



HISPANIC  
EDUCATION  
COALITION



**National Hispanic Leadership Agenda**

February 27, 2015  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Joint NHLA and HEC Position on H.R. 5, the Student Success Act

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of 39 leading national Latino nonpartisan civil rights and advocacy organizations, and on behalf of the Hispanic Education Coalition (HEC), which unites 14 organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for the more than 54 million Latinos living in the United States and Puerto Rico, we write to urge you to vote against H.R. 5, the Student Success Act.

On January 9, 2015, HEC released its Latino Priorities for Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Today, NHLA endorses those principles through the newly established Campaign, Latinos United for Educational Opportunity. NHLA and HEC are both disturbed that H.R. 5 violates these principles by block granting Title III programs for English learners, removing performance targets for the academic achievement of Latinos and English learners, and removing accountability for the achievement and learning gains of Latinos and English learners.

The missions of HEC and NHLA call for unity among Hispanics nationwide to provide the Latino community with greater visibility and a stronger voice in our nation's affairs, including increasing educational excellence for Latinos. NHLA will closely monitor the vote on H.R. 5, and will include the vote on H.R. 5 in its scorecards evaluating members' support for the Latino community.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Adam Fernandez of MALDEF, at [afernandez@maldef.org](mailto:afernandez@maldef.org); Brenda Calderon of NCLR, at [bcalderon@nclr.org](mailto:bcalderon@nclr.org); or Serena Davila of HACU, at [serena.davila@hacu.net](mailto:serena.davila@hacu.net).

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Saenz  
MALDEF, President and  
General Counsel  
Co-Chair of HEC and Latinos  
United for Educational  
Opportunity

Eric Rodriguez  
NCLR, Vice President, Office  
of Research, Advocacy, and  
Legislation  
Co-chair of HEC

Antonio R. Flores  
HACU, President and CEO  
Co-Chair of the NHLA Education  
Committee

Attachment: Latino Priorities for Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization

**HEC Member Organizations:** Aspira; Cuban American National Council; Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; League of United Latin American Citizens; Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund; Migrant Legal Action Program Multicultural Education, Training & Advocacy; National Association for Bilingual Education; National Association for State Directors of Migrant Education; National Council for Community and Education Partnerships; National Council of La Raza; National Latino Children's Institute; National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association; and TESOL International Association.

**NHLA Member Organizations:** American G.I. Forum; ASPIRA Association; Avance Inc.; Casa de Esperanza; Cuban American National Council; Farmworker Justice; Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities; Hispanic Federation; Hispanic National Bar Association; Inter-University Program for Latino Research; Labor Council for Latin American Advancement; LatinoJustice PRLDEF; League of United Latin American Citizens; MANA, A National Latina Organization; Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund; National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities; National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives; National Association of Hispanic Publications; NALEO Educational Fund; National Association of Latino Independent Producers; National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.; National Council of La Raza; National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators; National Hispana Leadership Institute; National Hispanic Council on Aging; National Hispanic Environmental Council; National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts; National Hispanic Medical Association; National Hispanic Media Coalition; National Institute for Latino Policy; National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health; National Puerto Rican Coalition; Presente.org; SER Jobs for Progress – National; Southwest Voter Registration Education Project; United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; United States Hispanic Leadership Institute; United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce; and U.S.- Mexico Foundation.



# HISPANIC EDUCATION COALITION

## MEMBERS

January 9, 2015

Aspira

President Barack H. Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Cuban American  
National Council

Hispanic  
Association of  
Colleges and  
Universities

### **Re: Latino Priorities for Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization**

Dear President Obama:

League of United  
Latin American  
Citizens

On behalf of the Hispanic Education Coalition (HEC), which unites 14 organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for the more than 54 million Latinos living in the United States and Puerto Rico, we write to encourage you to adopt the following core principles of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in your consideration of any legislation to reauthorize ESEA, and to veto any ESEA reauthorization bill that does not satisfy these principles.

Mexican American  
Legal Defense and  
Educational Fund

#### **I. Further the Civil Rights Mission of ESEA.**

Migrant Legal  
Action Program

Passed during the civil rights era, ESEA has always been a tool to combat poverty and provide economic and social mobility for underrepresented communities. Any ESEA reauthorization should adhere closely to this mission, and expand to meet the needs of a twenty-first century America. At minimum, this means that the core provisions of the ESEA should aim toward effectively ameliorating and ultimately eliminating the educational attainment gaps faced by African Americans and Latinos.

