

Hispanic Education National Meeting

Tuesday, January 18, 2000

3:30 p.m.

Agenda

- I. Developments since "merger meeting" of January 5, 2000
  - Efforts of stakeholders -- *Initiative*
  - Status of proposed workplan -- *Andy*
  - Status of proposed outreach plan/efforts -- *Brian*
  - Status of talking points -- *Sarita*
  
- II. Next Steps and Action Items

01-19

White House National Meeting for Latino Educational Excellence  
Timeline

Representation @ mtg's  
UP  
HRC  
DPC  
Dawne/Echeverria

January

• **Outreach to External Groups**

- **Meeting with Latino Organizations** January (Week of 1/24-28)  
 Location: White House  
 Office: OPL  
 Organization participants: NCLR, LULAC, NALEO, HACU, MALDEF, MANA, NPRC, PRLDF, Latino Civil Rights Task Force, Hispanic National Bar Association, SW Voter, American GI Forum, Nat. Assoc. of Bilingual Education, Nat. Assoc. of Migrant Education, National HEP/CAMP Association
  
- **Meeting with Education Organizations** January (Week of 1/24-28)  
 Location: White House  
 Office: OPL and DPC  
 Organization participants: National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, American Association of School Administrators, Council of Chief State School Officers, National School Boards Association, National PTA, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Council of Great City Schools, National Association of Bilingual Education Association for Career and Technical Education (Voc Ed), Council for Opportunity in Education (TRIO), American Council on Education, American Association of Community Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, National Coalition for Literacy, National Association of College Admissions Counseling
  
- **Meeting with Business/Philanthropist** January (Week of 1/31-2/4)  
 Location: White House  
 Lead Office: OPL  
 Organization participants: Coca-Cola Company, US West, US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, US Mexico Chamber of Commerce
  
- **Meeting/Conference Call with Congressional Offices** January (Week of 1/31-2/4)  
 Location: TBD  
 Lead Office: Leg. Affairs  
 Participants: Congressional Hispanic Caucus, etc.
  
- **Conference Call with Statewide/Local Electeds** January (Week of 1/31-2/4)  
 Location: TBD  
 Lead Office: IGA  
 Participants: Statewide and local electeds from AZ, CA, FL, IL, NM, NJ, NV, NY, PA, TX, PR
  
- **Conference Call with Cabinet Members** January (Week of 1/31-2/4)  
 Location: TBD  
 Lead Office: Cabinet Affairs  
 Participants: Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff and Communications Directors from Cabinet Members offices

- **Conference Call with Latino Community Leaders** February (Week of 2/7-11)  
Location: TBD  
Lead Office: OPL and IGA  
Participants: Community Leaders from AZ, CA, FL, IL, NM, NJ, NV, NY, MA, PA, TX, PR

- **Conference Call with Excelencia Conference Planning Committees** February (Week 2/7-11)  
Location: TBD  
Lead Office: Initiative, OPL, DPC  
Participants: Leaders from the Excelencia Conference Planning Committees

- **Conference Proposal and Agenda** Mid-February (Week of 2/14-18)

- Develop Conference Proposal and Agenda, submit proposal for decisions on goals, format, date, location, outcomes, participants, issues, paper, etc.
- Develop message with Communications office and submit scheduling requests.

### Last week February

- Coordinate substantive planning with NEC, DPC, OMB and Education, and begin planning logistics.
- **Buy-in from External Groups**
  - Secure buy-in, via conference calls, from External Groups, and other White House offices, Congress, Constituency Groups/Organizations/Community Leaders, State and Local Elected officials and Cabinet Members.

### March- April

- Extend invitations to all participants.
- Pull in Press Office to develop and implement press strategy.
- Finalize plans.

### April

- Conference date 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week in month.

## ED and OMB Concerns Regarding the Higher Standards, Higher Pay Proposal

1. On what basis would ED be making the grants? The paper states that \$1 million per site will be used to develop the peer review system. Does this mean that we need to award grants before systems are developed? What will we require of districts before they get any funding?
  - Money would be distributed through a competitive grant process to those districts that work with teachers and local business to develop a plan to:
    - Recruit, test and support talented new teachers;
    - Provide high-quality professional development for all teachers and reward “good” teachers (including those identified as “master teachers”);
    - Institute rigorous peer review of all teachers in the district, including student achievement as one performance measure; and
    - Design a faster, but fair, system to improve or remove low-performing teachers (including those identified as “low-performing” in their peer review).

Initially the \$1 million investment will be used to develop a rigorous peer review system, and in later years some portion of that money would be used to implement that system.

2. As a superintendent, I would be very tempted to develop a system that almost all of my teachers would pass. This would allow me to essentially give all of my teachers raises. How will we prevent this from happening?
  - Theoretically most superintendents might appreciate a peer review that helped them get rid of their worst teachers. The involvement of the business community should help mitigate the potential for a sham somewhat, but overall the policy will be similar to other Ed grants in which we choose to fund good proposals and rely on evaluation and honesty to ensure that the money is not being misused.
3. Does your formula provide for districts to hire subs or staff as needed to enact the peer review?
  - Yes, that is what the \$1 million (or some portion thereof) will be used for after the peer review system is developed.
4. Does this program facilitate the dismissal of low quality teachers? If it is not a real possibility that low quality teachers will lose their jobs, why do we give all teachers so much money before they even pass the peer review?
  - The program facilitates the removal of low-performing teachers by both requiring that the district implement a streamlined policy for removing bad teachers and by identifying teachers who should be removed through the peer review.
5. We are spending a lot of money on teachers before any peer reviews takes place. What is the rationale behind this decision? It seems to run counter to the premise of this proposal to provided raises to teachers who have only passed a minimum standard.
  - One of the purposes of the program is to attract and retain high-quality teachers to high-poverty districts. In addition to being the political “price of admission for this program, the up-front increase supports the plan to attract high-quality teachers.

6. There is not enough money in this proposal to do what it proposes. When we start supplementing teacher salaries at the tune of \$5000 per teacher, that's a huge amount of money in large school districts. If we want to reach the high-poverty urban areas, this won't go too far. What happens when our program ends? Who makes up the difference in salary?
  - The program is a demonstration that will fund from 10-15 districts (I'll be happy to walk through the math if anybody wants to call me). The Los Angeles and Chicago districts of the country may not qualify, but the vast majority of districts would.
7. Would districts that have already done this be eligible? For example, Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, Rochester, NY, and Seattle already have this kind of system in place.
  - They could apply, but since their application would have to show that their new proposed changes would substantially increase teacher quality above what their current policies are doing, I doubt they would receive funding.
8. I don't think we want to be suggesting that districts start testing new teachers. States are the ones who administer tests for state licensing. Districts should not be adding to this. We might want to encourage districts to develop rigorous performance-based assessments for their new teachers that includes peer review, but we should not use the word "test" new teachers.
  - We will replace "test" new teachers with "evaluate" new teachers, including a test in the subject they will teach, where appropriate.
9. This proposal should make reference to the proposal that the Secretary put on the table in his State of American Education speech last February. He called on States to rethink their licensing and certification system to make them more rigorous, but also more flexible. To start a national dialogue, the Secretary outlined a three-tiered licensing system for initial, professional, and advanced certification, with appropriate jumps in salary for each stage. The professional license required a rigorous assessment of performance in the classroom judged by a panel of peers. To ignore the Secretary's proposal would be a serious mistake. We got lots of press attention to this when he made his speech. (The proposal is spelled out in our latest Information Kit on the Teaching Initiative and it's on our web site.)
  - If you have specific proposals for how this could be done, please give me a call to chat about them.
10. I'd also like to see us continue to push the concept of knowledge and skills-based pay. The Secretary has been pushing this concept since his Back to School Address in 1998. It does a similar thing to this proposal, but does not just give across the board raises to everyone. Again, we elaborated on this concept in the State of American Ed last year.
  - Again, we'd be happy to discuss specific proposals for changing the program, although we all know the time constraints of any changes that would be incorporated into budget docs.
11. If we wanted to be really bold, we should be looking at the proposal that the Milliken Foundation put forward this fall on differentiated teaching salaries based on knowledge, skills, and responsibilities of teachers on a faculty. Their proposal includes a description of a typical elementary and high school and how this might work without having to pour a tremendous amount of new money into the system. It's based on the medical field model. I don't know how the unions have reacted to this proposal, but I thought it was quite interesting.
  - It's probably a little late for this kind of large-scale change.

12. Competitive grants to high-poverty districts (suggesting that urban and rural are competing against each other, no priority for districts in teaching staff crisis) How long are these grants for, particularly if they include salaries?
  - The grants are indefinite at this point, but could be stepped down as the local match increases if that became appropriate. It is probably not necessary to make this decision for the budget paper.
13. Application that includes plan (as described before) for testing of new teachers (Is this just the test for initial certification/licensure? What benefit does it have besides ensuring compliance with state teaching standards?) professional development and mentoring, streamlined system for teacher evaluation and removal
  - See above.
14. Salary increases--there seem to be three intervals at which teachers can earn up to \$5,000 in salary increases. Are these to be added together, meaning up to \$15,000 in salary increases per teacher? Is there any way of ensuring that our dollars do not supplant local dollars for salaries and salary increases? One increase is based on successful completion of "a rigorous peer review." Does this mean when the district has put in place such reviews, or when the teacher has undergone some peer implemented performance assessment?
  - The final \$5,000 for becoming a master teacher is a bonus, not an increase, so the total possible increase per teacher is \$10,000. The second increase would be given to the teacher upon successful completion of the peer review described in the proposal. We could put a supplement not supplant clause in (note: how is this done in class size?).
15. Size and Number of Awards. Considering the estimated costs of peer review (\$1 million per site) and salary costs (\$5-15,000 per teacher), these awards would be for \$4 million-\$12 million for each LEA, and not serve Leas with more than 800 teachers. (5 awards to medium size districts?) I would guess that the top 100 largest districts have easily a couple of thousand teachers each. For which districts is this intended (Does it exclude big districts?) How many awards could be made? At what size?
  - See above.
16. Matching Requirement of 25%: Most of our matches are in-kind, is that the case here as well? Otherwise, which districts will contribute the \$1-4 million? Do we have evidence to suggest that districts will do this?
  - This match could be in-kind (although this is really only useful for the peer review component, since the rest is straight dollars), and can be from any source, including the state, the district or the local businesses involved in the program

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# National Journal

THE WEEKLY  
ON POLITICS AND  
GOVERNMENT

They are both more, and less, economically successful and politically powerful than imagined, and they are crucial to America's future.

A SPECIAL REPORT

## Beyond the Myths: Hispanics in America





# Hispanics: Beyond the Myths

■ BY DICK KIRSCHTEN

*The immigrants keep coming, not only to the Southwest but up the eastern seaboard to New York and Boston and west to Chicago and the Midwest, where they meet the long-established Chicanos, the North Americans of Mexican origin, who have been here even longer than the gringos.*

—CARLOS FUENTES, *The Bilingual Mirror*, 1992

THEY WILL SOON BE  
AMERICA'S LARGEST  
MINORITY, HOLDING THE  
KEYS TO PROGRESS  
AND POWER IN THE NEW  
CENTURY.

In the eve of the 21st century, Hispanics—people with that most variegated of ethnicities—are emerging with fanfare as America's hot new minority. The faces of Latino singers and movie stars have recently graced the covers of popular magazines, including *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *People*, and *George*, surrounded by headlines blaring that "Young Hispanics Are Changing America" and "Latino Power Brokers Are Making America Sizzle." At Major League Baseball's All-Star Game in July, seven

ILLUSTRATION BY [unreadable]

of the starting players were Hispanics, whose average salaries exceed \$7 million a year. Presidential aspirants are using Spanish-language sound bites in their stump speeches.

Not only are famous Hispanics getting attention, but so, too, the infamous. The nation's front pages and television screens focused relentlessly this summer on the face of illegal immigrant Rafael Resendez-Ramirez, the object of a six-week FBI manhunt, a man thought to be the "railroad killer" responsible for eight brutal slayings since 1997.

Indeed, Hispanics are becoming a larger and more prominent part of the American polyglot. Their numbers have been bolstered by high birth rates and a remarkable shift in immigration patterns since World War II, with Latinos making up more than 11 percent of the U.S. population, a proportion that is projected to grow to one in four by 2050. (The terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" seem to have become virtually interchangeable.) They will outnumber non-Hispanic blacks by 2005, laying claim to the title of America's largest minority group.

Hispanics, however, are not the monolithic minority sometimes portrayed in the media. With origins traceable to more than a score of Spanish-speaking homelands, and complexions that range in hue from white to brown to black, Hispanics are, as Mexican diplomat Carlos Fuentes so aptly noted, "above all mixed, mestizo."

A more accurate portrait of the 31 million Hispanics in the United States would be equally mixed and, indeed, more complex. Most Hispanics are neither highly paid entertainers nor members of an impoverished underclass of illegal aliens.

In reality, the Hispanic community is both more and less successful, and more and less important, than popular opinion or prejudice might suggest. It is a vibrant community to be sure, and many—probably most—members are carving their niche in the nation's middle class, just as other ethnic immigrants did before them. Others, however, are struggling to get into the working class. Poverty is a serious concern for one Latino in four.

Neither are Hispanics a teeming mass of illegal and illiterate aliens. Today's Hispanics are predominantly native-born (56 percent). When those who have been naturalized or are

Puerto Rico natives are included, 70 percent are U.S. citizens. A majority of the remainder reside here legally. Estimates vary, but it appears that no more than 13 percent to 14 percent of Hispanics in the United States are here unlawfully.

Spanish is spoken in many Latino households, but fluency in English is widespread, especially among U.S.-born children exposed to television programming and the U.S. educational system. And bilingual education, although controversial, is, in fact, rare.

Two-thirds of Hispanic children who speak only Spanish receive instruction in U.S. schools where only English is taught.

Though they are voting in larger numbers, the might of the Latino electorate—quadrennially hyped as "a slumbering giant"—has proved illusory. Although one in nine Americans is Hispanic, only about one in every 20 votes is cast by a Hispanic. Nearly a third of Hispanics cannot vote because they are not citizens, and more than 40 percent of those who are citizens are below voting age.

Politicians, however, can ill afford to ignore the Latino community, which in recent years has begun to mature as a political force and to place higher priority on attaining citizenship. Hispanic voters are particularly important because they are concentrated in a half-dozen key electoral states. In California, whose 54 electoral votes are by far the largest

plum in presidential contests, Hispanics make up more than a third of the population and cast upward of 12 percent of the votes in the 1996 election. In Texas, where 32 electoral votes are up for grabs in 2000, Latinos accounted for 17 percent of the 1996 vote.

Hispanic economic power is also maturing. The magazine *Hispanic Business*, which annually lists the 500 largest Latino-owned companies, this year hailed the first such company to post annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion: the Miami-based construction firm MasTec Inc., headed by Jorge Mas Jr., son of a deceased Cuban-exile leader.

But like other immigrant groups before them, Hispanics for the most part are found on the lower rungs of the economic ladder. In today's booming economy, Hispanic men are participating in the labor force at a higher rate than either black or white men. But not all who are working are getting ahead. The median family income for U.S. Hispan-



JOSE GALVEZ

**STRONG FAMILIES:**

Hispanic households in the United States are as likely to be headed by married couples as are white households.

ics was \$26,628 in 1997 and has been climbing slowly. It remains well below that of whites (\$38,972) and only slightly higher than that of blacks (\$25,050).

Large numbers of Latinos, both native- and foreign-born, belong to the ranks of America's working poor. More than a third of Hispanic children are being raised in poverty—defined as \$16,700 a year for a family of four—and disturbingly large numbers of them are falling by the educational wayside, dropping out of school and—with increasing frequency—dropping into the criminal justice system.

This more nuanced portrait of Hispanics in America has given rise to a lively debate as to whether Hispanics should be treated as a discriminated-against minority entitled to civil rights remedies similar to those afforded blacks, or viewed simply as another immigrant group en route to assimilating into the U.S. mainstream. It's a debate that continues today in such states as California and Texas, where quota-like approaches to affirmative action have been rejected, but other means are used to bolster Latino enrollment in state colleges and universities; one such measure is Texas' program of admitting any student who graduates in the top 10 percent of his or her high school class.

Political scientist Peter Skerry ruffled feathers with his 1993 book, *Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority*, which criticized those who promote the idea that Hispanics are an oppressed minority. "It is the racial minority perspective that has fundamentally shaped Mexican-American politics," he wrote. Such an approach, he argued, may be "emotionally and programmatic gratifying . . . to its elite practitioners, but it offers little help to newcomers struggling to make sense of their new lives."

But other experts warn that if America wants to enjoy continued prosperity and maintain a qualified work force, remedial governmental measures are needed to ensure that today's youthful Hispanic population receives the educational tools—including command of the English language—necessary to compete successfully in a technology-driven economy.

Susan F. Martin, executive director of the congressionally mandated immigration reform commission that completed its work in 1997, says that the federal government should more aggressively address the problems of newcomers using new "immigrant integration" policies that give "particular attention" to health care and English skills. The government, she adds, should also provide aid to communities most affected by immigration. (*See sidebar, p. 2357.*)

Now at Georgetown University, Martin argues that if a larger proportion of Hispanic immigrants and their children are to prosper as American citizens in the 21st century, they need special services now, including a faster process for obtaining citizenship that would also better educate them about American civic culture.

The elimination of naturalization backlogs is a high priority of Latino advocacy groups and congressional critics of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Most immigrants must reside in the United States for five years before they can apply for citizenship, but it takes another 15 to 24 months to process their applications, according to Rep. Lamar S. Smith, R-Texas, chairman of the House Judiciary Immigration and Claims Subcommittee, which oversees the INS. Smith notes that the INS has a backlog of 1.8 million naturalization petitions and 800,000 applications for permanent residence. And the pressure will very likely not ease any time soon. About 450,000 Hispanics enter the United States each year, including legal and illegal immigrants.

#### A COMPLEX HISTORY

The story of U.S. Hispanics—some call them Americans—dates back to the Spanish crown's sponsorship of Christopher Columbus' 1492 voyage of discovery. His feat led to the establishment of a Spanish empire in the Western hemisphere in the early 16th century. Its foot soldiers were the conquistadors and missionaries who left their language, their religion, and sometimes their progeny from Florida to California.

Few of today's Latinos trace their roots directly to Spain. Some claim bloodlines here long predating this nation's founding, but most are of more recent vintage and more closely related to the native peoples of this hemisphere who came under the Spaniards' control.

Nearly two-thirds of "Americans" are of Mexican ancestry; 11 percent are Puerto Rican; 4 percent Cuban; and the rest are mostly from Central and South America and other countries of the Caribbean. Mexicans first headed north in large numbers in the 1920s, in a movement that was cut

short by the Depression and World War II, which virtually halted immigration to America. From 1942-64, 4 million to 5 million supposedly temporary farm workers were shuttled in from Mexico under the "bracero," or "strong arms," program. Many stayed illegally and joined the low-wage underground economy. In the 1960s, and again in the 1970s and 1990s, refugees from the Castro revolution in Cuba washed ashore in large numbers in southern Florida.

The doors opened more widely for Hispanics (and Asians) in 1965, when Congress revoked restrictive and discriminatory "country of origin" quotas and anchored U.S. immigration policy on the principle of fostering the reunification of families. Migration from south of the border increased further after the enactment of 1986 legislation granting amnesty to nearly 3 million unlawful immigrants, who later became eligible to send home for their wives and children. Civil warfare in Central America during the 1980s created even more refugees.



CARLOS RIOS

#### MEXICAN HERITAGE:

Our Lady of Guadalupe is tattooed on the back of a Houston resident. Mexicans make up about two-thirds of U.S. Hispanics.



JOSE GARZA

**REACHING MIDDLE CLASS**

Although this country's Hispanics did not arrive on trans-Atlantic ships, as their European counterparts did earlier this century, they do resemble the Ellis Island immigrants in their slow but steady generational advancement up the economic and political ladder.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., represents a downtown Los Angeles district adjacent to the one that her New Mexico-born father, Rep. Edward R. Roybal, served for 30 years before retiring in 1992. In an interview, she stressed the need to paint a balanced and more complex picture of a Latino community that has both serious needs and laudable accomplishments.

"There are lousy schools in the Latino community, and people need better jobs," she said. "But we have to make sure that the public isn't under the impression that every Latino is a poor immigrant or—unfortunately, because of negative publicity—that we are all criminals or drug addicts."

Roybal-Allard noted that "the Hispanic community is very proud that we have more Medal of Honor recipients than any other ethnic group, that we have doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other professionals."

Gregory Rodriguez, a research fellow with the Pepperdine University School of Public Policy in California, has traced the economic progress of Hispanics in five Southern California counties that, according to the 1990 census, were home to more than a fifth of the nation's Latino population. Their progress was conspicuous.

His 1996 survey, "The Emerging Latino Middle Class," found that a third of the area's households headed by foreign-born Hispanics, and slightly more than half of those headed

**CITIZENSHIP:**

**Seventy percent of Hispanics in the United States are citizens. A majority of the rest reside here legally.**

by U.S.-born Hispanics, had incomes in excess of \$35,000 or owned their own homes.

In a recent interview, Rodriguez argued that Washington's "dysfunction-oriented" approach to minorities has created a perverse political system that "channels the spoils to the loser." If minorities prove they are victims, they get special help. Such an approach, he maintained, makes little sense at a time when Hispanics are making significant political gains in key states. (California's Lt. Gov. Cruz M. Bustamante and state Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villaragosa, for example, are both Latinos.) "It becomes incongruous to use the victimization approach when you're the lieutenant governor," he said.

Rodriguez likens today's Latinos to earlier generations of Irish and Italian immigrants, whose economic progress was "multigenerational, evolving over time from upper-blues-collar to sort of lower-pink-collar." He predicted that the basic Spanish identity will not go away, but politically, Latinos will be co-opted by the mainstream. "When Al Smith first became Governor of New York," he said, "that's when people first started identifying the Irish as Irish-Americans. And that is already happening with Hispanics."

As the author of a recent report, "From Newcomers to New Americans," published by the Washington-based National Immigration Forum, Rodriguez hopes to debunk the stereotype that portrays Hispanics as unwilling to culturally assimilate and adopt English as their language. "We have to take the debate away from the leftwing multiculturalists and the ethnic nationalists, as well as from the rightwing nativists," he said. To do that, "it makes common sense to focus on the upward mobility of these groups."

Rodriguez's research on Southern California shows that, as Latinos move into the middle class, they achieve increasing fluency in English while retaining "some linguistic and cultural continuity" in the home. Significantly, the majority of upwardly mobile Latinos choose to reside in racially integrated middle-income communities where they often constitute a minority, the report states. Nearly a third, he found, marry non-Hispanics.

A third-generation Mexican-American, Rodriguez acknowledges that Hispanics have differed from other immigrant groups in their reluctance, even after living here for decades, to formally sever ties with their homelands by becoming U.S. citizens. "There was a nostalgia for home, an idea that one day they would return to Mexico to retire," he said. But that tendency has changed markedly since former California Gov. Pete Wilson backed a ballot initiative in 1994 to deny public education and other benefits to illegal immigrants, and Congress, two years later, voted to strip legal immigrants of their eligibility for key benefits. The nostalgia for home has diminished, and Hispanics are seeking to naturalize in record numbers.

#### STRUGGLING FOR A Foothold

Yet while many Hispanics are achieving middle-class status, a sizable portion is not. In her recently published book, *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Urban City*, sociologist Katherine S. Newman of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government notes that "the largest group of poor people in the United States are not those on welfare. They are the working poor, whose earnings are so meager that despite their best efforts, they cannot afford decent housing, diets, health care, or child care."

Hispanics are more likely than any other group to be members of the working poor. Newman's study focuses on New York City, where Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are among the

poorest of the poor. The Puerto Ricans, who have the advantage of U.S. citizenship and greater English proficiency, tend to have higher earnings, she reports, while the Dominicans "tend to make up for this disadvantage by increasing the number of people per household who are in the labor market."

Yet even when both parents in a Hispanic family are working, their income often falls short of their needs. "One of the really troubling things," says Sonia Pérez, a deputy vice president of the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic advocacy group, is that Latino families headed by intact married couples are more likely to live in poverty than similar African-American or white families.

"There is something wrong here," Pérez argued in a recent interview. "You have a mother and a father and someone who is working full time. This is what everybody is supposed to be doing. These are the values we are trying to promote. They are exemplified by this community, but it's not working for them."

Census statistics support Pérez. Hispanic households are almost as likely as white households to be headed by married couples—55 percent, compared with 56 percent for the latter. Only 32 percent of non-Hispanic black households are headed by married couples. Yet more than a fourth of Latino families (27.1 percent) are poor, and slightly more than a third of America's total Hispanic population lives in poverty.

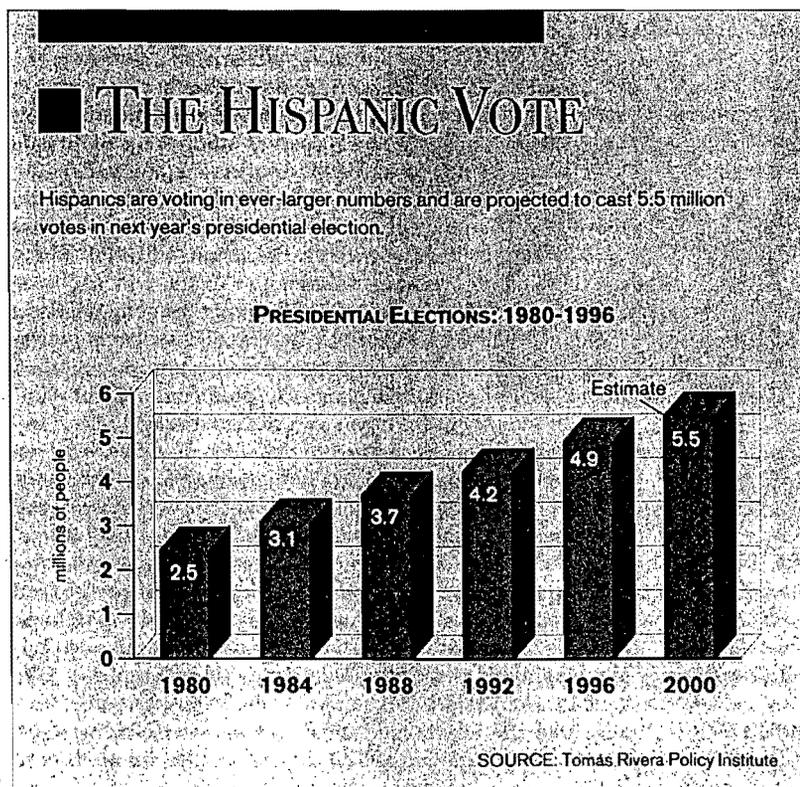
#### EDUCATION IS KEY

Pérez and other experts view education as critical to overcoming Latino poverty, particularly for large numbers of children who are growing up in Spanish-speaking homes and whose fluency in English is limited or nonexistent. The Urban Institute, a Washington think tank, notes that the number of school-age children whose parents are immigrants has more than tripled since 1970 and now totals nearly 12 million. Of that number, close to 7 million are Hispanics.

The highly polarized debate over bilingual education has not helped. It has masked the fact that such programs are offered to fewer than a third of immigrant children, and that many language-limited youngsters receive no special help at all. Researchers estimate that more than 3 million public school students, three-fourths of whom are Hispanics, have limited ability to speak and understand English.

The debate over bilingual education has also hidden the need for continuing help with English for Hispanics in the upper grades of elementary school and in middle and high schools.

In an interview, Michael Fix, a senior analyst at the Urban Institute, said "some kind of language instruction" is available to three of four elementary students who need it, but fewer than half of students in higher grades whose English is limited receive such assistance. Hispanic students, he added, are far more likely than whites or blacks to attend schools where a third or more of the enrollment consists of English-deficient students. Such schools, he declared, "are not just ethnically, but linguistically, segregated."



Studies show that "limited English proficiency" students have better attendance rates than other students, but nonetheless perform worse on tests, including those administered in Spanish, and are less likely to graduate from high school. One of every five students with limited English proficiency drops out of school—double the rate for English speakers.

Like other school dropouts, Latino youngsters frequently become involved with gangs and run afoul of the law. Although Hispanics make up only about 11.5 percent of the U.S. population, they account for a larger—and steadily rising—share of the nation's state and federal prison populations. Justice Department estimates indicate that 13.3 percent of all prisoners in 1990 were Hispanic, a figure that rose to 15.8 percent by 1996. A recent National Academy of Sciences report that focused on immigrants found that "noncitizens are more likely to be in prison for drug offenses, especially possession of drugs," than for violent offenses or property crimes.

From the perspective of La Raza's Pérez, America can ill afford to ignore the problems associated with low educational achievement by large numbers of Hispanics. As of 1997, only 54.7 percent of U.S. Latinos had graduated from high school and only 7.4 percent from college.

"These are the workers for the new millennium, and we



**HABANA DEL NORTE:**

A Cuban Day parade in New York City. Cubans make up 4 percent of U.S. Hispanics.

need to make sure that we prepare them for the kinds of jobs that will have high demand," she said. "We don't live in the kind of society any more in which people without a diploma can get a factory job and raise a family."

**THE CRITICAL FEW**

America's Hispanics are many things—both rising middle class and working poor. But one thing they are not is a monolithic vote.

Florida's Cubans have found a comfortable home in the Republican Party; Puerto Ricans in the big cities of the Northeast and Midwest have found solace in the social safety net programs of the Democratic Party. While the growing electoral strength of Mexican-Americans in California has recently enhanced the prospects of Democrats in the Golden State, Mexican-Americans in Texas have elevated the presidential prospects of their

Spanish-speaking Republican Governor, George W. Bush.

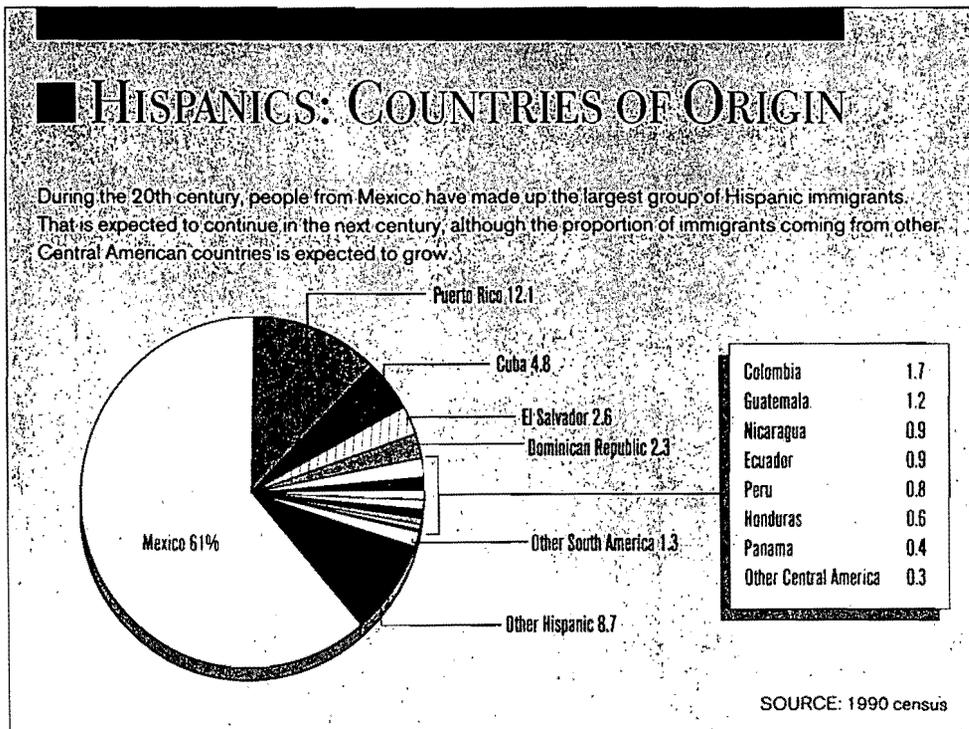
Indeed, the fact that Hispanics have voted in mixed patterns makes them highly sought after by both parties, and explains why Latinos are so much in play for the 2000 elections.

Republicans next year would love to equal or better the high-water mark set in 1984 when President Reagan received 40 percent of the nationwide Hispanic vote in his re-election sweep. Democrats, on the other hand, crave a

repeat of 1996—when GOP contender Bob Dole won only 21 percent of the Latino vote.

But in seeking Hispanic votes, the approaches of the two parties could not be more different. Bush has chosen Linda Chavez as his leading adviser on immigration issues. She is a controversial and outspoken opponent of affirmative action who was Reagan's appointee to chair the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. A key adviser to Vice President Al Gore will be Maria Echaveste, currently a deputy White House chief of staff, who made a name for herself at the Labor Department cracking down on sweatshop abuses by the garment industry.

Chavez traces her Latina ancestry through her



father's side of the family back to Spain and the 1600s. Her mother was English-Irish. Echaveste, by contrast, is the daughter of Mexican farmworkers who migrated first to Texas, then to California, and now, in retirement, have returned to their native Mexico.

In separate interviews, the two advisers argued that the traditional approaches of their respective political parties will have resonance with Hispanic voters.

Chavez pointed out that the Hispanics who "are most likely to vote" are hard-working entrepreneurs "who are moving into that lower-middle-class niche" despite shortcomings in formal education. For the most part, she said, they operate small businesses, such as restaurants, gardening services, or mom-and-pop groceries.

Republicans should be able to appeal to such voters by addressing their concerns about crime and safety and by condemning government regulation. "These are people who have problems with red tape, problems with government mandates for everything from health care to mandatory parental leave," Chavez said.

Echaveste, by contrast, said Democrats will appeal to Hispanics as consumers of government services that will be in jeopardy if the GOP gains control of the White House. "One of the reasons that Hispanics are caught in low-wage jobs is that they need better command of the language so they can move up," she said. "But the Republican Party has not been a friend of the Department of Education or of programs designed to get resources into poor neighborhoods."

If Gore is the Democratic candidate, Echaveste predicted, Hispanic voters will reward him for the Clinton Administration's recent efforts to restore welfare benefits for legal immigrants and for efforts to block the deportation of Central Americans seeking political asylum here.

Chavez and Echaveste are probably both correct. The political fault lines that divide Hispanic voters are largely economic

and precisely the same as those that divide the rest of the electorate. If that's the case, rising prosperity among Latinos could, over time, boost the GOP's share of their vote.

Political scientist Harry P. Pachon, who heads the California-based Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, says "the roots of partisan attachment are not deep" among Hispanics, who have mostly voted Democratic but are comparatively new to the electoral process. When his institute polled Latinos in three states last year, 55 percent said that "neither party" does a better job than the other.

Roybal-Allard, who chairs the all-Democratic Congressional Hispanic Caucus (three Latino Republicans in the House decline to join), notes that Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, a Republican, "does very well with Hispanic voters because he reached out to the community and supported important educational projects" before running for public office.

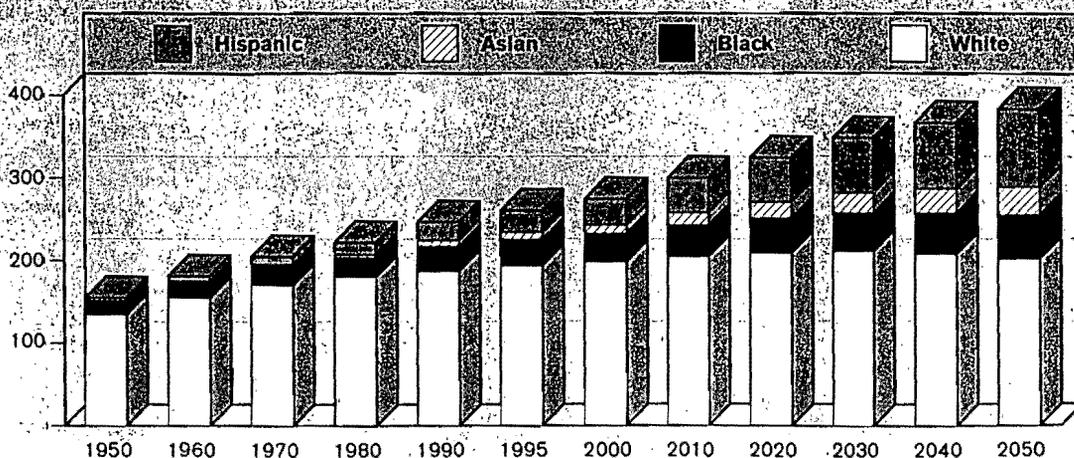
"Traditionally, Latinos are more conservative," Roybal-Allard explained, adding that Democrats will have to overcome "the unfortunate perception that they are anti-business" if they expect to compete for middle-class Hispanic votes.

That competition could be crucial. Although Hispanic voter registration and turnout rates still lag behind those of other groups, they have increased dramatically in recent elections. In the 1996 presidential election, 11.2 million Hispanics were eligible to vote, but only 6.6 million were registered and only 4.3 million actually voted, according to the National Association of Latino Elected Officials. Next year, according to projections by Pachon, the nationwide Hispanic vote may reach 5.5 million.

"It doesn't take many to be called 'the critical few,'" Republican political consultant V. Lance Tarrance Jr. recently observed. He noted that with support for both parties evenly balanced nationwide, it is possible "for the Hispanic vote to become the balance of power for the next decade." ■

## THE CHANGING FACE OF THE U.S.

The U.S. Hispanic population rose from 4 million in 1950 to 27 million in 1995—about one in every 11 Americans. It will rise to 95 million in 2050, or about one in every four Americans.



# DELAWARE'S HISPANIC PEACE CORPS

**G**ORGETOWN, DEL.— This sleepy courthouse community dates back to the presidency of George Washington, and has been known for a century as a gateway to southern Delaware's ocean beaches. But change with a heavy Spanish accent has come to this unassuming town of 6,000 souls.

Starting about 1989, Hispanic migrants began showing up to seek work at the half-dozen poultry and food processing plants that lie within a 20-mile radius of town. What started as a trickle soon became a steady stream. Most came from an impoverished rural region of Guatemala long torn by civil war.

For the expanding chicken industry, the development is a godsend. The newly arrived Latinos uncomplainingly perform onerous—and sometimes hazardous—jobs in mostly nonunion processing plants that are unable to recruit sufficient numbers of American-born workers.

William Satterfield, executive director of Delmarva Poultry Industry, a Georgetown-based trade association, says "a lot of positives" came with the addition of the workers from Central America. But, he adds, "The companies are not recruiting in Mexico or Guatemala. It's a word-of-mouth network that is sending workers up here."

For the once preponderantly white community, however, the arrival of the Hispanics—who now comprise 30 percent to 40 percent of Georgetown's population—was a rude shock. The newcomers were, at first, mostly young men who settled in crowded housing in an older neighborhood that became littered with trash. They spoke no English and had little formal schooling in Spanish. Their cash wages became an inviting target for inguerrers and unscrupulous landlords. When not

working or sleeping, many loitered on street corners drinking beer and whiskey. Those who bought cars were frequently pulled over for traffic violations.

"There was like a civil war here, because the town was accusing the poultry industry of bringing all these problems and there was nobody who could communicate with the Hispanic community because it had no leaders," recalls Gonzalo Martinez, a Chilean-born lawyer who lives in nearby Lewes.

So Martinez eased into the vacuum.

Slowly at first, and then jumping in with both feet, he became a full-time volunteer coordinator between the growing Hispanic community and the town.

Martinez is not unique. He is representative of a phenomenon being seen across the country in cities and towns struggling to integrate poorly educated Latino immigrants from peasant backgrounds into the U.S. middle class. Spanish-speak-

ing professionals—most immigrants themselves—are stepping forward to bridge the gulf between new arrivals and longtime residents. They form a volunteer army that helps ameliorate Third World kinds of problems in the United States.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Indeed, in tiny Georgetown, a remarkable cast of helpers from all over the Spanish-speaking world, Delaware, and all walks of life has surfaced to pitch in. Some are U.S. citizens raised near the Mexican border or in Puerto Rico. Others are foreign nationals from Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Spain. They include doctors, merchants, teachers, police officers, and clergy. Some were brought in because of their fluency in Spanish; others were already residing in the area. Taken together,

they help perform a variety of tasks that help integrate the Central Americans into their new Delaware home.

Initially, churches and social service agencies were the only ones trying to bridge the gaps between Georgetown's Guatemalans and the rest of the town, but their efforts were piecemeal. Martinez, an official of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, for 23 years, entered the scene in the early 1990s and emerged as an ambitious problem-solver.

A lawyer by trade, Martinez did not intend to perform good works for the Hispanic poor when he retired to the Delaware Shore. An art collector, whose maternal grandmother came from a wealthy Guatemalan family, he moved in 1989 to fashionable Lewes—25 miles north of Georgetown—to remodel a large house and hobnob with Sussex County's affluent artsy set.

He lived in the area several years before becoming aware of the isolated and problem-plagued Hispanic population of Georgetown and surrounding Sussex County, home to an immigrant Hispanic population estimated to exceed 15,000. After assisting with smaller projects sponsored by a local arts council and the county's AIDS committee, Martinez decided to plunge in as a full-time volunteer in chief.

Since then, he has worked closely with a remarkable assortment of Hispanic allies. Early helpers included Antonio Asión, a Cuban-born Delaware state trooper, and Elba Quiles, a former high school principal from San Juan, Puerto Rico, who runs a program of free English-language instruction at the community college.

Quiles, who left Puerto Rico in 1991 to be close to her son, a physician practicing in Lewes, has recently expanded her program to include Spanish classes for local Anglos. "Because of the needs of professionals here, I'm now giving two evening classes for people who work with Hispanics. My students include a radiologist, several nurses, and a couple of social workers," she notes.

Pilar Gómez is another member of Martinez's network of allies. A Spaniard, Gómez moved here after



**GONZALO MARTINEZ:**  
A Chilean-born lawyer and art collector helps Guatemalan immigrants adapt to Delaware.

RICHARD A. BLOOM

her husband took a job in the area. She has since divorced and launched a career as the organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

Gomez initially worked for an area landlord helping Hispanic tenants who were unfamiliar with such basics as the use of modern household appliances. "That drew me to get more involved," she recalls. "I related to them, because when I first arrived in this country, I didn't know any English and nobody was there to help me."

The presence of so many Hispanic immigrants has brought a demand for more Spanish speakers in the private sector as well, and many of them are professionals, who add to the town's mix. Georgetown is home to a large Perdue Farms Inc. processing plant and distribution center, where nearly half the workers are Latinos. The plant's supervisory ranks are dotted with college-educated Hispanics, who have become part of the town's professional middle class.

Even statewide media outlets are beginning to notice what is happening here. The state's largest newspaper, *The News Journal* in Wilmington, has assigned Bolivian-born Patricia Rivera as its Georgetown correspondent. Rivera's husband, a Spaniard, is a superintendent at the Perdue plant. Another Spaniard, José M. Somalo, a Perdue foreman, and his Mexican wife, Rocío Flores, publish a local bilingual monthly newspaper, *Hoy en Delaware*.

#### SUCCESS STORIES

Out of this synergy between an earlier generation of Spanish-speaking professionals and the later working-class immigrants from Central America is emerging a middle class of Hispanics who are, in turn, helping their more recently arrived colleagues. One of Elba Quiles' prize students, for example, is Maria Mendoza. She and her husband came to

Georgetown 10 years ago as migrant farm laborers. Both decided to stay and take year-round jobs in chicken processing plants. After five years of poultry work, however, Mendoza quit to study English and pursue an associate degree in human resources at Delaware Technical and Community College.

The Mexican-born Mendoza, 32, now works as a Vista Volunteer directing English literacy efforts to the local Hispanic community and, more recently, conducting welfare-to-work seminars for non-English-speaking recipients of government aid. After living for years in a trailer on rented land, she and her husband, who still works for the poultry industry, have purchased their first home in a Georgetown subdivision. "Yes, we're getting a house," Mendoza says with barely concealed glee. "We're so excited."

Julio Herrera, 27, who came here from Guatemala five years ago, is also trying to help the newer arrivals. A quality control supervisor at a poultry plant, Herrera helped found and now heads a Guatemalan self-help association that, among other things, conducts trash collection drives as a gesture of good will toward the larger Georgetown community.

Herrera has something to celebrate, too. He was recently granted permanent legal U.S. residency after a multiyear struggle to petition for political asylum. He had help in his legal battle from Pilar Gomez and Jim Lewis, an Episcopal minister who has a grant from a du Pont family foundation to work with area immigrants.

This is not unusual among Georgetown Hispanics, many of whom fled the Guatemalan civil war earlier this decade because they were persecuted for either opposing the government or declining to take sides. Many, although not all, come here illegally and try for asylum.

In fact, one of the major missions of La Esperanza, one of two community centers set up in Georgetown by Gonzalo Martinez, is to help Georgetown's Guatemalans fight deportation proceedings and seek legal residency. Two full-time experts at La Esperanza help with immigration problems.

#### GIVING AND GETTING

Not only have the lives of the immigrant Guatemalans been transformed through this community outreach, so too have the lives of the outreachers.

Martinez looked to Delaware for art and leisure and found, instead, a career as community leader. The list of his accomplishments and contributions, brought about through his organizational or fund-raising talents, is impressive: two community service centers; and the role of unpaid director of the first; two state-of-the-art preschool facilities; and the El Centro Cultural, an arts organization that stages Christmas pageants and an annual Georgetown Hispanic Festival.

Martinez's proudest accomplishments, however, are the early childhood development centers—Primeros Pasos, opened in 1997 for children up to the age of five, and Primeros Pasitos, opened in 1998 for infants and toddlers. Although the centers can serve only a fraction of Georgetown's Hispanic baby boom, they are models for the public school system.

In this process of stumbling onto a second career, Martinez has infiltrated Delaware's power structure. He has been appointed to gubernatorial commissions, speaks frequently with the state's lieutenant governor, and socializes on a first-name basis with heads of area poultry companies.

This arts aficionado turned social worker says he is happy with his new life. As a retiree, he has plenty of time to give, and he refuses any payment for his endeavors. As he sees it, "I'm giving back the money my wealthy Guatemalan grandmother took to Chile." ■

*Research for this story was supported in part by the Urban Institute.*



RICHARD A. BLOOM

#### MARIA MENDOZA:

A Mexican immigrant and former poultry worker, she is now a Vista Volunteer helping Guatemalan newcomers.



SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS/KIRICHARD KOCH/HERNANDEZ

**INCOME DISPARITY:**

Since 1980, the earning power of Hispanic workers has dropped 11 percent relative to earnings of all other workers.

**PROGRESS, YES, BUT LATINO INCOME STILL LAGS BEHIND THAT OF WHITES AND BLACKS, AND EDUCATION MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.**

# The Economics of Being Hispanic

■ BY JOHN MAGGS

**A**re Hispanics the new underclass of a prosperous America? Broad and detailed statistics on the economic status of Hispanics are in short supply, but what numbers there are indicate that Hispanics are increasingly stuck on the lowest rung of the economic ladder. And although this status is partly due

to a steady stream of recent immigrants who lack the basic tools to succeed in an Information Age America, the relative position of Latinos economically seems to be dropping even as native-born Hispanics are making up a larger share of the Hispanic population.

The causes of this disparity are many, but chief among them are lower high school and college graduation rates for Hispanic-Americans, and a changing economy that marginalizes low-skilled, low-education workers. Despite this bad news for Latinos, new research shows that successive genera-

tions of Hispanics can overcome many of the disadvantages faced by their parents and grandparents. And, despite popular suspicions that Hispanic immigrants are taking away jobs, depressing wages, and draining tax dollars, the evidence suggests otherwise.

## THE NUMBERS

Over the past two decades, a period of unprecedented Hispanic immigration, the relative economic status of Hispanics in America has been dropping steadily. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, median weekly earnings in 1998

for a full-time worker 16 years of age or older were \$572, or about \$30,000 a year. The median for a Hispanic worker, in contrast, was \$398, or about \$21,000 per year, just 69.5 percent of the median for all workers. This percentage has been falling steadily since 1980. That year, when workers were taking home weekly earnings of \$292, Hispanics were earning \$230, or 78.7 percent of the median. In 1985, when median weekly earnings were up to \$378 for all workers, Hispanic earnings were only \$292, or 77.2 percent of the median. The relative earnings of Hispanic workers have been declining ever since, to last year's 69.5 percent level. (See chart, p. 2360.)

That's an 11 percent drop in the earning power of Hispanics, relative to all Americans, in 18 years. The depth of that decline seems even more dramatic when compared with the relative earning power of another minority group—blacks. Over the same 18-year period, when the relative earning power of Hispanics was falling steadily, the relative earnings of black workers were virtually unchanged, and hardly fluctuated in any year.

In 1980, black workers had median weekly earnings of \$232, amounting to 79.4 percent of the \$292 earned by all workers. Fast-forward to 1998, and the relative amount of black earnings has barely changed, rising slightly to 79.7 percent of that for all workers. Throughout that period, the ratio of black earnings to the national average never changed by more than a few tenths of a percentage point.

But consider how Hispanics did compared with blacks. In 1980, black and Hispanic workers had almost exactly the same median weekly earnings—\$232 for blacks and \$230 for Hispanics. By 1985, a small gap had appeared—blacks earned \$300 and Hispanics earned \$292, or 97.3 percent of black earnings. The gap widened. In 1990, Hispanic earnings were 94 percent of blacks'; in 1998, they were 87 percent. That change, 12 percent over 18 years, is almost exactly the same amount by which Hispanic earnings declined compared with the national average during the same period.

So during a generation of great economic turmoil and growth for the United States, although Hispanics emerged as the ascendant ethnic minority, they also steadily lost ground economically, compared with other Americans and with those previously stuck in that low rank. Americans have prospered in those nearly 20 years, but some more than others: Earnings by all Americans and by blacks nearly doubled in that generation. Hispanic earnings rose too, but 20 percent less than that of whites and blacks.

**EDUCATION LAGS**

There are no easy answers for this phenomenon. It is tempting to conclude that recent waves of immigration, both legal and illegal, are responsible, because recent Hispanic immigrants are mostly poor and take the lowest-paying jobs when they arrive. But against this backdrop of ris-

ing Hispanic immigration in the 1990s has been a much larger increase in the overall population of native-born Hispanics. At current birthrates and levels of legal and illegal immigration, more than three times as many Hispanics are born in the United States each year as are added from immigration. Simply blaming the lagging earnings of Hispanics on the disadvantages of recent immigrants is not enough of an explanation.

A major factor seems to be education, or the lack of it. According to a study in the December 1998 *Population and Development Review*, a New York-based academic journal, the proportion of adult immigrants without a high school education has been rising since

1980; by 1994, they numbered about a third of all immigrants in the United States, or 5.1 million workers. That's a small proportion of the total U.S. work force of well over 100 million people, but immigrants represent 30 percent of all U.S. workers without a high school diploma.

Another factor hurting Hispanic earnings is the changing economy, which demands that workers have more education if they are to get ahead. Although some immigrants are foreign-born doctors or computer programmers bringing their skills to U.S. shores, most new arrivals are part of the low-skilled work force—indeed, they have come to dominate it. Between 1980 and 1994, the number of

native-born low-skilled workers dropped from 20 million to 13 million.

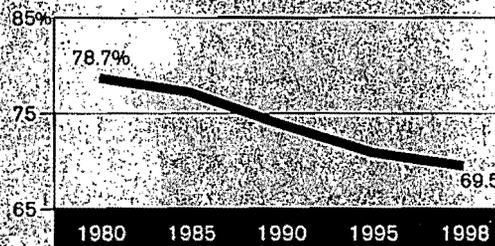
And as improved living standards become more dependent on education and skills in an information-based economy, immigrants (half of them Hispanic) are falling further and further behind. In 1980, the poverty rate for immigrants was 15.6 percent, not much more than the 12.2 percent poverty rate for native-born Americans. By 1994, the poverty rates for immigrants had grown to 22.7 percent compared to 13.9 percent for natives. Here's why: For immigrants without a high school diploma, the poverty rate rocketed from 20 percent in 1980 to 36 percent in 1994. Changes in the U.S. economy have made education and English-language skills more vital than ever. The lack of English proficiency tends to work against low-skilled workers in the Information Age more than it did in previous generations, when manufacturing jobs didn't necessarily require much in the way of language skills. Those immigrants without education and English are more likely to be trapped in poverty.

It is impossible to say exactly how much of the

**FALLING BEHIND**

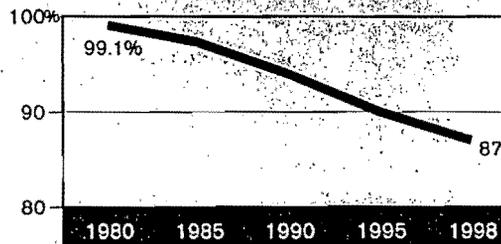
Median weekly earnings for Hispanic workers, although they have risen in nominal terms, have dropped steadily in the past 18 years in relation to median weekly earnings for all American workers. This chart shows, in percentage terms, how median weekly earnings for Hispanics compared with those for all American workers.

**HISPANIC EARNINGS COMPARED WITH ALL WORKERS' EARNINGS**



Meanwhile, Hispanics also lost ground relative to black workers. This chart shows, in percentage terms, how median weekly earnings for Hispanic workers compared with those of black American workers.

**HISPANIC EARNINGS COMPARED WITH BLACK EARNINGS**



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

low-skilled work force is made up of recent Hispanic immigrants, but new research by Jeffrey S. Passel of the Urban Institute in Washington indicates that Hispanics are much more likely to lack basic education than the next-largest immigrant ethnic group—Asians.

Passel said that sharp differences between Asian and Hispanic immigrants' earnings are due almost entirely to disparities in educational attainment. Hispanic immigrants earn about two-thirds of what is earned by "third-generation" white workers, whom Passel defines as those whose parents were born in the United States. But Asian immigrants earn much more—95 percent of what whites earn. The source of this disparity is clear: Only 41 percent of Hispanic immigrant workers are high school graduates, vs. 84 percent of Asian immigrants. Among third-generation whites, 92 percent complete high school.

The gulf is even more dramatic among the college-educated. Asian immigrants have an even higher college graduation rate—42 percent—than third-generation whites' 30 percent. Only 5 percent of Hispanic immigrants graduate from college, all but shutting out millions of other Hispanics from the credential and skills that are increasingly the means for escaping poverty in America.

Passel said there is some good news for Hispanics in his research, however. The disadvantages that plague Hispanic immigrants recede sharply for their children and grandchildren. For U.S.-born children of Hispanic immigrants, or for children who were less than 10 years old when they arrived, the benefits of an American education close the wage gap to 90 percent of the earnings of third-generation whites. Unfortunately, third-generation Hispanics don't make further progress, earning the same 90 percent achieved by their parents, he said.

This is again mainly due to the lag in the college graduation rate for Hispanics, which is only 19 percent for second-generation Hispanics and 13 percent for third-generation Hispanics. The wage gap reflects the education gap—third-generation whites are more than

twice as likely to graduate from college, and third-generation Asians three times as likely. This huge difference seems to point to a continued lag and perhaps even a widening of the earnings gap for Hispanics unless more of them can graduate from high school and college. Passel's research will be detailed in a study to be published this fall by the Urban Institute.

#### THE BIGGER PICTURE

A question separate from how well Hispanics are doing is what impact Hispanic immigrants have on the U.S. economy. Some Americans view immigrants as a pool of cheap and conscientious workers in a tight labor market—one in which arduous or distasteful

There are winners and losers from immigrant labor, however. The winners include business owners and higher-skilled workers whose pay is boosted; since low-wage immigrants allow capital to be used more productively. More generally, benefits are extended to all consumers who buy goods and services that are cheaper because of immigrant labor. The losers are less-skilled workers who compete with immigrants for jobs and wages.

However, empirical research indicates that the damage to the losers is very slight, and is overwhelmed by the benefits to others. The NRC study estimates that immigrants depressed the wages of other lower-skilled workers by only 1 percent to 2 percent in the

1980s, while boosting wages for higher-skilled workers and benefiting consumers by a much larger amount.

Even in those areas where large numbers of immigrants compete with other lower-skilled workers—in Los Angeles, for example—research shows little impact on native-born workers. Although some observers have argued that blacks suffer disproportionately from competition with immigrants, this is not true, according to the council's study. In fact, the main victims are earlier waves of immigrants.

Despite suspicions that immigrants are a fiscal burden on government, they are actually a net revenue generator, through the taxes they pay on their income and spending. The revenue produced by immigrants in two immigrant-rich states—New Jersey and California—reduced federal taxes by \$2 to \$4 a year for each American household nationwide, the study found, even allowing for the cost of education and welfare payments.

Gary Burtless, an economist at the Brookings Institution, a think tank in Washington, says he tends to think that the disadvantages Hispanics face—even after several generations in the United States—will diminish over time. The United States, almost alone among developed nations, confers one advantage that tends to reduce the disadvantages faced by immigrant groups—full citizenship for anyone born here. "It is a powerful force," said Burtless. ■



#### BRIGHTER FUTURE:

After only one generation, Hispanics earn about 90 percent of what whites earn.

jobs are especially hard to fill. Others see immigrants taking away jobs from American-born workers, depressing wages, and becoming a burden for federal and local governments.

An influential work on this debate is *The New Americans*, a 1997 study by the government's National Research Council. The study argues that immigration provides clear benefits to the U.S. economy. First, by boosting the supply of labor, immigration adds to U.S. output, providing more wealth for all Americans to share. Also, a larger labor pool allows workers to specialize and be used more productively, the study says. Overall, the actual gain from immigrant labor, in an \$8 trillion economy is minuscule—between \$1 billion and \$10 billion a year—but a clear plus.

# Boomers, Say Hola

■ BY JULIE KOSTERLITZ

**A**t the same time that America is getting browner, it is also getting grayer. This may not be a happy convergence.

Here's why: The retirement of the baby boomers will leave fewer workers to support the burgeoning costs of public programs for the elderly, such as Social Security and Medicare. At the same time, a growing share of those workers will be

minorities—especially Hispanics—who tend to earn low wages. That's bound to raise questions of fairness and of public priorities.

Some futurists predict that economic and fiscal strains will take on cultural and political overtones, resulting in a war between the generations suffused with racial tensions.

That provocative vision was first articulated by a new breed of Hispanic activist in the mid-1980s. In California, "what we will see from the year 2010 onward is essentially an age-ethnic stratification. Anyone age 65 and older will likely be Anglo, while younger people will likely be non-Anglos," David Hayes-Bautista told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1987. Hayes-Bautista, the director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health, at the University of California (Los Angeles), told *The San Diego Union-Tribune* that "either minorities are going to have to have a greater income level or the elderly are going to have to take smaller pieces of the economic pie."

Fiscal conservatives, libertarians, and young professionals quickly seized on the warning to argue for an overhaul of entitlements for the elderly. "By the second decade of the next century, an unprecedented proportion of the elderly population will lack any blood relation-

ship to younger Americans, and what's more, the generations will be increasingly estranged as well by differences of race and ethnicity," wrote a then-31-year-old political analyst, Phillip Longman, in a dire 1987 book, *Born to Pay: The New Politics of Aging in America*.

Longman argued that Social Security ought to go only to the needy—an approach that has since fallen out of favor among Social Security's critics. But critics today seize on the same demographic facts to argue for "privatizing" Social Security—that is, diverting some or all of payroll taxes into private retirement accounts that can be invested in the stock market, which promises greater returns over the long haul.

In a report issued last year, William W. Beach, director of the Center for Data Analysis at the conservative Heritage Foundation, contended that Social Security is an especially bad deal for Hispanics because the payouts are getting ever more meager relative to taxes paid, and because keeping the system solvent would require either major benefit cuts or a 40 percent tax increase between now and 2050. "The declining rates of return and mounting tax burdens implied by the current system disproportionately affect the comparatively youthful Hispanic population," he

wrote. In 2050, the report noted, the government estimates that Hispanics will comprise almost 25 percent of the 18-to-66-year-old population, but just 17 percent of those age 67 and over.

Privatization ought to hold a special appeal for Hispanics, he argued, not only because it could provide them more money in retirement, but also because it could offer them a vital opportunity to acquire and pass on wealth—and thus join the mainstream of American economic life.

Statistics do tend to show that Hispanics retire with far fewer assets. Hispanic households headed by adults over age 70, for example, have only one-eighth the financial assets of whites (not including the value of a home), says James P. Smith, a senior economist at RAND, a think tank in Santa Monica, Calif. Smith argues that Social Security may in fact play a role in discouraging saving among those with low wages.

Thus far, however, the privatization push has failed to catch fire with either ordinary Hispanics or the major advocacy groups. As relative newcomers, Hispanics tend to be more preoccupied with issues that address their immediate needs and concerns—welfare reform, affirmative action, education, immigration, and civil rights.

**HISPANIC WORKERS  
IN THE NEXT CENTURY  
WILL BE CRUCIAL TO  
PAYING THE  
RETIREMENT COSTS  
OF BABY BOOMERS.**

**NEXT GENERATION:**

Hispanic groups are just beginning to focus on their interests in the Social Security reform debate.



RICHARD A. BLOOD

Indeed, it was a 30-something white guy, Richard Thau, executive director of Third Millennium—the self-styled lobby for Generation X—who convened the first major conference of Hispanic advocacy groups on Social Security reform, just a little more than two years ago.

Although Third Millennium supports sweeping reforms, including partial privatization, Thau says his goal is not to proselytize but to be inclusive. "I'd been attending any number of symposia, and came to the conclusion that those involved in the discussion on aging were almost exclusively Anglo men over the age of 50," he said, adding that Third Millennium held similar conferences with African-American and women's groups, among others.

But as Hispanic advocacy groups begin focusing on the issue, most of them—with the exception of business-oriented groups—say they oppose privatization and want reforms that preserve Social Security's basic structure.

That's because Hispanics as a group rely far more heavily on Social Security for retirement income than does the population as a whole: just 9 percent of all couples age 65 and older rely on the program for all of their income, but nearly a quarter of Hispanic couples do.

And, as a group, Hispanics tend to

get more from Social Security—relative to what they paid in—than either whites or blacks. That's because the program is comparatively more generous to low-wage workers and to those with longer life expectancies. Hispanics, according to government statistics, live longer than other ethnic groups, and thus collect more benefits. Some Hispanic scholars dispute that, however, saying the government's data on Hispanics' life expectancy must be flawed. Hispanics' poverty, hazardous occupations, and poor access to health care all suggest a shorter-than-average life expectancy.

"The privatizers' promise of greater riches in retirement does have some appeal to Hispanic groups. Despite Social Security, nearly one in four older Latinos lives in poverty—more than two and a half times the poverty rate for elderly whites, and just below the rate for elderly blacks. The claim by conservatives that the Social Security program is not a good deal "is not completely untrue," said Eric Rodriguez, a senior policy analyst with the National Council of La Raza.

But the Heritage analysis has come under a barrage of criticism from liberal analysts and Social Security's own actuaries for, among other things, overstating the possible returns from individual accounts and understating the returns

from Social Security. Fernando Torres-Gil, associate dean of the School of Public Policy and Social Research at UCLA, calls Heritage's comparisons between Social Security and privatization "gross oversimplification."

Rodriguez fears that letting individuals invest a share of their own wages will mainly benefit those with high salaries and investment savvy. Hispanics, most of whom know little of Wall Street and whose ranks include many immigrants deeply mistrustful of banks and financial institutions, would, he argues, be left behind. Lacking other assets, he said, they simply can't afford to risk their old-age security in the stock market. "The fact

that [Social Security] is guaranteed and that it is progressive is very important, because their earnings and incomes are very low."

Still, Hispanic leaders praise conservatives for reaching out to them when others did not. "Though I do not agree with them, Third Millennium and Heritage have put this issue on the agenda, and I appreciate that," said Torres-Gil. These leaders say they are educating their members on the issues and will insist on having more say in the Social Security reform debate.

But Hispanic leaders are also recasting the generational arguments to advance their own priorities, including better health care, education, and job training. In a sense, they're making Hayes-Bautista's original argument all over again.

"If the retired Anglo community will not support education for Hispanic children, why should those Hispanics as workers support generous" cost-of-living increases for retirees, asks Harry P. Pachon, president of the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, a Hispanic-focused think tank with offices in California and Texas.

