hundreds of billions of dollars that go toward social service programs.

Today's Headline in the Philadelphia Inquirer: <http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/15195530.htm>

The Coalition on Human Needs reported that "HR 5970, The Estate Tax and Extension of Tax Relief Act of 2006, will deepen the deficit by at least three-quarters of a trillion dollars over its first full decade (2012-2021) through its estate tax cut. Even now, we are fighting cuts in health care, education, job training, Head Start, and so many other services that low-income people depend upon. Congressional leaders say there's no money to avoid cuts in these services, but will borrow money to pay multi-billions to multimillionaires, leading to worse service cuts in the future. The House estate tax bill will benefit only 8,200 families, who will get \$1.4 million each, on average, in 2011. \$31,600: the amount Congress has raised its own salary in nine separate increases since 1997. \$0: the amount Congress has raised the minimum wage since the last increase in 1997."

The Pennsylvania minimum wage increase was signed by Governor Rendell on July 9, 2006. The increase will be from \$5.15 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.

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

Congreso's Position

Congreso supports an increase in the federal minimum wage, even when the minimum wage in our state has just increased. The measure will assist many families (Latinos) and adults all over the country to spiral out of poverty and reach a more livable wage. The current minimum wage of \$5.15 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 supports voting NO on HR 5970, as this bill shamefully ties a long-overdue increase in the minimum wage to enriching multimillionaire heirs by hundreds of billions of dollars. We want Congress to, instead, simply raise the minimum wage to \$7.25. Call Senator Specter 215-597-7200 and Senator Santorum 215-864-6900 to change their votes to no on HR 5970 in September.
- Our own State Senator, Christine Tartaglione, fought for 6 years to have the PA legislation passed. Congreso sent her an official thank you letter, and we suggest that you thank her as well.
http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/senate_bio.cfm?districtnumber=2

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

Summary

The immigration debate is seen as an electoral & political issue this summer, more than movement around actually trying to find solutions to the system that many view as being broken. Politicians and news sources note that this is being used as an election issue as a way to distract people from the real challenges that are facing our country today. Whether candidates staunchly stand for or against the immigration issue, they are building their constituent bases based on this ‘hot’ federal issue. Using this hot button and/or ‘wedge’ issue is not restricted to federal government. State governments have seen heightened activity on this issue this summer as well.

As a way to gather support for H4437, the House’s “enforcement only” approach, various House committees are holding hearings on the Senate bill (S2611) for the rest of the summer.

http://www.cirnow.org/content/en/hearings_062926.htm shows the proposed schedule. None are proposed for Pennsylvania.

Another attempt to solving the immigration debate centers on a compromise piece of legislation by two members of Congress, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN). The Pence-Hutchison compromise starts by enacting border enforcement only (new border fences, additional enforcement personnel and bigger detention facilities) for the first two years and then would allow NAFTA & CAFTA residents only to apply for a two year visa. They would have to work here for 17 years through multiple visas, however, to be eligible for U.S. citizenship.

A public hearing, convened by the Senate Judiciary Committee, occurred in Philadelphia July 5th 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.

Congreso’s Position

Congreso opposes Anti-immigrant enforcement-only proposals like Sensenbrenner-King (HR 4437) and the Pence-Hutchison compromise because we advocate 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
- 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

- **Two very important federal Pennsylvania legislators that are key to this issue are Republican Senator Specter (215-597-7200 in Phila and 202-224-4254) and Representative Chaka Fattah (D-Phila) (215-387-6404 in Phila and 202-225-4001 in DC), as they sit on their respective Appropriations Committees. Confirm, by calling their offices, that they also support comprehensive reform.**
- **Continue discussions on the issue throughout the summer, while the House and Senate are on recess. Join the National White Ribbon Campaign for Dialogue, as Congreso has, to promote constructive dialogue on immigration reform: <http://whiteribbon.org/>**

Federal Budget

Summary

The Labor-HHS-Education Senate Appropriations Subcommittee approved their spending bill for fiscal year 2007 yesterday. The \$605.6 billion spending bill includes \$142.8 billion in discretionary funding, which has a direct effect on social service programs. This amount is \$5 billion more than the President had proposed, and about \$900 million more than the amount approved by the House Appropriations Committee. It is \$2 billion less than the amount specified in a successful amendment to the Senate budget resolution, approved by the full Senate in March. See <http://appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/LaborHPRSub07.mht> for more information.

Highlights & Lowlights

- **The Senate increased funds for Responsible Reintegration of Youthful Offenders, to \$60 million, from \$49.1 million in FY 2006. The House zeroed out this program.**
- **The Senate Committee was harder than the House on Adult Training under the Workforce Investment Act, providing only \$800 million, or a 15 percent cut below inflation-adjusted FY 2005 levels. The House provided \$854 million (9 percent below FY 2005). This includes a 7.5 percent cut (\$64 million) to adult education.**
- **The Senate Committee kept funding for The Maternal and Child Health Block Grant at the FY 2006 level of \$693 million (9 percent below FY 2005, counting inflation), even lower than the \$700 million in the House bill.**
- **In the Senate, The Ryan White AIDS program was increased by about \$101 million over FY 2006 levels (to \$2.139 billion), but it still falls 2 percent below inflation-adjusted FY 2005 levels. The House bill was worse, cut 4 percent below FY 2005 levels.**
- **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) is funded at \$1.98 billion, plus \$181 million in contingency funds, the same as the House proposal. An additional \$1 billion funded in FY 2006 because of the spike in energy prices is eliminated, despite the continued soaring cost of energy.**

See the Coalition on Human Needs at <http://www.chn.org/humanneeds/060725a.html> for more details.

