



phone 312-376-1766
fax 312-376-1760
web latinopolicyforum.org
180 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 1250
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Press Statement on Preserving Vital State Services

The powers in Springfield are on the verge of making disastrous cuts to vital services in this state: schools, universities, children, working people, seniors, people with disabilities. Cuts like this are devastating for all Illinoisans, but pack an especially hard punch for Illinois Latinos, one of the fastest-growing segments of the state.

Latino-serving organizations, which support a growing community that comprises 16 percent of the state population, have long been under-funded, receiving just 5.5 percent of all state grants in 2009, and 13 percent less in actual dollar amounts last year. Further cuts to already-shrinking lifelines must not be made unless strictly necessary.

Everyone understands that the state's financial crisis calls for reforms and spending restraint. But we must also insist that these measures be balanced and calm. It is a big mistake to cut just for its own sake, when the consequences of the cuts will be severe and long-lasting.

The House has estimated next year's revenues to be over a billion dollars less than the Senate's estimate. The Senate's estimate comes from a non-partisan forecasting agency that has an excellent track record. The House's estimate would necessitate over a billion dollars in unnecessary and harmful cuts. The Senate's forecast is responsible and should be used. There are other solid ideas for arranging the state's revenues to focus them to avoid damaging cuts. None of this is a tax increase.

Sylvia Puente
Executive Director
Latino Policy Forum