Indeed, says Pachon, Hispanics' poor job prospects are "a recipe for inter-ethnic tensions just within the work force itself." ■

# The Education Challenge

■ BY SIOBHAN GORMAN

**T**he half-paved road that leads up to Kelly Elementary School is lined with single-bedroom, wood-frame houses that sleep families of six to eight people and lack running water.

Located in the Las Milpas *colonia*—an impoverished

border community—in the city of Pharr, Texas, the neighborhood struggles with gangs, domestic violence, and an unemployment rate exceeding 45 percent. At Kelly, 99 percent of the students are Hispanic; few students enter pre-kindergarten speaking English; and 84 percent come from families with low-enough incomes to qualify for the free or reduced-price lunches offered under a federal program. But despite all their problems, inside the school walls, children are learning.

"It was an oasis compared to everything around it," said Rosalie O'Donoghue, a former educator who was part of a team of evaluators who awarded Kelly a 1997-98 national "distinguished school" award, one of five awarded to schools in Texas by the U.S. Department of Education.

Schools such as Kelly, made up mainly of immigrants' children, usually start miles behind the starting block. Each year, they face unpredictable enrollment numbers and flocks of students who do not speak a word of English at home. In addition, immigrant communities tend to have low incomes and are not a popular destination for teachers, especially good ones.

But Kelly's students are doing well. More than 90 percent of them are passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test. The key seems to be Kelly's energetic yet flexible

emphasis on basic reading skills, frequent diagnostic tests, increased parental involvement, a strong principal, and a school district that has kept teachers' salaries competitive.

But the school's progress is recent. Four years ago only 68 percent of Kelly's students passed the Texas assessment test, a result that prevented the school from achieving the second highest of four academic ratings from the state. The explanation: Many of the kids just couldn't read. With little supervision at home and no after-school options, most Kelly students went home to a television set. They would return to school the next day minus homework and books, but able to summarize the plot of that

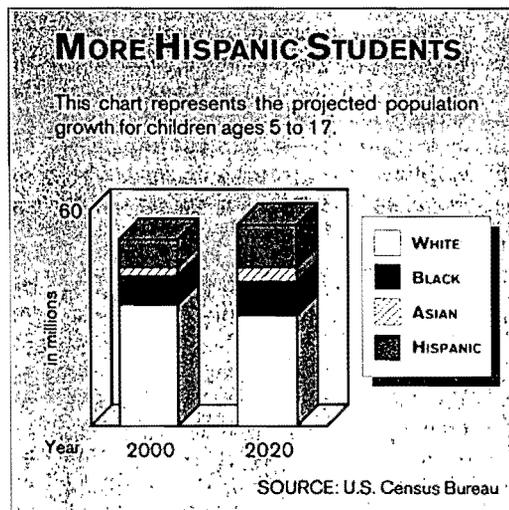
afternoon's *novelas*—Spanish soap operas.

Kelly faced other handicaps no different from those of many other schools that serve immigrant families. Annual budgets are based on the number of students enrolled the previous year, so a school with an unpredictable and growing enrollment is perpetually underbudgeted, said Rodolfo O. de la Garza, a University of Texas (Austin) government professor who specializes in Latino issues. At Kelly, which the state regards as a "rapid growth" campus, the student population swelled to 800 last year, finally prompting the school district to move half of the children to another, newly created elementary school.

In communities such as Las Milpas, where Spanish is the only language spoken at home, schools need to adapt their curricula and budgets accordingly. They need sets of books and teaching materials in two languages, as well as teachers trained in teaching children English while they're also teaching them math, science, and history. And de la Garza has found that even when schools recruit properly trained bilingual teachers, sometimes those teachers overcompensate for the students' problems by expecting less from them.

With students growing up in a Spanish-speaking community, it also becomes more difficult to com-

**ONE TEXAS SCHOOL IS MAKING PROGRESS DESPITE LONG ODDS, BUT HISPANIC CHILDREN CONTINUE TO LAG IN SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT.**



vince them that learning English is important. "They speak English here in school, but they go home and it's Spanish all the time," said Trine Barron, the principal of Kelly Elementary. "We have to do a lot of motivating just to get them interested in English."

Attracting good teachers and retaining them are also problems. "The holding power of a low-income school district makes it very difficult to compete," said Oscar M. Cardenas, a senior director in the Texas Education Agency's Office for the Education of Special Populations.

Barron said her school has been blessed with a district superintendent who has made teachers' salaries a priority and has kept them competitive with those of surrounding areas. The starting salary in the Hidalgo Independent School District is \$28,240; teachers also get bonuses every five years.

After climbing for nearly a decade, Kelly students' reading scores plateaued four years ago, and curriculum tinkering, such as adding a computer-based reading program, had not helped much. Barron decided it was time for drastic action. Because reading was the school's weak point, she dedicated two hours of classroom time each day to reading, and started using Reading Recovery, a curriculum that has been successful with many kinds of students across the country. The program, which requires specialized training for teachers, consists of daily intensive 45-minute, one-on-one sessions with students. At Kelly they're usually conducted in Spanish.

Since the adoption of Reading Recovery, the school's passing rate on the Texas assessment test for reading has shot up from 68 percent to 91 percent. Now some of the kids who lagged far behind in reading are among the school's top readers, Barron said.

And two years ago, the Hidalgo School District began requiring schools

**TOUGH CLIMB:**

Throughout the 1990s, Hispanic students have scored about 10 percent lower than non-Hispanics on national tests.



RICHARD A. BLOOM

to administer diagnostic tests in reading, math, writing, social studies, and science every six weeks. Teachers report back to the district on each student's progress and the areas in which children need help. Students who show deficiencies on the tests attend daily after-school tutoring that targets the concepts that are troubling them.

The other major change at Kelly was an increased emphasis on parents. Kelly parent Norma Dominguez started a parental involvement program four years ago, and it now holds monthly meetings at the school and at parents' homes, in addition to offering field trips and English-language programs.

In the first year, the number of parent volunteers in Dominguez's program at Kelly grew from two to 15. It has leveled off at 25, which is still small for a school that had 800 students. But Dominguez says the program's outreach efforts have made many more parents comfortable with the school. She estimates that 80 percent of them are illegal immigrants who feared the school would contact

immigration officials. A few years ago, parents would set foot on campus only when their children got in trouble, but now, Barron said, "they've become a lot more comfortable coming in. They see us as partners."

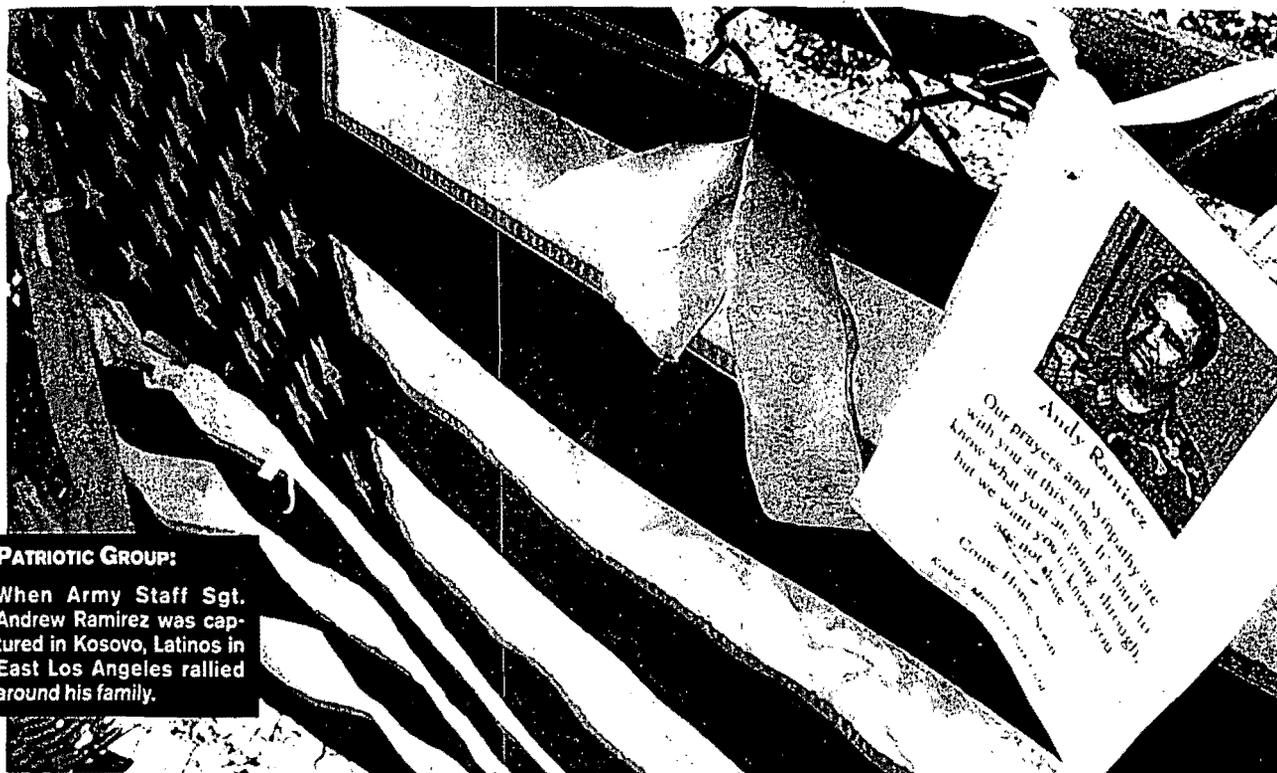
Perhaps one of the keys to Kelly's success is the willingness of administrators and teachers to try new things. This school year, which began on Aug. 10, Barron has a new experiment in the works. She has restructured the day to allow students reading at the highest levels to go home an hour early. Barron hopes that the smaller number of students for that last hour will enable teachers to offer more specialized attention to slower readers.

While Kelly Elementary's experience shows that a focused effort can bring low-performing Hispanic children up to speed, it is the exception and not the rule. Throughout the 1990s, Hispanic students in grades 4, 8, and 12 have scored about 10 percent lower than non-Hispanic white students in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test.

And the demographic challenges are considerable. The Hispanic school-age population is growing faster than that of any other ethnic group. Census figures predict the Hispanic school-age population will rise 54 percent between 1995 and 2010, and the white school-age population will decline about 6 percent.

But Hispanic leaders note that immigrants come here not only for jobs but also for the American promise of universal education, and the country would do well to meet that need.

"Education has been the fundamental consistent policy concern of Mexican-Americans since the 19th century," de la Garza said. "Their ability to realize that objective has been limited, and their success at realizing that objective has been limited, but they have always tried to pursue it despite their own lack of education."

**PATRIOTIC GROUP:**

When Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Ramirez was captured in Kosovo, Latinos in East Los Angeles rallied around his family.

# Not Enough GI José's

■ BY SYDNEY J. FREEDBERG JR.

**HISPANICS COULD FILL THE MILITARY'S RECRUITMENT GAP, IF THEY COULD FINISH HIGH SCHOOL IN GREATER NUMBERS.**

ook at the names on the Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Or the names of the three soldiers captured by the Serbs during the Kosovo campaign: Stone, Gonzales, and Ramirez.

By these and many other measures, Hispanics are one of America's more martially inclined ethnic groups. Hispanic leaders point proudly to Hispanics' commitment to military service. In Defense Department surveys, Hispanic youth consistently indicate above-average interest in enlisting. There's just one problem: Hispanics are actually underrepresented in the ranks.

Only the Marine Corps is home to the same percentage of Hispanics as the general working-age population,

just under 12 percent. All of the other services fall short. New classes of recruits coming into the military are somewhat more representative—preliminary figures show the Navy's 1998 recruiting class yielded full representation—but the Army and, especially, the Air Force still lag.

And at a time of large shortfalls in military recruiting, the mystery of the missing Hispanics is no longer just an issue of ethnic equity, but a national security matter as well. The most man-

power-intensive service, the Army, expects to fall more than 7,000 recruits short this year. Said Army Secretary Louis Caldera, himself a Latino, "We'd be OK if we were getting our fair share of the Hispanic-American market."

So what's the problem? Hispanics, after all, were bloodily over-represented in the Vietnam War, accounting for a quarter of combat casualties. But unlike the massive, mostly drafted force of that era, the modern military recruits almost exclusively among high school graduates and entices many of the best ones with offers of college aid. Today, the Pentagon rejects most high school dropouts out of hand. That means, lamented Rep. Ciro Rodriguez, D-Texas, "that half of Hispanics can't even participate." In Texas' public high schools, 54 percent of Hispanics drop out; nationwide, 30 percent do.

The hard fact is that Hispanics are

the worst-educated group in the United States—and today's military is the best-educated in American history. Any serious solution must address that fundamental mismatch.

But how? There is no consensus, even inside the Pentagon. The point man on the issue is Caldera, a West Point graduate and former Army officer who came to the Defense Department after a career in California politics. The controversial centerpiece of his program: recruiting more high school dropouts who possess GED certificates.

### JOHNNY GET YOUR GED

The military does not take high school dropouts without credentials. But what it does take, cautiously and in limited numbers—no more than 10 percent of recruits under Pentagon policy—are holders of the General Educational Development certificate. Devised for the military by the American Council on Education in 1942, the GED has become widely accepted in the civilian world as a rough equivalent of a high school diploma. Some 800,000 people take the test every year.

The Army has already increased its intake of GED recruits to the maximum. But Caldera does not want simply to take more GED-holders: He wants to make more. For high school dropouts with no criminal record, no drug problems, and good scores on military entry exams, a pilot Army program will pay for enrollment in GED programs—in return for their enlisting once they pass. The goal, Caldera said, is "to expand the market that we are recruiting from by looking at individuals who today we can't recruit, and turning them into individuals that we can."

But over the years, the military has had well-founded reasons to limit recruitment of GEDs.

First, experts disagree about the GED's ability to measure academic achievement. The American Council on Education says its test is a good barometer of skills; it boasts it raised standards two years ago so high that a

third of traditional high school graduates can't pass. But critics charge that the test still takes a "lowest-common-denominator" approach.

What really worries the military, however, is not intelligence, but persistence. Many dropouts are bright, but all are proven quitters, the logic goes. If they dropped out of high school, they'll probably drop out of the military as well, wasting recruiters' time and the armed forces' training dollars.

Statistics support this common-sense conclusion. Combining data from all the armed services from 1988-94, the attrition rate for enlistees with high school diplomas—those who flunk basic training, get discharged, or other-

the Hispanic community, many dropouts—far from being slackers—left school to take a full-time job to help support their struggling families. The military can sort out the most motivated by looking at legal records, work history, psychological exams, and aptitude tests. And, under the new program, candidates cannot just cram for the GED exam, because the Army will require them to take remedial courses.

Although examining other criteria shows "some promise," said Janice H. Laurence, an analyst at the Human Resources Research Organization in Alexandria, Va., "the educational credential has been the single best predictor" of whether a recruit will quit or stick with it. Statistically speaking, she said, everything else is "iffy."

But answering "whats" is why experiments are conducted in the first place, and Congress is so far letting Caldera proceed. "There are still some pretty rigorous recruiting standards," said Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., chairman of the Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee. "I approve of this program. [though] we'll have to watch it very closely. For the time being, I'm satisfied."

Hispanic members of Congress are more than satisfied with Caldera's program. Of the Texas delegation's five Hispanic Democrats, Caldera's program won plaudits from all four interviewed: Rodriguez, Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz, Rep. Silvestre Reyes—all members of the House Armed Services Committee—and Rep. Charles Gonzalez. Hispanic activists also praise Caldera's plan. Said Jess Quintero, national secretary of the Hispanic veterans' group, American GI Forum: "Other leaders have talked about it, but he put a plan into action."

But is Caldera lowering standards? "Compared to what?" responded Lawrence J. Korb, a former assistant secretary of Defense who is now with the Council on Foreign Relations, a



### NEW METHODS:

Army Secretary Louis Caldera and Air Force personnel chief Ruby DeMesme are trying new ways to recruit more Hispanics.

wise quit before their three-year term is up—is 29 percent. For enlistees with GEDs, it's 49 percent.

But Rep. Rodriguez said that "a damn survey" does not tell the whole story and that undoubtedly some GED-holders have the dedication to succeed in the military. Rodriguez should know. A ninth-grade dropout himself, he went on to college, not to mention Congress. "You've got to be able to look at the individual," he insisted. "We're not asking to lower standards, but we are asking them to look at multiple criteria."

That is Caldera's strategy. The Secretary believes the Army can pick and choose from among GED-holders. "You can segment that group," he said, "and take the cream of the crop of the non-high-school graduates." Especially in

think tank in New York. "Compared to the last couple of years, sure; but compared to the force that won the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War, no." The weaker economy and shrinking military of the early 1990s made recruiting easy, allowing the military to raise its standards to historic highs. Korb argues that during the 1980s, the military accepted more recruits who had not finished high school and more people with lower entrance exam scores. "If you went back to the . . . '80s quality [standards]," said Korb, "you could solve this very, very quickly."

**GROUNDING**

Not a chance, said Ruby B. DeMesme, the Air Force assistant secretary for manpower. "We are not considering lowering our quality standards."

And those standards have plenty of room to drop. Although the Pentagon lets each service take as many as 10 percent of its recruits from the ranks of GED-holders—as the Army does—the Air Force takes less than 1 percent, a number that upsets Hispanic lawmakers. Complained Rodriguez: "The hardest nut to crack is that Air Force."

Of all the services, the Air Force has the best-educated personnel and the worst underrepresentation of Hispanics: According to the Air Force's latest figures, 5.3 percent of enlisted personnel and just 2.2 percent of officers are Hispanic. Because it depends on temperamental, cutting-edge technology, the service always insisted on high school graduates, and it got them, drawn by the glamour of that same technology. For 20 years, the Air Force flew past every recruiting target.

But that in itself was a problem. The Air Force never developed a strategy to recruit more Hispanics, because it never needed a strategy to recruit anyone. The service did not even advertise on television. The Air Force essentially let Hollywood and word-of-mouth do its work for it and reaped the population that walked in the door. Said DeMesme: "We were actually having to turn away people, so we didn't think it

was necessary to get more people interested."

That has changed. This year, the Air Force might miss its annual quota for the first time in 20 years. Change is in the air. "The Air Force has not traditionally used paid advertising," said DeMesme. "We have begun to, [including] bilingual kinds of messages. . . . We haven't used posters where you see Hispanics flying airplanes a lot; we're going to do more of that."

But "simply advertising more aggressively . . . is not going to be producing the improvement and the turnaround they should be striving for," fretted Norman Heitzman, a Defense Department analyst on loan to the Hispanic advocacy group National Council of La Raza (itself a sign of how seriously the Pentagon takes the issue). To change who comes in, said Heitzman, the military must commit to change itself.

**OPPORTUNITY OR EXPLOITATION?**

The Marine Corps' success, said Heitzman, begins at the top, with a strong commitment to innovation from senior service leaders. "When I've gone to meetings with the Marine Corps that have focused on this," he said, "You've had [Gen. Charles C. Krulak,] the commandant of the Marines, sitting right there."

While Hispanics' affinity for the Ma-

rine Corps dates at least to Vietnam—"Hispanics want to be macho men, and I don't blame 'em," said Rep. Ortiz—the four-year tenure of Gen. Krulak, which ended June 30, saw a sharp increase.

"The secret," said Krulak in an interview, is "letting the Hispanic population know that we are not, I say again not, going in to take their kids from the educational system." Krulak asserts that parents will not encourage their children to enlist if they see the services as dead-end jobs for dropouts; but if they view a tour of duty as a bright kid's path toward college and a good job, the parents will be on the recruiters' side.

Although Krulak hesitates to criticize the Army, he is "worried" by the plan to target GED-holders: "The signal they're sending is, 'OK, don't worry about getting out of school, because the Army will come along and give you the opportunity.'"

But Hispanic members of Congress say that pursuing Krulak's logic to its extreme would mean not even having a GED for dropouts. In the Hispanic community, those dropouts are already there; opening up opportunities to the nongraduates should hardly encourage more youths to quit school, Rodriguez said. Indeed, both Ortiz—a dropout himself—and Reyes used the Army as their ladder up.

Some critics have said that military recruiting among Hispanics amounts to an exploitive "economic draft" of the underprivileged. "The answer to those that would worry about exploitation," Reyes replied, is, "you get much more out of it than you lose." Reyes and three of his five brothers joined the Army. If he hadn't, he said, "I probably still would be on that farm."

And the military needs Hispanics as much as they need it. "Sometime early in the next century, a quarter of the nation's population is going to be Hispanic," said Caldera. "A quarter of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen [will] have to come from the Hispanic population. So it's important that we start figuring out how to penetrate that market today."

**WANTED: MORE HISPANICS IN UNIFORM**

Hispanics make up about 12 percent of the military-age population, but a far smaller share of the military force, except for the Marine Corps.

**PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS AMONG:**

Civilians 18-44 years old	11.9%
Marine enlisted personnel	11.6
Navy enlisted personnel	8.5
Army enlisted personnel	7.0
All services enlisted personnel	7.0
Air Force enlisted personnel	4.8
Civilians 18-24 years old	14.5
Marine recruits	12.3
Navy recruits	10.2
Army recruits	9.6
Air Force recruits	6.8

SOURCES: Department of Defense, National Council of La Raza, from 1997 data

## The National Council of La Raza

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization established in 1968 to reduce poverty and discrimination, and improve life opportunities for Hispanic Americans. NCLR has chosen to work toward this goal through two primary, complementary approaches:

- ❖ **Capacity-building assistance to support and strengthen Hispanic community-based organizations:** providing organizational assistance in management, governance, program operations, and resource development to Hispanic community-based organizations in urban and rural areas nationwide, especially those which serve low-income and disadvantaged Hispanics.
- ❖ **Applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy:** providing an Hispanic perspective on issues such as education, immigration, housing, health, employment and training, and civil rights enforcement, to increase policy-maker and public understanding of Hispanic needs, and to encourage the adoption of programs and policies which equitably serve Hispanics.