Multicultural  
Education,  
Training &  
Advocacy

#### **II. Expand Latino-Serving Programs.**

National  
Association for  
Bilingual  
Education

Latinos are the America's largest and youngest minority group. Nationwide, one in six Americans is Latino, one in five public school students from kindergarten through twelfth grade is Latino. Programs that disproportionately serve Latino students should be expanded to meet the needs of these changing demographics. These programs include: the migrant education program, language instruction for limited English proficient students, TRIO, High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). Our investment decisions as a nation must reflect the new demographic reality, or our efforts will fail, to the lasting detriment of our future workforce and economy.

National  
Association for  
State Directors of  
Migrant  
Education

#### **III. Increase Parental Involvement.**

National Council  
for Community  
and Education  
Partnerships

Because school boards often do not reflect the communities they serve, any ESEA reauthorization must include robust involvement and input of parents, including those unable to vote, in school-based decision-making and community-driven accountability. History has proven that too many locally elected school boards do not perform a sufficient role in ensuring system accountability for closing equity gaps in both educational inputs and, most critically, education outcomes. ESEA must recognize this historical inadequacy and take strong steps to ensure that all communities can engage with vigor in moving public schools toward greater equity and excellence. Without such steps, reliance on community awareness and intervention to achieve equity objectives will prove illusory.

National Latino  
Children's Institute

National Migrant  
and Seasonal Head  
Start Association

#### **IV. Ensure Every Child Has the Resources Needed to Succeed.**

National Council  
of La Raza

ESEA must recognize that every child must have the same opportunity to succeed, not simply to some "floor" but to the highest level of attainment, and must implement a system that seeks to guarantee every child is given the supports he or she needs. This must include strong federal oversight, and the four principles discussed below.

TESOL  
International  
Association

**a. Annually Assess all Students.**

Annual objective measurement of the educational attainment of all students is critical to ensure that schools, districts, and states provide every child the tools needed to succeed. Test-based assessments must be aligned with each state's college and career ready standards, and appropriate supports should be provided to English learners and students with disabilities. As under current law, test scores must only be discounted for first year English learners, and alternate assessments should be limited to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, up to one percent of all students. Proven, objective measures of progress in addition to test scores must be included in any monitoring and assessment system.

**b. Include Performance Targets to Reduce Student Achievement Gaps.**

To ensure every child has a chance to succeed, schools, districts, and states must set performance targets, calibrated to reduce student educational achievement gaps and high school graduation gaps. These targets must be set for each subject and grade, and for high school graduation, for all students and for each subgroup, including: racial and ethnic groups, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. These targets must aim toward equity of outcomes at all levels of achievement, not simply to an established competency "floor."

**c. Require Remedies Focused on Reducing Student Achievement Gaps.**

Effective remedies to improve teaching and learning must be employed in any school or district where any subgroup of students, has consistently failed to meet the annual achievement or graduation targets. The goal of these remedies should be to reduce subgroup achievement gaps at all levels of educational achievement. These remedies must be specifically targeted at meeting the needs of those subgroups that do not meet their targets. For example, should a school or district fail to meet its target for English learners, the school or district should be required to ensure that tailored and proven steps are taken to ensure that its curriculum and teaching are addressing the needs of English learners.

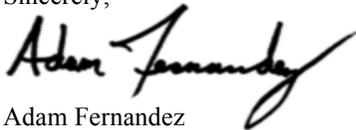
**d. Require Greater Equity in Access to Resources for Educational Progress.**

Except in education systems that can show that outcome gaps for subgroups have been eliminated, and that adequate steps have been taken to ensure that they do not recur, states and the federal government must use all available tools to ensure that the most critical educational inputs are distributed in an equitable manner, including recognition of the greater needs of certain students, such as English learners.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the HEC co-chairs: Adam Fernandez of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, at [afernandez@maldef.org](mailto:afernandez@maldef.org), or Luis Torres of the League of United Latin American Citizens, at [latorres@lulac.org](mailto:latorres@lulac.org).

Sincerely,



Adam Fernandez  
HEC Co-Chair  
Mexican American Legal  
Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)



Luis Torres  
HEC Co-Chair  
League of United Latin  
American Citizens (LULAC)

CC:

Arnie Duncan, Secretary of Education  
Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to the President  
Cecilia Muñoz, Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council  
Roberto Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy  
Joseph Conaty, Department of Education, Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
Samuel Myers, Department of Education, White House Liaison  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus