



National Immigration Debate Blames Individual, Not System

Immigration Initiatives: Advancing a just approach to immigration reform

Who We Are

The Latino Policy Forum is the only organization in the Chicago area that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. The Forum strives to promote just immigration policies by conducting analysis to inform, influence and lead, all with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future for Illinois.



The Challenge

Not all Latinos are immigrants, and not all immigrants are Latino, but the terms *immigrant* and *Latino* have become nearly synonymous in the eyes of many Americans. While opinions on immigration—all passionate—run the gamut, it is clear that the US immigration system is broken and in need of urgent repair. But the national immigration debate focuses largely on security and not on economic realities or the plight of the millions of undocumented workers currently living in local communities. And bitter partisan divides in Congress makes dialog on real fixes to the system almost impossible, as evidenced by the devastating defeat of the DREAM Act in 2010, and the worrisome trend of independent states—like Arizona—taking matters into their own hands with controversial, divisive legislation.

Where We Are Headed

Despite the doom-and-gloom prognosis for immigration reform, there are still compelling reasons why it can and should happen. Research shows that reform would be a major stimulus to the US economy. By raising wages and increasing consumption—which, in turn, would create jobs and generate additional tax revenues—immigration reform could yield as much as \$1.5 trillion in gains over the next decade. With 2012 elections in sight, immigration will undoubtedly be a core issue for the many voters—particularly Latino voters—whose loved ones await decisive action.

Our Response

We tend to hold individuals—not systems—accountable for our current immigration quagmire. The Latino Policy Forum is working to ensure individuals living in the United States are recognized as valuable and contributing members of society with equal access to equity and prosperity, regardless of their country of origin. We are promoting a thoughtful approach to immigration reform through our Immigration *Acuerdo* (Accord) work group, and provide credible, consistent information through regular communications and federal policy analysis. We also seek to balance anti-Latino, anti-immigrant rhetoric in mainstream media through our Comment Corps volunteers, who post fact-based, truthful perspectives on immigration.

Learn More: To find out more about our work, visit our website at: www.latinopolicyforum.org.

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