NCLR strengthens these efforts with **public information and media activities** and **special and international projects**. These include innovative projects, catalytic efforts, formation of and participation in coalitions, and other special activities which use the NCLR structure and credibility to create other entities or projects which are important to the Hispanic community, and can sometimes be “spun off” as independent entities.

**NCLR is the largest constituency-based national Hispanic organization, serving all Hispanic nationality groups in all regions of the country.** NCLR has over 220 formal affiliates who together serve 37 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia — and a broader network of more than 20,000 groups and individuals nationwide — reaching more than three million Hispanics annually. Capacity-building assistance to support and strengthen local Hispanic groups — provided from NCLR’s Washington, D.C., headquarters and its field offices in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Chicago, and San Antonio — focuses on resource development, program operations, management, and governance. NCLR provides services not only to its own affiliates, but also to other local Hispanic organizations; unlike organizations which serve only their own “chapters,” NCLR welcomes affiliation from independent Hispanic groups which share NCLR’s goals and self-help philosophy. NCLR also assists Hispanic groups which are not formal affiliates through issue networks on HIV/AIDS, health, elderly, education, leadership, and other issue areas.

**NCLR’s Policy Analysis Center is the pre-eminent Hispanic “think tank,” serving as a voice for Hispanic Americans in Washington, D.C.;** the *Albuquerque Tribune* has called NCLR “the leading Hispanic think tank in the country,” and the *Baltimore Sun* routinely refers to NCLR as “the principal” Latino advocacy group. Its unique capacity to provide timely policy analyses, combined with its considerable advocacy expertise, a reputation for political independence, and an identifiable constituency, permits NCLR to play an important role in policy and advocacy efforts. Its policy-related documents command extensive press and policy maker attention, and NCLR is consistently asked to testify and comment on public policy issues such as immigration and education, as well as other issues of broad concern, from free trade to affordable housing, health policy, and tax reform. The synergistic and complementary approach between NCLR’s capacity-building efforts and its advocacy-related activities is exemplified by its Census Information Center, which serves as a “clearinghouse” on Hispanic Census data and other information, and has begun to establish “local policy centers” at six of its affiliated Hispanic community-based organizations.



**NCLR has a strong and stable leadership.** The NCLR President, Raul Yzaguirre, has led the organization for 25 years, and is among the best known and most respected national Hispanic leaders; he serves on the Boards of such entities as the Enterprise Foundation, National Democratic Institute, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, and the National Alliance of Business; was founding Chairperson of the National Neighborhood Coalition; and was the first minority Chairperson of the Independent Sector. He served as Chairperson of President Clinton's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and is currently President of the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation.

**NCLR's governing Board represents the constituency it serves.** NCLR's Board of Directors includes 34 elected members; bylaws require that the Board include representatives of various geographic regions and nationality groups, that half the Board represent affiliates or have identifiable constituencies, and that the Board include approximately half men and half women. The current NCLR Chair is Ramon Murguia, an attorney from Kansas City, Kansas.

**NCLR works closely with the private sector and has a broad base of financial support.** NCLR's credibility in the corporate sector is demonstrated by its active Corporate Board of Advisors, which includes senior executives from 25 major corporations and their liaison staff, who provide ongoing consultation and assistance on a variety of efforts, from education and community health projects to visibility and fund raising. NCLR maintains a diverse revenue base; the organization receives two-thirds of its funding from corporations and foundations, and the remaining from government sources.

**NCLR believes in cooperation and collaboration.** NCLR staff belong to many issue-focused coalitions and associations, cooperating with other nonprofit organizations and private-sector entities on issues ranging from welfare reform to energy. All of NCLR's national-emphasis projects, which sometimes include pass-through funding — health, housing and community development, employment and training, education, elderly issues, volunteer programs, and leadership — include efforts to educate mainstream organizations, public and private, about Hispanic needs and help them develop partnerships with Hispanic community-based organizations. NCLR also carries out joint projects with other organizations; NCLR is a partner with the National Urban League Project PRISM (**P**artners for **R**eform in **S**cience and **M**athematics), a national education reform project funded by the Annenberg/CPB Project.

Some of NCLR's major reports include: the third in a series of statistical analyses on *Latino Education Status and Prospects: State of Hispanic America 1998*; a comprehensive analysis of the Immigration Reform and Control Act's objective-related performance, *Racing Toward Big Brother: Computer Verification, ID Cards, and Immigration Control: State of Hispanic America, 1995*; an analysis of the performance of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in serving Hispanics, *The Empty Promise: EEOC and Hispanics*; a statistical "snapshot" of the status of the Hispanic population, *State of Hispanic America: 1991*; a report assessing the burden and fairness of federal, state, and local taxes for Hispanics: *Burden or Relief? The Impact of Tax Policy on Hispanic Working Families: State of Hispanic America 1996*; a major analysis on Hispanic health status, *Hispanic Health Status: A Disturbing Diagnosis*; a report providing an empirical basis for comparing the magnitude of the effects of alternative anti-poverty strategies on Hispanics, *State of Hispanic America 1993: Toward a Latino Anti-Poverty Agenda*; and a report documenting the negative portrayal of Hispanics in the media and entertainment industry, and its effects on Hispanic and non-Hispanic public opinion, *Out of the Picture: Hispanics in the Media*.

NCLR also publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Agenda*. NCLR's extensive series of policy reports and training modules are briefly described in its *Publications Guide*.

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**Overview**

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In 1998, the number of Hispanic women totaled 14.7 million, accounting for 48.6% of the total Hispanic population, 5.4% of the total U.S. population, and 10.7% of all women in the United States. Since 1990, the number of Hispanic women has increased by about 3.6 million, or 32.4%. By 2005, the number of Hispanic women is projected to increase 22.4% to 18 million. In 1997, Mexican women represented the largest share of Hispanic women, at 9.0 million (62.1% of all Hispanic women), with Central and South American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban women following at 2.1 million (14.7%), 1.7 million (11.4%), and 0.6 million (4.0%), respectively. In general, Hispanic women tend to be younger and have lower educational levels and labor force participation rates than White and Black women. In addition, Hispanic women are more likely to have children, but less likely to be covered by private or government health insurance, than White or Black women.

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**Family Characteristics**

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- ❖ **Hispanic women are younger, and more likely than White and Black women to be under 18 years of age.** In 1997, the median age for Hispanic women was 27 years, compared to 37 years for White women and 31 years for Black women. In addition, Hispanic women under 18 years of age accounted for more than one-third (35.1%) of the Hispanic women population and one-seventh (14.8%) of the total U.S. women population under 18 years of age. By comparison, fewer than one-quarter (23.8%) of White women and fewer than one-third (29.7%) of Black women were under 18 years old.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are more likely than White women, but less likely than Black women, to be single mothers.** In 1997, 10.6% of Hispanic women were single mothers, compared to 5.7% of White women and 18.3% of Black women.
- ❖ **Hispanic young women have the highest birthrate of all adolescents.** In 1995, Hispanic teenagers 15-19 years old had a higher birthrate than African-American or White adolescents (106.7 per 1000 women, compared to 96.1 and 50.1, respectively), a figure which has steadily increased since the 1980s. Moreover, the birthrate for unmarried Hispanic, African American, and White young women ages 15-19 that same year was 78.7, 92.8, and 35.5 per 1000, respectively.

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**Fertility**

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- ❖ **The birth rate for Hispanic women is higher than that for White and Black women.** In 1996, the birth rate for Hispanic women 15-44 years old was 104.9 per 1,000 women. Data show that the birth rate for comparable White and Black women was 64.7 and 71.1 per 1,000 women, respectively.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are more likely than White women, but less likely than Black women, to give birth out of wedlock.** In 1996, two in every five (40.9%) births to Hispanic women were outside of marriage, compared to one-quarter (25.6%) and seven-tenths (69.7%) of births to White and Black women, respectively.

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**Education**

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- ❖ **High school and college completion rates for Hispanic women are lower than those for White and Black women.** In 1997, 54.6% of Hispanic women 25 years old and over had completed high school and 10.1% had completed four or more years of college. In comparison, 83.2% of White women and 76.0% of Black women had graduated from high school, while 22.3% of White women and 13.9% of Black women had completed four or more years of college.

# HISPANIC WOMEN FACT SHEET

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- ❖ **Young Hispanic females are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school than their White peers.** In 1996, the event dropout rate for Hispanic women was 8.3%. That same year, the dropout rate was 3.8% for White women and 8.5% for Black women.

## Labor Force Status

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- ❖ **The number of Hispanic women in the labor force has increased since 1990.** In 1997, the labor force participation rate for Hispanic women 16 years old and over was 56.1%, an increase of three percentage points since 1990. In comparison, 59.5% of White women and 61.7% of Black women were working or looking for work, an increase of 2.1 percentage points and 3.4 percentage points, respectively, since 1990.
- ❖ **Among Hispanic subgroups, Central and South American women have the highest labor force participation rates.** Almost three-fifths (59.7%) of Central and South American women were working or looking for work in 1997, compared to more than one-half of Cuban (53.0%) and Mexican (54.0%) women, and almost one-half (49.0%) of Puerto Rican women.
- ❖ **A smaller proportion of Hispanic women is working than either White or Black women.** In 1997, the employment-to-population ratio for Hispanic women 16 years old and over was 50.2%, compared to 57.0% for White women and 55.6% for Black women.
- ❖ **The unemployment rate for Hispanic women is higher than that for White women, but lower than that for Black women, while Puerto Rican women have the highest unemployment rate among Hispanic subgroups.** In 1997, the unemployment rate for Hispanic women 16 years old and over was 8.9%, compared to 4.2% for White women and 9.9% for Black women of the same age group. In addition, the unemployment rate for Puerto Rican women 16 years old and over was 10.1%, compared to 8.9% and 7.6% for Mexican and Cuban women, respectively.
- ❖ **Employed Hispanic women are more likely than White and Black women to be concentrated in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, and less likely than White or Black women to be concentrated in either service occupations or managerial and professional occupations.** In 1996, almost two in five (38.4%) Hispanic women worked in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, one-fourth (25.0%) in service occupations, and one-sixth (17.4%) in managerial and professional occupations. In comparison, 41.9% of White women and 38.4% of Black women worked in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, 16.3% and 25.4% in service occupations, and 31.5% and 22.7% in managerial and professional occupations, respectively.
- ❖ **The economic force of Hispanic women has been growing since 1990.** The participation rate of Hispanic women in managerial and professional occupations increased 2.8 percentage points since 1990. In addition, a greater proportion of Hispanic women is employed in managerial and professional occupations in comparison to Hispanic males (17.4% compared to 12.1% in 1996).

## Income and Poverty

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- ❖ **Hispanic women workers have lower median earnings than White women workers and median earnings similar to those of Black women workers.** In 1997, the median earnings for Hispanic women year-round, full-time workers were \$18,973, while those of White women workers were \$25,331. Black women workers had median earnings of \$22,035 that year.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are more likely to be poor than their White and Black counterparts, and Puerto Rican women are the poorest Hispanic women subgroup.** In 1997, over one-quarter (29.8%) of Hispanic women were poor, compared to 12.4% of White women, and 28.9% of Black women. Furthermore, in 1996, 38.0% of Puerto Rican women lived below the poverty level, compared to 34.0% of Mexican women. (No such data exist for Cuban, Dominican, and Central and South American women.)

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<sup>1</sup> The event dropout rate describes the proportion of students who leave school each year without completing a high school program.

<sup>2</sup> The employment-to-population ratio measures the proportion of the population that is employed.

## Health Status

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- ❖ **Hispanic women are less likely to have private or government health insurance than White or Black women, but more likely than White women to be covered by Medicaid.** In 1996, 30.4% of Hispanic women lacked health insurance, while 24.9% were covered by Medicaid. In comparison, 13.1% of White women and 19.3% of Black women had no health insurance, and 10.6% of White women and 28.0% of Black women were covered by Medicaid.
- ❖ **Hispanic women are disproportionately affected by AIDS.** In 1997, while 10.4% of the total U.S. women population was Hispanic, Hispanic women accounted for 20.3% of all AIDS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Sources

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U.S. Census Bureau, The Hispanic Population in the United States: 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Income and Poverty Tables: 1959 to 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, Poverty in the United States: 1997; U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1990 to 1998; U.S. Census Bureau, Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2050; U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1997; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1997; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Characteristics of Black and Hispanic Workers: September 1997; National Center for Health Statistics, Monthly Vital Statistics Report, Volume 45, No. 10(S) 2: April 1997; and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Overview

According to recently-released data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Hispanics in poverty declined over the period 1996 to 1997. In particular, the declines in the poverty rates of both Hispanics and Blacks accounted for most of the decrease in the overall poverty rate in the United States over that period.

Despite this recent drop, the poverty rate for Hispanics remains significantly higher than the rates for other groups. Furthermore, the persistence of high poverty in the Hispanic community poses a serious threat to the overall economic well-being of Hispanics in the United States.

## Hispanic Poverty

- ❖ **The poverty rate for Hispanics remains high despite declines in overall U.S. poverty rates.** In 1997, both the number of poor and the poverty rate decreased for Hispanics: from 29.4% (8.7 million) in 1996 to 27.1% (8.3 million) in 1997. Likewise, in 1997, the poverty rate for the United States was 13.3%, lower than the 13.7% reported for 1996.
- ❖ **The Hispanic poverty rate is at its lowest level in almost a decade.** In 1997, the poverty rate for Hispanic persons was 27.1%, the highest rate among all groups (the poverty rate for Blacks was 26.5%, whereas the poverty rate for Whites was 11.0%). By comparison, in 1989, 26.2% of Hispanics were poor.

## Hispanic Family Poverty

- ❖ **The poverty rate for Hispanic families remains high despite a decrease over the time period 1996-1997.** The Hispanic family poverty rate fell from 26.4% in 1996 to 24.7% in 1997. However, the number of Hispanic families in poverty did not decrease from 1996 to 1997, numbering close to 1.7 million both years. By comparison, in 1997, 7.3 million U.S. families were poor, down from the 7.7 million reported for 1996.
- ❖ **Hispanic families remain the poorest of American families.** In 1997, the poverty rate for Hispanic families was 24.7%. Similarly, the Black family poverty rate was 23.6%. White families, however, had a poverty rate of 8.3%, the lowest of all ethnic and racial groups.
- ❖ **The poverty rate for Hispanic married-couple families is significantly higher than that of either Blacks or Whites.** In 1997, the poverty rate for Hispanic married-couple families was 17.4%. In comparison, the poverty rate for Black and White married-couple families was 8.0% and 4.8%, respectively.
- ❖ **While poverty among Hispanic female-headed families is at its lowest level in this decade, Hispanic single-mother families are still the likeliest to be poor among all groups.** In 1997, the poverty rate for Hispanic female-headed families was 47.6%, compared to 39.8% for Blacks and 27.7% for Whites. In 1990, 47.5% of these Hispanic families were poor.
- ❖ **Poverty remains high for Hispanic families with children.** The poverty rate for Hispanic families with children decreased 2.6 percentage points from 1996 to 1997 to 30.4%, its lowest level since 1989 (29.8%). Despite these recent declines, poverty for Hispanic families with children remains as high as the rate for Black families with children (30.5%), and more than double the rate for White families with children (13.0%).
- ❖ **Hispanic families, especially Hispanic families with children, continue to be more likely than any other group to be "working poor."** In 1997, 8.2% of Hispanic families with at least one full-time, year-round worker were poor, compared to 2.2% of Whites and 4.6% of Blacks. Furthermore, Hispanic families with children are more than three times likelier to be poor than any other group. In 1997, 10.3% of Hispanic families with children with at least one full-time, year-round worker were poor, whereas for both White and Black families that figure was 2.7%.

# HISPANIC POVERTY FACT SHEET

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## Hispanic Child Poverty

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- ❖ **In spite of small declines since 1990, Hispanic and Black children continue to suffer extremely high poverty rates.** In 1997, 36.8% of Hispanic children and 37.2% of Black children were poor, compared to 16.1% of White children. This represents a 1.6 and 7.6 percentage point decrease in the child poverty rate for Hispanics and Blacks, respectively, and a 0.2 percentage point increase for Whites, since 1990.

## Hispanic Subgroup Poverty

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- ❖ **Puerto Ricans have the highest poverty rate of all Hispanic subgroups.** Subgroup data for 1997 show that 36.1% of Puerto Ricans lived in poverty, followed by 31.2% of Mexicans, 21.0% of Central and South Americans, and 17.3% of Cubans.
- ❖ **Among Hispanic families, Puerto Ricans are the most likely to be poor.** One in three (33.1%) Puerto Rican families were poor in 1997. By comparison, more than one-quarter (27.7%) of Mexican families, one in five (19.0%) Central and South American families, and one in eight (12.5%) Cuban families were poor in 1997.
- ❖ **Child poverty is highest for Puerto Ricans and lowest for Cubans.** In 1997, more than one-half (respectively, 51.0% and 50.6%) of Puerto Rican and Mexican children, two in five (40.5%) Central and South American children, and more than one-fifth (20.9%) of Cuban children were poor.

## Sources

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- ❖ Poverty in the United States: 1997, U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce
- ❖ Hispanic Population of the United States, Current Population Survey - March 1997, Detailed Tables, U.S. Bureau of the Census

January 1999

**HISPANIC WORKING POOR AND THE  
EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC)****Overview**

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a government benefit designed to reduce the federal tax burden on low-income workers and thus provide economic assistance and relief for working poor families. The benefit is available to all families with at least one full-time worker who do not owe federal income tax. The EITC is income-tested. Single or married-coupled families with children, who earned less than \$30,095 in 1998, may be eligible for the benefit. In addition, the EITC also allows some childless workers to receive the benefit (specifically, workers ages 25-65 who earned less than \$10,030 in 1998). Workers who are eligible must complete the appropriate tax forms with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and may receive the benefit in the form of a refund or in allotments throughout the year in their paychecks. Because Hispanics are a significant proportion of working poor Americans, Hispanic families and households disproportionately benefit from the EITC.

**Hispanic Poverty**

- ❖ **A large proportion of Hispanic families with children are poor.** In 1997, one-third (30.4%) of Hispanic families with children under 18 years old were poor - a situation comparable to that of Black families (30.5%). By contrast, just over one in eight (13.0%) White families with children was poor that year.
- ❖ **Hispanic married-couple families with children have a higher poverty rate than comparable White and Black families.** In 1997, more than one in five (21.0%) Hispanic married-couple families with children were poor. In comparison, one in 15 (6.7%) White married-couple families and one in eleven (9.0%) Black married-couple families were poor.
- ❖ **Hispanic families with one or more workers are more likely to be poor than comparable White and Black families.** In 1997, nearly one in five (19.3%) Hispanic families with one or more workers was poor, relative to one in 15 (6.6%) comparable White families and one in six (17.1%) comparable Black families.

**Hispanic Household Income**

- ❖ **The median income of Hispanic households has declined since 1990.** In 1997, the median income of Hispanic households was \$26,628, a decrease from \$26,806 in 1990.\* In comparison, the median income of White households was \$38,972 and for Black households was \$25,050, a decrease from \$38,352, and an increase from \$22,934 in 1990, respectively.
- ❖ **The median income of Hispanic households with a year-round, full-time worker is lower than for similar White and Black households.** The median income of Hispanic households with the householder working year-round, full-time was \$36,701 in 1997. Similar data show that White household income that year was \$53,045 and Black household income was \$36,928.
- ❖ **The median income of Hispanic households with one earner is lower than that for comparable White and Black households.** In 1997, the median income for Hispanic households with one earner was \$20,464, while the median income for comparable White households was \$31,412 and for comparable Black households was \$21,319.
- ❖ **The median income of Hispanic male and female year-round, full-time workers is below that of their White and Black peers.** The median income of Hispanic male and female year-round, full-time workers in 1997 was \$21,799 and \$19,676, respectively. By comparison, the median income for comparable White and Black male workers was \$36,118 and \$26,897, and for comparable female workers was \$26,470 and \$22,764, respectively.

\* Numbers are inflation-adjusted to allow for comparison.

## **Hispanics and the EITC**

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- ❖ **The proportion of Hispanic households that receive the EITC benefit has increased since 1993.** In 1997, 32.9% of Hispanic households received the EITC, an increase of 6.5 percentage points from 1993. In contrast, in 1997 9.6% White households and 22.7% of Black households received the EITC (a decrease of 2.1 percentage points for White households and an increase of 2.1 percentage points for Black households from 1993).
- ❖ **The EITC continues to have a substantial impact on the income and poverty rate of Hispanic workers.** The average EITC benefit distributed to Hispanic households was \$1,750, while White households averaged \$1,257, and Black households averaged \$1,561 in 1997. In fact, that same year the EITC helped reduce the overall after-tax Hispanic poverty rate by 4.1 percentage points.

## **Sources**

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U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income in the United States: 1997*, Current Population Reports, P60-197; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States: 1997*, Current Population Reports, P60-1998; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities tabulations of March 1998 Current Population Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

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**Overview**

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In 1997, the Hispanic male population totaled 15.0 million, accounting for 51.4% of the total Hispanic population and 5.6% of the U.S. population. The number of Hispanic men has increased by about 3.5 million, or 30.7%, since 1990, and is projected to increase 8.1% to 16.2 million by the year 2001, surpassing that of Black men at 16.1 million. In 1994, Mexican males represented the largest share of Hispanic men at 8.8 million (65.5% of the total Hispanic male population), with Central and South American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban males following at 1.9 million (14.1%), 1.3 million (9.6%), and 0.5 million (3.9%), respectively. Overall, Hispanic males tend to live within families, be younger, and be in the labor force, often working in less lucrative jobs than non-Hispanic males. In addition, Hispanic men have lower educational levels and are less likely to be covered by health insurance than non-Hispanic men, and the percent of Hispanic men in prisons has been steadily increasing over the past decade.

