



INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON
RACE & PUBLIC POLICY



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Laurie R. Glenn
Telephone: 773.252.8672 x301
Cell: 773.704.7246
E-mail: lrglenn@lrglenn.com

Alan Snider
Telephone: 773.252.8672
Cell: 630.965-5966
E-mail: asnider@lrglenn.com

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 22nd, 2008**

PRESS RELEASE

**AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINO LEADERS REACH OUT TO COMMUNITIES
TO BEGIN DIALOGUE ON IMMIGRATION**

Public participates in immigration symposium on national and local issues

Chicago—African American and Latino leaders meet tomorrow in Chicago at the first African American/Latino Immigration Symposium to open a joint dialogue for community members to discuss the effects of immigration on both communities. The Symposium was held at the University of Illinois at Chicago Forum and hosted by the organizations African Americans in Philanthropy, the Latino Policy Forum (formerly Latinos United), and the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy as well as Centers for New Horizons, Chicago Jobs With Justice, Chicago Jobs Council, Community Renewal Society, Durango Unido, Latino Organization of the Southwest (LOS), Little Village Community Development Corporation (LVDC) Metropolitan Group for Igniting Civilization, Inc. (MAGIC), National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC), Rooted Afrikans, and TARGET Area Development Corporation.

The Symposium was the opening discussion between the convening African American and Latino organizations on the issue of immigration. Inspired by the concept that dialogue leads to action, the organizations brought a diverse cross section of Latino and African American leaders from religious, human rights, labor and community-based organizations and active members of their respective communities to inform each other and craft recommendations to cope with the increasingly important role immigration will play in their lives, especially in the midst of the nation's presidential election.

"We hope this symposium will stimulate collaboration and help dissolve ethnic stereotypes that have been used to set Americans of different backgrounds apart from each other for far too long," said Steven Casey, Co-Member - Interim Executive Committee of Chicago African Americans in Philanthropy (CAAIP).

Featuring two panels of national and local public policy experts, the Symposium sought to identify concrete methods for increasing joint activities and decreasing the tension between the African American and Latino communities, which has been aggravated by the polarizing dynamics of the immigration debate. To do this, residents of the city of Chicago were invited to participate in discussions and provide recommendations to the sponsoring organizations to develop a plan of action.

“Immigration is polarizing the relationships between Latinos and African Americans and undermining the possibility of working on common agendas.” said Maricela Garcia, Executive Director of the Latino Policy Forum. “A dialogue between these two communities is urgent to clarify the widespread myths about immigration and to forge alliances based on issues of mutual interest.”

Panel Discussions Highlight Benefits of Collaborative Action on Immigration

African American and Latino Leaders Define and Discuss Key Issue in this Election Year

From regions as diverse as Mississippi, Chicago, and California, the African American/Latino Immigration Symposium featured national and regional discussion panels touching on issues of importance to both communities Illinois and across America. Immigration has already been a divisive issue in presidential primaries, and it’s sure to be one in the upcoming presidential election. African American and Latino leaders who shared their perspectives today included:

- **Steven Casey, Chicago African Americans in Philanthropy**
- **Maricela Garcia, Latino Policy Forum**
- **Jesus Garcia, Little Village Community Development Corporation**
- **Patricia Watkins, TARGET Area Development Corporation**
- **Oscar Chacón, National Alliance of Latin American & Caribbean Communities**
- **Eric Fleming, Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance**
- **Arnoldo Garcia, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights**
- **Gerald Lenoir, Black Alliance for Just Immigration**
- **Claudia Lucero, Durango Unido**
- **Bob Wordlaw, Chicago Jobs Council**
- **James Thindwa, Chicago Area Jobs With Justice**
- **John Betancur, UIC Institute for Research on Race**
- **African American and Latino youths**

“It is important for public policy makers to listen to their communities,” said Jesus “Chuy” Garcia, Board President of the Latino Policy Forum. “We have to be willing to attempt innovative ways of bridging the racial divide between African Americans and Latinos in order to work toward a common agenda.”

The Latino Policy Forum has a mission to build the power, influence and leadership of the Latino community through collective action to transform public policies that ensure the well being of our community and society as a whole. For more information, please contact Miguel Jimenez at 312.376.1766, or visit www.latinopolicyforum.org.

###