Most analysts are predicting that the bill will not go to the Senate floor until the fall. Within this timeframe, it could potentially lead to a continuing resolution, especially if final agreement with the House does not occur before October 1.

On June 7, the House Appropriations Committee panel approved the FY 2007 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill (HR5647) that we reported on May 23, 2006. The bill provides \$141.9 billion in discretionary (appropriated) funding for a variety of domestic social service programs. This is a .6% increase over the \$141.1 billion provided in FY 2006, and it's insufficient to keep pace with inflation.

Congreso's Position

Congreso opposes domestic social service reductions to the budget.

Congreso's Action

- Congreso signed on to a letter to our US Senators against S3521, the "Stop Over Spending" Bill. The bill is designed to impose rigid spending caps and other budget changes on domestic spending in the areas mostly funded through the Labor-HHS-Education bill - health care, education, community development, social services, etc)
- Call Senator Specter at 202-224-4254 or 215-597-7200 to thank him for advocating for domestic spending! Call Senator Santorum to ask for the same.
- Encourage your US Representative to keep discretionary funding above inflation. Find your Representative at www.house.gov.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Summary

The Philadelphia Inquirer highlighted the local impact of TANF reform in today's paper:

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/15193408.htm>

TANF was reauthorized for five years through the Deficit Reduction Act. There is a lot of movement on the federal and state level surrounding this reauthorization as these entities try to figure out the implementation of TANF. The reauthorization involves more federal regulation and less flexibility at the state level (which affects the Pennsylvania Maximizing Participation Program (MPP)). Education and training opportunities leading to job placement are coming into question as allowable activities. Other drawbacks include: limits of six weeks per year for counting substance abuse and mental health services as work participation; restrictions on counting programs such as ESL; and the limits of funding for childcare despite the increase in work participation rates. See above to note how these changes are coming at a time when the federal government is drastically cutting funding for many of the social programs needed to prepare welfare recipients for jobs.

States are required to reach a new level of 50% work participation rate, and the activities that fall within this percentage are more restrictive than in the past. Another point of contention is the barriers to employment that certain populations will face: those with addictions, mental health issues and/or disabilities. In 2004, most states fell short of the 50 percent mark. Pennsylvania's rate was 7 percent in 2004, the worst in the nation. Pennsylvania is now closer to 30%, but we have until October 1 to reach a 50% work participation level. This challenge is coupled with the difficulty in securing child care for most working families. The reauthorization document from the Department of Health & Human Services can be viewed by linking to:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/06-5743.pdf>

The House of Representatives have recently moved forward a bill entitled H.CON.RES.438 whose purpose is “expressing the sense of the Congress that continuation of the welfare reforms provided for in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 should remain a priority.” One of the co-sponsors of this bill is US Representative Melissa Hart (R-PA). On July 19, the bill was referred to the Senate.

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.

Congreso's Position

It is important that federal and state government focus on sustainable jobs and career paths as they determine what ‘qualifies’ as work participation. With a goal of the short-term fix of putting people into jobs, we can't lose sight of the longer-term goal of better preparing our community members for skills that enhance their opportunities in the job market.

Congreso's Action

Public comments on the regulations can be forwarded to the Dept of Health & Human Services until August 28, 2006. Congreso is supporting the Pennsylvania Welfare Coalition as they gather comments from advocates and service providers across the state. TANF is administered by the Office of Family Assistance under the Administration for Children and Families division of the US Department of Health & Human Services. Their website is:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/>

Newsorthy

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 or at 215.763.8870 x1505.
2. **Congreso is the lead convener for the Latino Juvenile Justice Network, which is an NCLR program designed to encourage the participation of Latino community-based organizations (CBOs) in juvenile justice reform issues, including but not limited to the following four “core areas”:** disproportionate minority contact (DMC); “adulthood” and “criminalization” of Latino youth, which contributes to differential treatment; anti-gang laws targeting Latino youth and their families; and efforts to increase funding for prevention and treatment programs and other alternatives to incarceration. A community forum conducted May 25, 2006 determined that Congreso’s LJNN will focus on the last core issue: evaluating Community-Based Alternatives to Incarceration. More information to come on how you can become involved.
3. **Gun Violence and Restricting Guns in Philadelphia – announcement from the Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) www.pccy.org:**
If a tree falls in the forest, and no one’s there to hear it, does it make a sound? *George Berkeley* Before another child falls to gunfire in Pennsylvania, will *you* make a sound? Tell your state legislators to limit gun purchases to one gun a month...and no more.
<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/index.cfm>
PCCY is planning a march to Harrisburg on this issue for September. Stay tuned for details.
4. **View the new Pew Hispanic Center’s 2006 National Survey of Latinos – The Immigration Debate: <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=68>. This report highlights the discrimination that all Latinos are feeling as a result of the negativity and divisiveness resulting from the immigration debate in the United States.**
5. 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#TopOfPage *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.*
6. 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

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
- 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
- Committee of Seventy (Philadelphia-based electoral information) www.seventy.org