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**Family Characteristics**

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- ❖ **Hispanic males are generally younger than White and Black males.** In 1997, the median age for Hispanic males was 26 years, compared to 35 years for White males and 28 years for Black males. In addition, 35.2% of the Hispanic male population was under 18 years old that same year, compared to 25.9% of the White male population and 34.0% of the Black male population.
- ❖ **Hispanic men help head most Hispanic families.** In 1996, 67.6% of Hispanic families were headed by married couples, compared to 46.1% of Black families and 81.3% of White families.

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**Education**

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- ❖ **Hispanic men are less likely than White or Black men, and as likely as Hispanic women, to graduate from high school or college.** In 1996, 53.0% of Hispanic men 25 years old and over had completed high school and 10.3% had completed four or more years of college. In comparison, 82.7% of White men, 74.3% of Black men, and 53.3% of Hispanic women had graduated from high school, and 26.9% of White men, 12.4% of Black men, and 8.3% of Hispanic women had graduated from college.
- ❖ **Hispanic males are more likely than White or Black males, but less likely than Hispanic females, to drop out of high school.** In 1994, 8.4% of Hispanic males in grades 10-12 dropped out of high school. In contrast, the high school dropout rate was 4.6% for White males, 6.5% for Black males, and 10.1% for Hispanic females.

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**Labor Force Status**

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- ❖ **A higher percentage of Hispanic males are in the labor force and working than either White or Black males or Hispanic females.** In 1996, the labor force participation rate for Hispanic males 16 years old and over was 79.6%, and the employment-to-population ratio was 73.3%. In comparison, 75.8% of White males and 68.7% of Black males were working or looking for work; their employment-to-population ratios were 72.3% and 61.0%, respectively. By contrast, more than one-half (53.4%) of Hispanic women had a job or were trying to find one that same year; their employment-to-population ratio was 47.9%.
- ❖ **Among Hispanic subgroups, Mexican males have the highest labor force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio.** In 1996, 81.4% of Mexican males participated in the labor force and 74.8% were working. In comparison, the labor force participation rate was 74.8% for Cuban and 69.2% for Puerto Rican males; the employment-to-population ratios were 70.0% and 63.2%, respectively.

# HISPANIC MALE FACT SHEET

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- ❖ **The unemployment rate for Hispanic men is higher than that for White men, but lower than that for Black men, while Mexican males have the highest unemployment rate among Hispanic subgroups.** In 1996, the unemployment rate for Hispanic men 16 years old and over was 7.9%, compared to 4.7% for White men and 11.1% for Black men. The unemployment rate for Mexican males was 8.2% that same year, compared to 8.6% for Puerto Rican males and 6.4% for Cuban males.
- ❖ **Employed Hispanic males are more likely to work in labor-intensive, and less lucrative, occupations than non-Hispanic males.** In 1996, 27.7% of Hispanic males worked as operators, fabricators, or laborers and only 12.1% worked in the high-paying managerial and professional specialty occupations. In comparison, 28.4% of White males and 16.9% of Black males worked in the managerial and professional specialty occupations, and 19.2% and 31.1%, respectively, in operator, fabricator, or laborer occupations.

## Income and Poverty

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- ❖ **Hispanic male workers have lower median earnings than their non-Hispanic counterparts, and among Hispanic subgroups, Puerto Rican males have the highest median earnings.** In 1996, the median earnings for Hispanic male year-round, full-time workers was \$21,056, compared to \$32,966 for comparable White workers and \$26,404 for comparable Black workers. In 1993, the most recent subgroup data available showed that Puerto Rican men working year-round and full-time had median earnings of \$23,792, while comparable Cuban men had median earnings of \$23,749, Mexican men \$18,917, and Central and South American men \$18,147.
- ❖ **Hispanic males are more likely to be poor than non-Hispanic males, while Puerto Rican males are the poorest of all Hispanic subgroups.** In 1996, 26.8% of Hispanic males were poor, compared to 9.8% of White males and 24.7% of Black males. Furthermore, 33.0% of Puerto Rican males lived below the poverty level that same year, compared to 28.4% of Mexican males. (No such data exist for Cuban and Central and South American males.)

## Health Status

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- ❖ **Hispanic males are less likely to have private or government health insurance than White or Black males, but more likely to be covered by Medicaid than White males.** In 1996, 36.6% of Hispanic males lacked health coverage, while 17.7% were covered by Medicaid. In comparison, 15.8% of White males and 24.4% of Black males had no health insurance and 8.3% of White males and 21.7% of Black males were covered by Medicaid.
- ❖ **Hispanic men are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS.** In 1997, 11.5% of the total U.S. male population was Hispanic, and 83.1% and 12.3% was White and Black, respectively. However, Hispanic men accounted for 17.3% of all adolescent and adult male AIDS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1997, while White and Black males accounted for 50.1% and 31.4%, respectively.

## Crime

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- ❖ **The proportion of Hispanic male prisoners has been steadily increasing over the past decade.** From 1985 to 1995, the percentage Hispanics comprise of all prisoners under Federal or State jurisdiction increased from 10.9% to 15.5%. Although these data were not disaggregated by gender, given that men constitute the majority of all prisoners (92.6% in 1995), it appears likely that the increase in the proportion of all Hispanic prisoners has been fueled by growth in the incarceration of Hispanic men.

## Sources

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*Bureau of the Census; Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Department of Education; U.S. Department of Commerce; U.S. Department of Justice; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

October 1996

## Hispanic Children, Poverty, and Federal Assistance Programs

### Overview

Hispanic children are a rapidly growing and increasingly poor population group in the United States. Since 1980, the Hispanic child population has nearly doubled, from 5.7 to 9.7 million, and as the number of Hispanic children has increased so has the number and proportion of Hispanic children living in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

With the Social Security Act of 1935 and the anti-poverty programs of the 1960s, a number of federal programs were established to help combat child poverty. These include the now block-granted Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, which provided cash payments to families in which one parent was absent, incapacitated, unemployed, or deceased; Food Stamps, which increases the food purchasing power of eligible low-income households; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which provides food and nutritional assistance to low-income pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under age five; Medicaid, which provides medical assistance to low-income persons who are aged, blind, disabled, and members of families with dependent children; and school lunch programs. However, while Hispanic children may benefit from these assistance programs, the state of Hispanic children in the U.S. continues to worsen.

### Population Profile

- ❖ **Hispanic children are a significant portion of the total Hispanic population.** In 1995, over one-third (35.8%) of the total Hispanic population was estimated to be under age 18, a larger proportion than either the Black (32.4%) or White populations (25.0%).<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ **The Hispanic child population has risen dramatically since 1980, and will soon become the largest minority population under age 18.** Between 1980 and 1995, the Hispanic population under age 18 increased by 70.3%, while the number of Black and White children increased 13.4% (from 9.5 to 10.7 million) and 3.8% (52.5 to 54.5 million), respectively, over the same period. Furthermore, the number of Hispanic children is projected to grow by 28.9% (to 12.5 million) by 2005, as compared to 9.9% for Black children (to 11.8 million).<sup>1</sup>

### Poverty

- ❖ **Poverty among Hispanic children is severe and has been steadily increasing.** In 1995, two-fifths (40.0%) of Hispanic children lived below the poverty level, compared to 16.2% of White children and 41.9% of Black children. In fact, since 1980 the number of poor Hispanic children has increased by an average of approximately 6.0% each year, compared to 1.7% annually for White children and 1.3% annually for Black children.<sup>2</sup> Overall, since 1980 Hispanic child poverty has increased by 133.3% (1.7 to 4.1 million), compared to 25.1% (7.2 to 9.0 million) for White children and 20.2% (4.0 to 4.8 million) for Black children.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Percentages were computed by NCLR using Census numbers in thousands.

<sup>2</sup> Average annual increases were reached by first computing the percentage changes year-to-year, and then dividing the total by the total number of years (16).

# Hispanic Children, Poverty, and Federal Assistance Programs

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## Poverty Cont.

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- ❖ **Hispanic families with children continue to experience substantially higher poverty rates than families without children.** In 1995, over one-third (33.2%) of Hispanic families with children were poor, compared to 12.1% of Hispanic families without children. In comparison, 12.9% of White families with children and 34.1% of Black families with children lived in poverty, compared to 4.0% and 11.3% of White and Black families without children, respectively.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ **Regardless of family type and when compared to non-Hispanic families, Hispanic families with children are more likely to live below poverty.** In 1995, 57.3% of Hispanic female-headed families with children lived in poverty, compared to 35.6% of comparable White families and 53.2% of comparable Black families. Likewise, Hispanic married-couple families with children (22.6%) are three times as likely as comparable White families (7.0%), and twice as likely as comparable Black families (9.9%), to be poor.

## Federal Assistance Programs

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- ❖ **A large proportion of Hispanic children received AFDC.** In 1994, 21.2% of AFDC recipient children, or 2.1 million children, were Hispanic, compared to 33.0% for White children and 37.9% for Black children. Since 1990, the percentage of Hispanic AFDC recipient children increased 3.5 percentage points, while the percentage of White and Black AFDC recipient children decreased 0.1 and 3.5 percentage points, respectively.
- ❖ **A substantial number of Hispanic mothers receive Food Stamps and WIC benefits.**<sup>3</sup> In 1993, one in four (25.3%) or 1.1 million Hispanic mothers age 15 to 44 received Food Stamps, compared to about one in three (33.2%) or 1.9 million Black mothers and one in nine (11.2%) or 3.2 million White mothers. In addition, 12.3% of Hispanic mothers age 15 to 44 (or 0.5 million) were WIC recipients in 1993, compared to 10.3% of Black mothers (or 0.6 million) and 6.1% of White mothers (or 1.7 million).
- ❖ **The majority of Hispanic school age children participate in school lunch programs.** In 1994, more than one-half (55.2%) of Hispanic school age children, or 3.8 million children, received free or reduced-priced school lunches, a proportion larger than that of White school age children (23.6%) and similar to that of Black (57.4%).
- ❖ **While Hispanic children represent a significant number of Medicaid recipients, they are still more likely than any other racial group to lack health insurance.**<sup>4</sup> In 1995, over one-third (37.4%) of Hispanic children received Medicaid benefits, a much higher proportion than White children (18.3%), and a lower proportion than Black children (45.4%). However, in 1995 more than one-quarter (26.8%) of all Hispanic children were not covered by any form of health insurance, compared to 15.3% of Black children and 13.4% of White children.

## Sources

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*U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1990 to 1995*, U.S. Bureau of the Census; *Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2050*, U.S. Bureau of the Census; *Poverty in the United States: 1995*, U.S. Bureau of the Census; AFDC Data, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Statistical Briefs, U.S. Bureau of the Census; and Health Insurance Data, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

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<sup>3</sup> Since Hispanic households are about three times more likely to be poor than non-Hispanic households, the receipt rate that is twice that of non-Hispanic households actually represents a relatively lower use of these benefits. Food Stamp and WIC data were broken out by race and Hispanic origin separately.

<sup>4</sup> The term "health insurance" refers to both governmental coverage, i.e., Medicaid and Medicare, and private coverage provided by an employer, or union, or coverage purchased by an employee.

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## Overview

Using income as an indicator of economic well-being, Census Bureau data show that Hispanics were better off in 1997 than they were in 1996.\* Over that year, Latinos experienced a greater increase in household median income than either White or Black households. Incomes for Hispanic women rose most significantly, contributing to a decrease in overall Hispanic poverty.

Although Latinos have made important income gains, overall income levels for Hispanics continue to lag behind those of non-Hispanics. For example, Hispanic households with a full-time, year-round worker are still more likely to be considered "working poor." Moreover, compared to 1989 levels, data show that the per capita income of Latinos has remained statistically unchanged, as opposed to increases seen for both Blacks and Whites. With overall low income levels, Hispanic economic well-being remains insecure.

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## Hispanic Women

- ❖ **Median income increased significantly between 1996 and 1997 for Hispanic female-headed households, yet it is still below that of their White and Black counterparts.** In 1997, median income for Hispanic female-headed households was \$16,393, an increase in real median income of 10.3% from \$14,535 in 1996. By comparison, for the same time period, median income for Black and White female-headed households was \$17,962 (an increase in real median income of 8.0% from \$16,256 in 1996) and \$25,670 (an increase in real median income of 3.0% from \$24,375 in 1996), respectively.
- ❖ **Hispanic females working full-time, year-round have a lower median income than comparable White and Black females.** In 1997, full-time, year-round Hispanic female workers had a median income of \$19,676. Median income was higher for comparable White and Black females -- \$26,470 and \$22,764, respectively.

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## Hispanic Men

- ❖ **Hispanic men working full-time, year-round have a lower median income than their non-Hispanic counterparts.** In 1997, median income for full-time, year-round Latino male workers was \$21,799. Median income for comparable White and Black male workers in 1997 was \$36,118 and \$26,897, respectively.
- ❖ **Median income for Hispanic men was significantly higher than that for Hispanic females.** In 1997, median income of Hispanic men was \$16,216 compared to \$10,260 for Hispanic women.

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## Married-Couple Families

- ❖ **Median household income for Latino married-couple families is significantly lower than that of comparable Black and White families.** In 1997, median income for Hispanic married-couple families was \$34,317. By comparison, median income for Black and White married-couple families was significantly higher, at \$45,372 and \$52,199, respectively.

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## Hispanic Households

- ❖ **Over 1996 and 1997, the percentage by which median household income increased was greatest for Latinos and Blacks.** The median income of Hispanic households increased 4.5% from \$25,477 in 1996 to \$26,628 in 1997, a rate similar to that of Blacks who experienced an increase in median household income of 4.3% (from \$24,021 to \$25,050) during this time. Whites experienced a 2.5% increase in household income (from \$38,014 to \$38,972).

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\* All numbers are inflation-adjusted to allow for comparison.

- ❖ **In spite of recent increases, Hispanic median household income has declined since 1989.** From 1989 to 1997, the median income of Hispanic households declined 5.5% (from \$28,192 to \$26,628). For that same time period, the median income of White households declined 0.7% (from \$39,241 to \$38,972), whereas the median income of Black households increased 6.2% (from \$23,583 to \$25,050).
- ❖ **Hispanic households continue to be more likely than White households to be "working poor."** In 1997, the median income of Hispanic households with at least one year-round, full-time worker was \$36,701. Meanwhile, the income for comparable White and Black households in 1997 was \$53,045 and \$36,928, respectively.

## **Hispanic Real Per Capita Income**

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- ❖ **From 1989 to 1997, real per capita income for Latinos has remained the same, whereas per capita income for both Whites and Blacks has increased significantly.** From 1989 to 1997, Latinos experienced a 1.6% increase in per capita income (from \$10,605 to \$10,773). During the same time period, Whites experienced a 7.0% increase in per capita income (from \$19,088 to \$20,425) and Blacks experienced a 10.0% increase in per capita income (from \$11,231 to \$12,351).\*\*

## **Sources**

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- ❖ *Money and Income in the United States: 1997*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce
- ❖ *Hispanic Population of the United States, Current Population Survey - March 1997*, Detailed Tables, U.S. Bureau of the Census

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\*\* Per capita income reflects the mean, or average, income for every man, woman, and child in a particular group; in this case, by race and ethnicity.

## HISPANIC EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS FACT SHEET

October 1997

### Overview

For the Hispanic community, economic well-being is directly related to employment, occupation, and earnings. Latino men continue to have the highest labor force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio of any group in the U.S., yet tend to be employed in low-wage, low-growth jobs; are underrepresented in professional and managerial positions; and experience high rates of unemployment. Hispanic women, on the other hand, are better represented in professional and managerial positions than Hispanic men and represent one of the fastest growing segments of the workforce, but still maintain the lowest labor force participation rates, highest unemployment rates, and receive the lowest wages of any worker group. Moreover, two important economic indicators also show that the employment status among Latinos needs improvement. **In 1996, Hispanics had the lowest median personal income and remained the poorest group of Americans (29.4% are poor, compared to 28.4% of Blacks and 11.2% of Whites).**

### Employment Status

- **Hispanic men have the highest labor force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio of any group in the U.S.** In 1996, 79.6% of Hispanic men 16 years and over were either working or looking for work, a higher percentage than that of White (75.8%) or Black (68.7%) men. Central and South American men had the highest labor force participation rate of any Hispanic subgroup (82.3%), followed by Mexican-American (81.4%), Cuban (74.8%), and Puerto Rican (69.2%) men. In terms of employment, more Hispanic men (73.3%) than White (72.3%) or Black (61.0%) men were employed in 1996, and Central and South American men (76.5%) had a higher employment-to-population ratio than Mexican-American (74.8%), Cuban (70.0%), and Puerto Rican (63.3%) men.
- **The labor force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio for Hispanic women has remained steady, but below the rates for non-Hispanic women.** In 1996, 53.4% of Hispanic women 16 years and over were in the labor force, compared to 59.1% of White women and 60.4% of Black women. In 1990, the labor force participation rate for Hispanic women was 53.1%, while the rates for White and Black women were 57.4% and 58.3%, respectively. In 1996, Central and South American women had the highest labor force participation rate (59.0%), followed by Cuban (53.3%), Mexican-American (52.8%), and Puerto Rican (48.5%) women. Hispanic women also had lower employment levels than either White or Black women, 47.9% compared to 56.3% and 54.4%, respectively, while Central and South American women had the highest employment-to-population ratio of all the Hispanic subgroups (54.1%), followed by Cuban (48.9%), Mexican-American (47.0%), and Puerto Rican (43.2%) women.
- **The Hispanic unemployment rate has declined in recent years, but the difference between Hispanic and White unemployment rates has remained relatively unchanged.** Between 1992 and 1996, the Hispanic unemployment rate fell 2.5 percentage points (from 11.4% to 8.9%), while the White rate decreased 1.8 percentage points (6.5% to 4.7%) and the Black rate 3.6 percentage points (14.1% to 10.5%). However, despite comparable levels of workforce participation, the



Hispanic unemployment rate is still 1.90 times the White rate, slightly higher than in 1992 at 1.75 times. Hispanic men have experienced a significant decline in unemployment over the last five years, as have Black men, with their respective rates falling 3.8 (11.7% to 7.9%) and 4.1 (15.2% to 11.1%), compared to a 2.3 percentage point decline (7.0% to 4.7%) in the White male rate. In contrast, the Hispanic female unemployment rate has dropped the least since 1992, 1.2 percentage points (11.4% to 10.2%), which is much less than either the males unemployment rates or the White (6.1% to 4.7%) and Black (13.2% to 10.0%) female rates. As a result, the Hispanic female unemployment rate is currently over twice (2.17 times) the White rate, compared to 1.88 times in 1992.

## Occupations

- **Hispanic men are concentrated in low-wage occupations, which are expected to experience little or no growth over the next decade.** In 1996, 27.7% of employed Hispanic men worked as operators, fabricators, and laborers, and 19.4% worked in precision production, craft, and repair occupations. Hispanic men have the lowest percentage (12.1%) of persons employed in managerial and professional specialty positions, with 28.4% and 16.9% of White and Black men employed in this area, respectively. Furthermore, between 1994 and 2005, the share precision production, craft, and repair occupations and operators, fabricators, and laborers comprise of total occupations is expected to decline 0.8 and 1.1 percentage points, respectively.
- **The majority of Hispanic women are in lower-wage service and technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, but a growing proportion also hold managerial and professional positions.** Nearly two-fifths (38.4%) of employed Hispanic women worked in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations in 1996, and one-fourth (25.0%) were employed in service occupations. The share of Hispanic women in managerial and professional specialty occupations (17.4%) was higher than that of Hispanic men (12.1%) in 1996, and higher than in 1990 (14.7%). In contrast, 31.5% of White women and 22.7% of Black women held managerial and professional positions. By 2005, administrative support occupations as a percent of total occupations are estimated to decrease 1.5 percentage points, and service occupations to increase 1.3 percentage points.

## Earnings

- **Both Hispanic men and women have disproportionately low median earnings levels overall, and even within the same occupations.** In 1996, median earnings per week for Hispanic men working full-time were \$356, two-fifths (61.4%) that of comparable White men (\$580) and less than that of comparable Black men (\$412). Furthermore, median weekly earnings for full-time Hispanic female workers were \$316 in 1996, compared to \$428 and \$362 for comparable White and Black women, respectively. The earnings differential is even more apparent when contrasting weekly wages by race/ethnicity. A comparable percentage of Hispanic, White, and Black men and women are employed in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations, and yet the median weekly earnings for full-time workers were \$428 and \$348; \$584 and \$396; and \$430 and \$374, respectively.

## Sources

U.S. Bureau of the Census; *Money Income in the United States: 1996*, September 1997; Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Characteristics of Black and Hispanic Workers*, September 1997; Unpublished labor force data provided by Jay Meisenheimer, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 1997; U.S. Department of Labor, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1995.

## **Twenty Of The Most Frequently Asked Questions About The Latino Community**

### **1. What does the term "La Raza" mean?**

The term "La Raza" has its origins in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Latin American literature, and translates into English most closely as "the people," or, according to some scholars, "the Hispanic people of the New World." The term was coined by Mexican scholar Jose Vasconcelos to reflect the fact that the people of Latin America are a mixture of many of the world's races, cultures, and religions - Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans; Arabs and Jews; "old world" and "new world." Subsequent scholars built on this idea, pointing out that no other area of the world had experienced this unique mix of race and culture. Some people have mis-translated "La Raza" to mean "The Race," implying that it is a term meant to exclude others. In fact, the full term coined by Vasconcelos, "La Raza C6smica," meaning the "cosmic people," was developed to reflect not purity but the mixture inherent in the Hispanic people. This is clearly an inclusive concept, meaning that Hispanics share with all other peoples of the world a common heritage and destiny, and that Latinos provide an example of a world in which traditional concepts of race can be transcended.

### **2. How large is the Latino population?**

Hispanics are the third largest population group in the country. The Hispanic population (on the U.S. mainland) was estimated to total 28.3 million in 1996, which constituted 10.7% of the U.S. population. In comparison, Whites and Blacks comprised 82.8% and 12.6%, respectively, of the total population.\*

### **3. How fast is the Hispanic population growing?**

The Hispanic population has grown faster than the overall U.S. population since 1990 and is projected to become the largest U.S. minority group by 2005. The number of Hispanics increased 25.3% from 1990 to 1996, compared to 6.4% for the overall U.S. population. The Hispanic population is estimated to increase 27.5% between 1996 and 2005, to reach a level of 36.1 million, while the non-Hispanic Black population is expected to grow 11.2%, to 35.5 million, over the same period. Furthermore, the Latino population is projected to be one-fourth (24.5%) of the total U.S. population by 2050.

### **4. Why is the Hispanic population growing so rapidly?**

The extreme growth in the Hispanic population is largely attributable to increased birth rates and a rise in the level of immigration. From 1990 to 1996, Hispanic women between the ages of 15 and 44 were estimated to average 106.3 births per 1,000 women yearly, compared to 67.7 births for the total population. Moreover, 17.4% of all Hispanic births were to teenage mothers in 1995, compared to 12.8% of all births. In addition, the immigration rate for Hispanics was also higher between 1990 and 1996, with an estimated average of 15.1 immigrants for every 1,000 Hispanic persons per year, compared to 3.1 immigrants for all persons.

### **5. What is the age breakdown of the Latino population?**

Overall, Hispanics are much younger than non-Hispanics, and a large proportion are children. The median age for Hispanics was estimated at 26.4 years in 1996, while the median age estimates for Whites and Blacks were 35.7 years and 29.5 years, respectively. In addition, more than one-third (35.2%) of Hispanics were estimated to be under age 18 in 1996, compared to one-quarter (24.9%) of Whites and nearly one-third (32.0%) of Blacks.

\* Hispanics may be of any race, and thus, White and Black families may also be Hispanic. The terms Hispanic and Latino will be used interchangeably throughout this document.

## **6. Who makes up the Hispanic population?**

Hispanics are an ethnically and racially diverse population. In 1994, the Hispanic population on the U.S. mainland was comprised of the following groups: Mexican-American, 64.1%; Puerto Rican, 10.4%; Cuban, 4.2%; Central and South American, 14.0%; and Other Hispanic, 7.3%. While 91.2% of the Hispanic population was estimated to be White in 1996, 5.6% was estimated to be Black.

## **7. What percentage of Hispanics are immigrants and citizens?**

The majority of the Hispanic population was born in the U.S. and have U.S. citizenship. Over three-fifths (62.1%) of U.S. Hispanics were native-born according to 1996 data, while less than two-fifths (38.0%) were foreign-born. Furthermore, 69.0% of Hispanics were U.S. citizens in 1996. Among children, the data for that same year indicate that 87.0% of the Hispanic population under age 18 was native-born and had U.S. citizenship. Finally, persons born on the island of Puerto Rico are also U.S. citizens.

## **8. Does the U.S. Hispanic population and data include island Puerto Ricans?**

Most data and other statistics reported on the U.S. Hispanic population do NOT include data on Puerto Rico, although these data are somewhat similar to those of U.S. mainland Latinos. In 1996, 3.8 million persons lived in Puerto Rico, which represented a 7.4% increase since 1990. According to the 1990 Census, 90.9% of residents were born on the island. With regard to socioeconomic status, less than one-half (49.7%) of island Puerto Ricans 25 years old and over were high school graduates, although one in seven (14.3%) was a college graduate, a figure higher than that of mainland Latinos. Poverty rates in Puerto Rico are quite high, relative to both mainland Latinos and the U.S. in general; over one-half (57.3%) of the island population lived below the poverty level, as did two-thirds (66.7%) of Puerto Rican children. Finally, while one-fifth (20.4%) of island residents were unemployed at the time of the 1990 Census, that figure has declined to approximately 14.0% (1996).

## **9. Do most Latinos who speak Spanish also speak English?**

Yes, the vast majority of Hispanics who speak Spanish are also proficient in English. In 1990, 91.5% of the 17.3 million persons 5 years old and over who spoke Spanish at home also spoke English. In addition, almost three-fourths (74.0%) of Spanish-speakers spoke English "very well" or "well."

## **10. Are most Hispanic households "traditional" two-parent families?**

The majority of Hispanic households are married-couple families, but a significant proportion are also female-headed families. In 1995, over one-half (54.8%) of Hispanic households were married-couple family households; however, nearly one-fifth (19.2%) of Hispanic households were female-headed family households. In comparison, 57.2% of White households, and 33.0% of Black households, were married-couple family households in 1995, and 9.6% and 31.9%, respectively, were female-headed family households.

## **11. Where do most Latinos in the U.S. live?**

The majority of the Hispanic population lives in select states. In 1994, the five states with the largest Hispanic populations were: California, with a Hispanic population estimated at 8.9 million (34.3% of the total U.S. Hispanic population); Texas, 5.0 million (19.3%); New York, 2.5 million (9.6%); Florida, 1.9 million (7.2%); and Illinois, 1.1 million (4.0%). However, regions (states), which have historically had much smaller Latino populations, have experienced significant growth in the last several years. For example, the Hispanic population in the Midwest increased 35.2% between 1980 and 1990 and is projected to increase an additional 43.6% by 2000.

## **12. What percentage of Latinos are high school and college graduates?**

Hispanics have a much smaller percentage of graduates than Whites or Blacks. In 1996, over one-half (53.1%) of Hispanics 25 years old and over had graduated from high school and 9.3% had graduated from college. In contrast, over four-fifths (82.8%) of Whites, and almost three-fourths (74.3%) of Blacks, 25 years old and over had completed high school in 1996, and 24.3% of Whites, and 13.6% of Blacks, had completed college.

## **13. Are most Hispanics in the work force?**

A significant portion of Hispanics are participating in the labor force. In fact, Hispanic men were more likely than either White or Black men to be working or looking for work in 1996; 79.6%, compared to 75.8% and 68.7%, respectively. In addition, in 1996, 60.6% of the Hispanic population 16 years old and over, or 11.6 million persons, were employed, which was comparable to Whites (64.1%), and slightly more than Blacks (57.4%). Despite the fact that a comparable percentage of Hispanics, Whites, and Blacks were employed in 1996, the unemployment rate for Hispanics was 8.9%, compared to 4.7% for White workers and 10.5% for Black workers.

## **14. What types of jobs do most Hispanics have?**

Hispanics are generally employed in manual labor and service occupations. In 1996, almost one-half (47.1%) of Hispanic men 16 years old and over were employed in either precision production, craft, and repair occupations (19.4%) or as operators, fabricators, and laborers (27.7%). The majority (60.7%) of Hispanic women were employed in either sales and administrative support occupations (35.7%) or service occupations (25.0%) in 1996. In comparison, both White men and women were concentrated in managerial and professional specialty occupations (28.4% and 31.5%, respectively), and sales and administrative support occupations (17.1% and 38.4%, respectively). Black men and women were employed in similar occupations as Hispanic men and women in 1996.

## **15. What are the income levels for Latino families?**

Hispanic median family income remains well below that of White families, and has declined since 1990. Hispanic median family income was \$24,570 in 1995, compared to \$42,646 for White families, and \$25,970 for Black families. Between 1990 and 1995, real median family income levels fell 10.1% for Hispanic families and 0.9% for White families, and increased 4.0% for Black families.

## **16. How many Latino families and Hispanic children are poor?**

Poverty rates for Hispanic families, working Hispanic families, and Hispanic children remain disproportionately high. In 1995, more than one-quarter of both Hispanic and Black families lived in poverty (27.0% and 26.4%, respectively), while the poverty rate for White families was 8.5%. Moreover, data show that poverty among working Hispanic families is a serious problem; one-fifth (20.6%) of Hispanic families with at least one worker were poor in 1995, compared to 17.5% of comparable Black families and 6.4% of comparable White families. Finally, two-fifths (40.0%) of Hispanic children were poor in 1995, compared to 16.2% of White children and 41.9% of Black children.

## **17. What kind of impact does the Latino population have on the U.S. economy?**

Hispanics are making significant contributions to the overall economy. The number of Hispanic-owned businesses are rising dramatically. In 1992, roughly 860,000 U.S. firms were owned by Hispanics, an increase of 76.1% since the last U.S. Census business survey in 1987; these firms generated over \$76.8 billion in gross receipts in 1992, compared to \$32.8 billion in 1987. In addition, new research has shown a large and growing Latino middle class in certain areas of the country. In Southern California, for example, a recent study revealed that there were nearly four times more U.S.-born Latino households in the middle-class than in poverty and over one-half (51.6%) of U.S.-born Hispanic households were owned dwellings. Furthermore, the buying power of the total Hispanic population is projected to be \$350 billion in 1997, an increase of 65.5% since 1990.

## 18. What is the health status of Latinos?

There are both hopeful and disturbing signs with regard to Hispanic health. On the positive side, smoking, drinking, and illicit drug use are less prevalent among Hispanics than non-Hispanics. In 1996, 24.7% of Hispanics 12 years old and over smoked, compared to 29.8% of Whites and 30.4% of Blacks; 42.0% of Hispanics used alcohol, compared to 54.0% of Whites and 43.0% of Blacks; and 5.2% of Hispanics used illicit drugs, compared to 6.1% of Whites and 7.5% of Blacks. In addition, the infant mortality rate for Hispanics was relatively low. In 1995, the infant mortality rate was 6.1 per 1,000 live births for Latinos, compared to 6.3 per 1,000 for White infants and 15.1 per 1,000 for Black infants. However, HIV/AIDS and diabetes are two of the most serious and troublesome health threats affecting the Latino population. Hispanics are disproportionately represented among reported cases of AIDS; while Hispanics constitute 10.7% of the total U.S. population, they accounted for 17.7% of the reported AIDS cases through December 1996, and although they are only 14.5% of the child population, Hispanic children accounted for 23.2% of all pediatric AIDS cases through December 1996. In addition, according to a 1982 - 1984 study, one out of four Mexican-Americans (23.9%) and Puerto Ricans (26.1%) 45 years old and over suffered from diabetes, and up to one-third (33.3%) of Hispanics 65 years old and over were diabetic compared to 17.0% of non-Hispanic Whites.

## 19. What percentage of the Hispanic population is covered by health insurance?

A large percentage of Hispanics, especially Hispanics who are poor and Hispanic children, lack health insurance coverage. In 1995, one-third (33.3%) of Hispanics, and 40.8% of Hispanics living in poverty, were not covered by health insurance. In contrast, smaller percentages of Whites (14.2%) and Blacks (21.0%), and poor Whites (33.3%) and Blacks (23.5%), did not have health insurance. Furthermore, over one-quarter (26.8%) of Hispanic children lacked any form of health insurance, higher than both White (13.4%) and Black (15.3%) children.

## 20. Are Hispanics primarily homeowners or renters?

Hispanics have relatively low homeownership rates. More than two-fifths (42.2%) of Hispanic households were owner-occupied in 1993, which was much lower than the national average of 64.7% of all households. In addition, 45.8% of Hispanic families lived in owner-occupied housing in 1993, which was significantly less than the homeownership rates for all families (72.3%). Hispanics are also less likely to participate in federal low-income housing programs than non-Hispanics. In 1993, approximately 13.0% of public housing renters were Hispanic, while 37.0% were non-Hispanic White, and 47.0% were non-Hispanic Black; similarly, roughly 13.0% of Section 8 tenant-based renters, and 10.0% of Section 8 project-based renters, were Hispanic, while 51.0% and 52.0%, respectively, were non-Hispanic White, and 33.0% and 34.0%, respectively, were non-Hispanic Black.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1990 to 1996*, April 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2050*, February 1996; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, June 10, 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Tables for the Hispanic Origin Population from the March 1994 Current Population Survey*; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "The Foreign-Born Population: 1996," U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Estimates of the Population of Puerto Rico Municipios, July 1, 1996, and Demographic Components of Population Change: April 1, 1990 to July 1, 1996*, April 30, 1997; Data from the 1990 U.S. Census, April 1, 1990; and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *State and Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment: July 1997*, August 26, 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for United States, Regions and States: 1990*, April 28, 1993; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Income, Poverty, and Valuation of Noncash Benefits: 1994, 1996*; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Estimates of the Population of States by Race and Hispanic Origin: July 1, 1994," August 20, 1996; Aponte, Robert and Marcelo Siles, *Latinos in the Heartland: The Browning of the Midwest*, Julian Samora Research Institute, November 1994; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1996*, Table No.38, October 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1996," July 1997; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Characteristics of Black and Hispanic Workers*, September 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income in the United States: 1995 (With Separate Data on Valuation of Noncash Benefits)*, 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States: 1995, 1996*; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Poverty Status of Families and Persons in Families in 1995," 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1992 Economic Census: Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (Hispanic)*, June 1996; Rodriguez, Gregory, *The Emerging Latino Middle Class*, Pepperdine University Institute for Public Policy, October 1996; Humphreys, Jeffrey M., "Hispanic Buying Power by Place of Residence: 1990-1997," Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 1997; *1996 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*, Department of Health and Human Services; *Report of Final Mortality Statistics, 1995*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics; *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, 1996, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics; *Diabetes Among Latinos*, NCLR, 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Health Insurance Coverage: 1995," September 1996; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Supplement to the American Housing Survey for the United States in 1993*, January 1996; *Rental Housing Assistance at a Crossroads: A Report to Congress on Worst Case Housing Needs*, Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, March 1996.

**SELECTED POLICY TRENDS**

**NCLR Board of Directors  
Strategic Planning Retreat  
April 1998**

## I. OVERVIEW

Hispanic Americans have taken a beating in public policy terms in recent years; major legislation such as welfare reform and immigration reform have taken an extraordinary toll on the economic well-being of the community. Indeed, Hispanic Americans are likely to be the hardest hit of any group in the country by welfare reform, in part because of their concentration in the low-skilled, low-wage sectors of the economy and limited English proficiency and, in part, because the new law contained major cuts in services for legal immigrants. This negative trend has been echoed in other policy debates, including debates on issues such as affirmative action, language, and other key policies, including the distribution of federal resources; which are critical to improving the social and economic status of the community.

While the policy outlook appears somewhat grim, it is also true that increasing political participation by Latinos has begun to change the way in which the community is viewed and treated in policy circles. For example, Republicans are sensitive to the accusations that they drafted the worst legislative attacks on Hispanics, and have responded by attempting to rehabilitate both their individual images and that of the party. In some cases this simply means conducting outreach and translating speeches into Spanish; in other cases, it has concrete policy implications. Similarly, some Democrats no longer appear to be taking Latino support for granted, and are attempting to fashion a policy agenda which they believe may be appealing to Latino voters. Increased attention by both political parties may better position Hispanic organizations such as NCLR to propose -- and hopefully implement -- a concrete policy agenda which can have a positive impact on the greatest challenges facing the community.

## II. SELECTED MAJOR TRENDS

### A. Negative Trends

#### 1. *The Balanced Budget and Devolution*

Recent changes in the availability and allocation of federal funds have created an environment which severely limits the possibility of accomplishing positive policy objectives through the use of government programs. Similarly, it is much more difficult for Latinos to influence the way funding and programmatic decisions are made, particularly at the state level.

For example, several years' worth of legislation restricting the use of federal funds for domestic programs, culminating in the enactment of the Balanced Budget Agreement in 1997, has created severe competition over the distribution of government resources. Any new policy initiative must be funded at the expense of existing programs, many of which are already shrinking, or by increasing taxes. The debate on the FY 1999 federal budget, which includes

Congressional priorities such as tax cuts and massive spending for highways and other public works projects, suggests a dramatically eroded resource base, making it more difficult – if not impossible – to accomplish key social policy objectives.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the outcomes of upcoming debates over issues with enormous budget consequences, such as Social Security and Medicare, could both significantly reduce the level of federal discretionary funding and exacerbate inequalities in the distribution of federal assistance.

Furthermore, in addition to limiting the size and scope of potential policy interventions, federal budget constraints will make it increasingly difficult to achieve greater equity in the distribution of federal resources. Currently, Latinos are underrepresented in and/or ill-served by virtually every federal anti-poverty initiative, including most entitlement programs, Head Start, Title I Compensatory Education, TRIO higher education programs, school-to-work and Job Corps programs, housing assistance, trade adjustment/worker dislocation programs, etc. Attempts to increase the proportion of Hispanics served by these and other programs are likely to be met with stiff resistance by current beneficiaries, particularly in a “zero sum” budget scenario.

In addition, the trend toward devolution expanded dramatically with the enactment of welfare reform in 1996, thrusting the states into the position of implementing major social policy with strict new requirements. Organizations such as NCLR, which have traditionally focused on influencing federal policy, are in a much weaker position to influence the way these new policies are implemented, in part because they are implemented differently in each state. In addition, such organizations’ greatest influence is on the federal regulatory process and not on the individual actions of the state and local governments who are controlling the funds. Latino institutions in general are poorly equipped to influence state policy battles, which are now the key arena in the fight to ensure equitable implementation of anti-poverty policies and to create economic opportunity for low-income Latinos.

## **2. *Anti-Immigrant/Anti-Latino Policies and Politics***

While the high tide of immigrant bashing appears to have crested, and there is a great deal of attention focused on “reversals” of these policies by Congressional Republicans, it is also true that a negative policy trend continues disproportionately to harm Hispanic Americans, particularly those who are or who are perceived to be immigrants. This is true for several reasons:

- Welfare recipients are only just beginning to encounter time limits on the availability of services. Programs designed to assist these recipients in getting and keeping jobs tend to focus on those who are the easiest to serve, which means that Latinos with low skills or limited English proficiency are unlikely to be helped by these interventions, and could lose their benefits without securing jobs. Similarly, the lack of availability of child care is

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<sup>1</sup> See Attachment A, a recent edition of the *Congressional Monitor* which explains the current budget battle.

especially likely to impede Latino welfare recipients from entering the workforce because of the high proportion of young workers and children in low-income Latino families.

- The largest single piece of welfare reform legislation enacted in 1996 was a budget cut in services to immigrants who are legally in the U.S., of whom Latinos are a significant proportion.<sup>2</sup> In addition, according to the Urban Institute, one in 10 children in the United States lives in a household with a legal immigrant parent. These children have also lost access to services by virtue of their parents' status; even when the children themselves are eligible to receive services, they are likely to receive a smaller portion of assistance, if any. For example, as many as 600,000 U.S.-citizen children have less food because their immigrant parents have lost access to food stamps as a result of welfare reform. Similarly, many legal residents and U.S. citizens now fear receiving services that they are eligible for, such as health care, because of possible negative immigration consequences in the future.<sup>3</sup> These provisions could seriously undermine the achievement of even relatively non-controversial objectives, such as assuring health care coverage for children.
- There is increasing evidence of significant, and perhaps growing, discrimination against Latinos in a variety of contexts; however, this has not been accompanied by commensurate attention to the need to reduce such discrimination. Recent research demonstrates that in many markets Hispanics are discriminated against in at least 20% of their encounters with employers, and 50% of their contacts with real estate agents and landlords. Hispanic children are now, by far, the most segregated students in the U.S. In addition, based on reports received by NCLR, there appears to be a massive increase in the incidence of hate crimes, harassment, and law enforcement abuse against Latinos. Despite the fact that the civil rights enforcement system has, with few exceptions, failed adequately to address such discrimination, little attention has been paid to policy interventions to remedy the situation.
- There is enormous potential for further harm to the Latino community in the form of policy proposals which are currently under consideration at the federal and state levels. For example, there is heated debate in several states as well as in Congress over affirmative action in employment and educational programs. The effects of California's recently enacted policy against affirmative action in higher education are likely to be duplicated elsewhere if similar policies are adopted; that is, the presence of Latino students in elite state-funded institutions is likely to be severely diminished. Similarly, there are attacks on bilingual education programs in California as well as at the federal level; these proposals would limit school systems' ability to choose and tailor programs to educate Latino students effectively, especially those with limited English proficiency.

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<sup>2</sup> Though immigrants accounted for only 5% of welfare recipients at the time welfare reform became law, they had to bear over 40% of the total cuts in services in the legislation.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the Department of State and the INS have used data regarding use of medical care and other services in order to deny visas to immigrants seeking to join family members. These practices have had a dramatic chilling effect on the use of services by people in immigrant families, even if they are eligible for those services.

- NCLR has been at the forefront of the opposition to the trend toward expanded use of computer verification systems in the workplace. Purportedly designed to improve enforcement of employer sanctions and reduce discrimination, such systems have proven to be highly unreliable, inaccurate, and discriminatory. Computer verification techniques are now widely used to screen applicants for public benefits, as well. Moreover, Congress is poised to expand the use of immigration verification systems as a method of challenging the rights of individuals with Hispanic surnames to register to vote and to participate in elections.

All of these policies constitute an ongoing assault on the rights of Hispanics in ways which further threaten their ability to improve their economic and political circumstances.

### 3. *Racial and Ethnic Tensions*

Because the Latino community is growing quickly in numerical and political terms, tensions with other groups are beginning to grow, and beginning to receive significant media attention: For example, each time the Census releases new information about the growing number of Latinos, the proportion of Latinos in the workforce, or the number of immigrants in the United States, these stories make headlines. Often in these stories, Hispanics are framed as causes of ethnic division. Recent events such as the House of Representatives' consideration of a bill on the status of Puerto Rico, and the enactment of a recent policy in Mexico to allow dual nationality for Mexicans living in other countries, have been framed in the media as potentially major sources of conflict between Latinos and other groups.

Similarly, Latinos' expanding political and policy influence is causing tension with other groups, particularly African Americans, in the policy-making world. The ongoing debate on the Higher Education Act over resources for Hispanic Serving Institutions -- which for Latinos is a simple question of equity -- has become a major battle between these two groups over resources. Other similar battles over anti-poverty programs which underserve Latinos could reach similar levels of conflict as other groups perceive "their" resources as being under attack. As the size and influence of the Hispanic community continues to grow, these tensions are likely to continue, and could easily worsen.

One extremely disturbing trend in race relations that has yet to receive substantial media or policy maker attention is the fact that growing racial tensions increasingly involve the Latino "rank and file" as well as advocates. For example, recent public opinion polls suggest that Hispanics harbor the same kinds of negative stereotypes of other racial and ethnic groups that such groups hold against Latinos. Similarly, a review of hate crimes statistics show that Latinos are increasingly represented as *perpetrators*, as well as *victims*, of race-related harassment and violence. Although understandable -- Latinos are subject to the same cultural and media stereotypes affecting other Americans -- these data reveal the considerable challenge faced by a society seeking racial reconciliation at a time of dramatic demographic change.

#### **4. Media**

Media coverage and portrayals of Hispanics in the policy context continue to be troubling. While overall attention to Latinos has undeniably increased, it is still disproportionately low. Furthermore, much of this coverage is framed in ways that present Hispanics as the cause, as opposed to the victims, of societal problems. For example, although nearly two-thirds of Latinos are U.S. citizens, most political and policy-related coverage routinely assumes that Hispanics are largely recent immigrants. Similarly, stories describing Latinos' demands for increased political appointments, federal employment, or policy attention almost invariably fail to include detailed enumeration of the underlying conditions prompting such demands, such as historic underrepresentation in the government or federal assistance programs.

Moreover, it is increasingly common for "contrarians," such as former Reagan Administration official Linda Chavez or media critic Richard Rodriguez, to be among the most highly-visible Latino media spokespersons. While there is certainly a diversity of views within the Hispanic community that should be aired, given the historic failure of the media to cover "conventional" or "traditional" Latino perspectives this trend has seriously distorted public and policy-maker perceptions of the community and its advocates. These distortions continue to stimulate harmful policy proposals such as Proposition 187, and they undermine support for appropriate policy interventions such as investments in education or affirmative action.

#### **B. Positive Trends**

##### **1. Growing Political Clout**

During the last several years, a number of indicators of civic and political participation have increased dramatically for U.S. Latinos. A combination of growing population, expanding naturalization rates, increased voter registration, and record-breaking voter participation in the 1994 and 1996 elections as well as in smaller, "off year" elections, has demonstrated what appear to be the early indications of a trend in increased political participation by Latinos. Recent events in California are the strongest indicators of such a trend:

- The proportion of Latino registered voters in California has grown from 11.3% in 1990 to 13.7% in 1996.<sup>4</sup>
- The proportion of California Latinos who actually vote has grown even faster, from 8.7% of California voters in 1990 to 12.3% in 1996.

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<sup>4</sup> *Real Numbers: California Latino Voting in the 1990s*, Ross Communications, Sacramento. Unless otherwise noted, all other "bullets" in this section refer to this analysis.

- The gap between the levels of Latino voter participation and that of other voters in California has narrowed steadily, from 15% in 1990 to 7% 1996.
- The number of naturalization applicants nationwide has skyrocketed from 233,843 in 1990 to 1,277,403 in 1996, an increase of over 500%.<sup>5</sup>
- Newly-naturalized and newly-registered Latinos voted at higher rates (67%) than all California voters (65%) in 1996.
- Latino voter loyalty in California appears also to be shifting. In 1992, 40% of Latino voters voted for Republicans, and 52% voted for Democrats. In 1996, 21% voted for Republicans compared to 73% for Democrats.
- In 1996 President Clinton won the states of Florida and Arizona, the first time in recent memory that these states have supported the Democratic presidential candidate. This has been widely attributed to Latino voter participation, as well as strong support for the Democrats by Latinos who had previously supported Republicans. Exit polling indicates that voter anger over welfare reform was a primary cause for this dramatic shift.

While much attention has been paid to the effects of increased Latino participation in the 1996 presidential race, perhaps even more notable is the growing presence of Latino voters on critical issues like school bond initiatives and other pressing local concerns; Hispanic voters have been decisive on these issues in Los Angeles and other parts of the country during "off year" elections.<sup>6</sup>

These changes have increased the level of attention being paid to Latino voters and Latino concerns at the local and national levels. They have also created opportunities to begin to frame a constructive policy debate which can affect the economic and educational status of Latinos, as well as to reconsider the state of public policy with respect to civil rights and equality of opportunity for this community.

## ***2. Heightened Institutional Capacity***

Although not yet to a degree proportional to the size and importance of the community, it is clear that Hispanics now enjoy unprecedented access to policy makers in both the Administration and the Congress, and opinion leaders in academia and the media. This has occurred in part through increases in the numbers of Latino elected officials and political appointments and the establishment or strengthening of institutions such as the Senate Democratic and Republic Hispanic Task Forces.

In addition, although Latino advocacy organizations are still substantially smaller and more fragile than their counterparts representing other communities, such groups have grown in several respects. First, the absolute number of policy analysts and other advocates representing Hispanic organizations in Washington, D.C. has increased in recent years, albeit

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<sup>5</sup> Immigration and Naturalization Service, Statistical Yearbook, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> See "Latino Turnout a Breakthrough," *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1997.

slowly relative to the growth of the Latino population. Second, such organizations are increasingly adopting more sophisticated advocacy strategies, incorporating a broader variety of tools: research, policy analysis, media, grassroots support, etc. Third, Hispanic organizations such as NCLR frequently are viewed now as leaders in important coalitions with other ethnic or mainstream organizations, as opposed to being viewed as the "junior partner" status they were relegated to in the past.

Finally, although by no means eliminated, intra-Latino ethnic and organizational tensions appear to be diminishing. At the organizational level, regional and sub-group competitive pressures, while still present, are more subdued than in the recent past. Whether this is more than a temporary reaction to a period of sustained attack is not yet clear, but this is a promising development. At least among certain subgroups, e.g., college students, there is an unmistakable, unified "Latino consciousness" that simply did not exist even a decade ago. The extent to which such a consciousness has penetrated the "grassroots" is debatable, but the trend here also seems positive.

### ***3. Increased Policy Clout***

A direct result of the perception and the reality of increased Latino political influence, the environment is clearly ripening for Latino-specific public policy initiatives which can have a positive impact on the economic and educational status of Hispanic-Americans. For example, when the Clinton Administration unveiled its budget proposal for FY 1999, it included an "Hispanic Education Initiative," a major investment of resources specifically aimed at improving the quality of education for Latino students. This initiative was announced with great fanfare and explicit commitments to ensure its enactment. And although Hispanic Serving Institutions will most assuredly not receive a fully equitable share of federal funding under the Higher Education Act, they are likely to receive a much higher proportion of funding than could have been imagined even five years ago. As a result of a number of recent reforms supported by NCLR, Latino participation in certain key programs such as the Job Training Partnership Act and Title I Compensatory Education are nearing parity.

Similarly, both the Administration and Congress have been persuaded to reverse major pieces of the 1996 welfare and immigration reforms. Less than a year after their enactment, Congress had reversed a significant piece of its cuts in services to immigrants, in large part because of their vast negative effects on Latinos. In addition, Congress acted to protect Central Americans who were negatively affected by the 1996 immigration law – although they did so in a way which egregiously singled out Nicaraguans and Cubans for full access to legal permanent residence while applying a much more difficult residency standard for Salvadorans and Guatemalans – as part of an overall effort to rehabilitate their tarnished image among Latinos.

While these changes are modest in relation to the enormity of the challenge of achieving full equity for Latinos, they may reveal a shift in policy-maker attitudes toward highlighting key concerns and addressing them with policies tailored to the specific needs of Hispanic Americans. Policy makers in some circles are more likely to "get it," that an improving economy does not reach all communities equally, and that explicit policies must be aimed at ensuring that Latinos benefit from positive economic trends and are not disproportionately harmed by negative ones.

### III. SOME CHALLENGES

Achieving measurable improvements in the social and economic condition of Hispanics through the public policy process poses numerous complex, inter-related challenges to NCLR and other American institutions. Assuming the policy trends identified above are correct, the staff believes that three sets of "core" challenges are pre-eminent.

First, the public image of Latinos must be revamped; however, promoting more accurate and sensitive portrayals of Hispanics will be an increasingly complex task. For example, the many positive aspects of the community - e.g., strong work ethic and family values - need to be highlighted in ways that do not undermine support for policy interventions to address the fact that Latinos have the highest poverty rates of any major population group in the U.S. The idea that Hispanics are largely uninterested in or incapable of achieving greater levels of education have to be addressed in a context where Latinos have the lowest rates of educational attainment in an increasingly educated society. The stereotype that most Latinos are immigrants who are resisting integration into American society needs to be replaced at a time when the percentage of Hispanics who are foreign-born is rapidly increasing. Similarly, calling attention to the need for interventions to improve the condition of Latinos must be done in a way that supports, rather than undermines, the image of the Hispanic as one of "us," instead of one of "them." Some of the staff believe that what is required is nothing less than a "new paradigm" describing the condition and status of U.S. Hispanics.

Second, considerable effort will be required to translate Latinos' growing population into political clout. Exploiting the momentum of Hispanics' 1996 electoral impact will involve building and strengthening a variety of institutions, as well improving linkages between them. For example, greater cooperation and collaboration among national advocacy organizations, among such organizations and elected officials and other policy makers, and among national and grassroots groups is necessary. Similarly, the apparent trend toward greater intra-Latino cooperation and collaboration should be nurtured and strengthened. Significantly greater resources, however, are needed both to sustain increasingly sophisticated national-level advocacy strategies, and simultaneously to build and strengthen a policy and advocacy infrastructure to shape policy development and implementation at the state and local levels.

Third, Hispanic advocates and elected officials will have to navigate through an increasingly complex social and economic, political and ideological, and racial and ethnic landscape. New types of policy and program interventions may be necessary to respond to societal inequality in the context of a globalized economy, but such efforts may be more difficult to promote in an aging society. In the political and ideological context, Hispanics will need to consolidate newly-won political gains in the Democratic Party, while simultaneously reaching out to "big tent" segments of an increasingly diverse Republican Party. With respect to the question of race, it appears that Latinos will need to compete with African Americans, and increasingly Asians, for political power, policy attention, and public resources, while simultaneously working in coalition with them to promote increased public investments in education, children, and workforce development, vigorous civil rights enforcement, and racial reconciliation.

Previous strategic plans have charted the course through which NCLR has become the premiere national Hispanic organization. Now, at the dawn of a new millennium, the community and the organization are faced with a series of formidable challenges. NCLR is uniquely positioned to lead the Hispanic community as it meets and overcomes these challenges; the next strategic plan should provide the "road map" for doing so.

**DRAFT**

Comment on  
*The Latino Civil Rights Crisis*  
A Research Conference

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**Comment on  
*The Latino Civil Rights Crisis*  
A Research Conference**

By Raul Yzaguirre and Charles Kamasaki<sup>1</sup>

**I. Overview**

The papers submitted at this symposium correctly note the diminution of civil rights protections for Latinos, focusing principally on the *Hopwood* decision outlawing race-conscious admissions policies at the University of Texas Law School; Ballot Proposition 209, which overturned all state affirmative action programs in California; a series of education-related developments; and the welfare reform and immigration reform bills passed in the second session of the 104th Congress, which among other things reduced rights and protections available to legal resident aliens in the U.S.

Although these and other policy developments undoubtedly diminish Hispanics' civil rights protections, we argue herein that Latinos have never enjoyed anything close to the full protection of the civil rights laws with respect to employment, housing, and the distribution of public services and benefits, despite serious and persistent discrimination in these areas. In addition to substantiating these claims, this comment will also explore broader explanations for the failure of the civil rights enforcement system to adequately serve Latinos.

**II. Extent of Discrimination**

**A. *Employment Discrimination***

Over the past 15 years, social scientists have produced substantial and persuasive evidence of the scope and degree of discrimination against Hispanic Americans with respect to employment and housing. In the area of employment, several labor market studies based on survey research (Verdugo, 1982; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1982; James, 1982; DeFreitas, 1985; Reimers, 1985; Carnoy, et. al., 1990; and Melendez, 1991) and using a "residual analysis" technique, have estimated that Hispanic workers earn lower wages and/or experience higher unemployment than similarly qualified White workers, and attribute some portion of the differential (10%-50% of the White-Latino wage gap, equal to about 4%-16% of Hispanic wages) to employment discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

Beginning in 1990, a new technique known as the "hiring audit," which tests for differential treatment by having closely matched pairs of testers, one from the majority group and the other from a minority group, inquire about or apply for the same job, was introduced. The

experiences of the testers are matched to determine whether or not differential treatment occurred; since the methodology attempts to control for "objective" human capital characteristics (e.g., age, education, and work experience), significant differences in treatment are attributed to discrimination. An Urban Institute study based on 360 hiring audits in San Diego and Chicago in 1989 found that Anglo applicants received 33% more interviews and 50% more job offers than equally qualified Hispanic applicants; overall, 31% of the Latino applicants encountered unfavorable treatment, compared to 11% of Anglo applicants (Cross, et. al.). A 1992 hiring audit in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area by the Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington found that Hispanic testers encountered discrimination about 22.4% of the time (Bendick, et. al.).<sup>3</sup>

Taken together, and despite a number of methodological issues and questions which remain to be resolved, these studies demonstrate that Latinos experience substantial labor market discrimination. Although a statistically precise estimate of the scope and degree of such discrimination remains elusive, suffice it to say here that the discrimination experienced by Latino workers appears to be of the same order of magnitude as that experienced by African Americans and women in comparable studies and markets.<sup>4</sup>

## ***B. Housing Discrimination***

The audit technique has been used to measure discrimination in housing for a much longer period than in the employment arena, although the inclusion of Hispanics in such studies is a relatively recent phenomenon. Perhaps the first use of real estate audits to measure housing discrimination against Latinos took place in Dallas in 1979. In this study, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), researchers found that the chance of dark-skinned Mexican Americans experiencing at least one instance of discrimination in a typical housing search was 96%, and the probability of light-skinned Mexican Americans experiencing similar discrimination was about 65% (Hakken, 1979). Other real estate testing studies including Latino samples have taken place in Denver, Boston, Washington, D.C., and other cities.

The definitive study in this area, the *Housing Discrimination Study* sponsored by HUD and conducted by the Urban Institute, carried out paired tests of housing rental and sales markets in 40 metropolitan areas. According to this study, Latinos seeking housing experienced discrimination in at least half of their encounters with both sales and rental agents; the incidence of discrimination was 56% for Hispanic homebuyers and 50% for Hispanic renters (Yinger, 1991; Turner, et. al., 1991).<sup>5</sup>

Analyses of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data and homeowners' insurance coverage have found significant discrimination against Latinos in the mortgage market and in the provision of insurance. One noteworthy study by the National Fair Housing Alliance found that Hispanic testers seeking insurance in Chicago experienced discrimination in 95% of their encounters with insurance agents.<sup>6</sup>

By way of comparison with other protected groups, the scope and degree of housing discrimination experienced by Latinos varies considerably by type, geography, and perhaps other factors as well; however, taken together, the data reveal that the housing discrimination faced by Latinos is of the same order of magnitude, or in some cases *slightly* lower, than that faced by African Americans.<sup>7</sup>

### ***C. Distribution of Federal Benefits and Services***

A less well-known, but perhaps as important, area in which Latinos experience unequal treatment is in the distribution of federal means-tested assistance, benefits, and services. Given that Hispanics in 1995 constituted more than 22% of all poor American families and about 28% of American children who are poor, one might expect that Latinos would constitute approximately these percentages of participants in major federal anti-poverty programs. Actual Hispanic participation in such programs, however, is almost uniformly lower than the expected participation, according to a summary issue brief compiled by the National Council of La Raza (Rodriguez, 1997).<sup>8</sup>

For example, with respect to programs serving youth, instead of the "expected" 28% participation levels, Latinos constituted about 15% of non-migrant, Head Start participants on the U.S. mainland in 1993; about 19% of participants in Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Youth Programs in 1994; about 16% of 1995 Job Corps participants; approximately 15% of TRIO Higher Education Program participants in 1994; and less than 7% of Apprenticeship/School-to-Work participants.

With respect to programs serving adults, in comparison to the "expected" 22% participation levels, Hispanics constituted about 13% of JTPA adult programs; 17.4% of Medicaid recipients in 1995; 19% of Food Stamp recipients in 1995; 12% of housing assistance recipients in 1995; and less than 13% of Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program participants (compared to the 17% of AFDC recipients who were Latino).

Although these data alone are not conclusive evidence of unlawful discrimination in the allocation of federal benefits and assistance, they at least raise serious questions about the extent to which federal resources are equitably distributed.<sup>9</sup>

## **III. Inequitable Allocation of Civil Rights Resources**

Despite the substantial discrimination faced by U.S. Latinos in employment and housing, and perhaps in the distribution of federal assistance, the record demonstrates that historically the federal civil rights enforcement infrastructure has not effectively protected Hispanics' civil rights. With respect to employment, an exhaustive analysis of data from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) by the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) in 1993 (Gonzales, 1993) found that:

- From FY 1985 through FY 1990, Hispanic charges alleging discrimination based on national origin accounted for only 4.2% of the EEOC's caseload, while charges alleging discrimination based on race (Black), gender (female), and age, respectively, made up 31.6%, 21.5%, and 17.9% of the caseload.
- Over the same six-year period, lawsuits including a charge of national origin (Hispanic) discrimination were only 2% of the total number of lawsuits by basis filed by the EEOC. Lawsuits alleging charges of discrimination based on gender, age, and race made up 29%, 23%, and 17%, respectively, of the total EEOC lawsuits filed.
- Hispanics routinely received significantly smaller average monetary awards in the few lawsuits litigated by the EEOC on their behalf. In 1990, for example, in the four suits based solely on national origin (Hispanic) discrimination, victims received an average of \$5,796, compared to \$29,228 for the 64 suits alleging age discrimination, \$10,674 for the 55 suits alleging race (Black) discrimination, and \$11,251 for the 82 suits involving gender (female) discrimination.
- From FY 1987 through FY 1990, EEOC reported the resolution of 48 major class action cases -- 21 on behalf of victims of gender (female) discrimination, 18 on behalf of age discrimination victims, and nine on behalf of Black victims; no major class actions were brought on behalf of Hispanic victims during this four-year period.<sup>10</sup>

The situation with respect to housing discrimination is much the same. An early NCLR analysis of data from the division of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) at HUD found that, during the early 1980s, charges from Latinos typically constituted about 5% of FHEO's total caseload (Kamasaki, 1986). More recent data cited in NCLR Congressional testimony (Yzaguirre, 1994) reveal that:

- Over the FY 1989 to FY 1994 period, charges from Latinos ranged from a low of 2.8% to a high of 7.3%, in 1990 and 1993, respectively, of the total FHEO caseload, compared to a low of 31.9% (1989) to a high of 46.8% (1994) of charges from African Americans.
- Over the same period, charges from Hispanics constituted 4.7% of the entire FHEO caseload, compared to charges filed by Blacks which constituted 40.6% of the caseload.

The authors note that NCLR's own analyses have suggested some cultural and institutional reasons which may partially explain the relatively low rate of charges filed by Hispanics. However, we also note that these factors are amenable to policy interventions, and note further that focus group research (Munoz, 1988; Luna and Perez, 1997) strongly suggests that a major -- and perhaps *the* major -- reason why Latinos who encounter discrimination tend not to file complaints is that they do not believe that civil rights enforcement agencies are likely to protect their rights." Given this evidence, we argue that no reasonable person could credibly claim that Hispanics have enjoyed anything remotely resembling equitable treatment from the very federal government agencies charged with protecting their civil rights; as we wrote in 1992:

...for Hispanics, the current civil rights system is a sham. Indeed, if the civil rights enforcement system applied the same "disparate impact" standard it expects employers, realtors, and schools to adhere to, it would be forced to conclude that it is itself guilty of discrimination against the Hispanic community (Yzaguirre and Kamasaki, 1992).

#### IV. Some Possible Explanations

##### A. Overview

The essential facts briefly summarized in this analysis have been known for at least a decade. The policy debate taking place on these issues, however, generally ignores perhaps the most intriguing question -- why, in the face of a growing body of social science evidence documenting discrimination against Latinos, growing poverty in the Hispanic community, and an active public debate on issues involving Latinos and other minorities, has there been so little attention to, and even fewer policy responses to address, what amounts to be a virtual complete failure of the federal enforcement infrastructure to protect the civil rights of a community that will soon become the nation's largest ethnic minority?

While this symposium reflects the fact that some influential scholars and policy makers have begun to bring welcome attention to the civil rights crisis faced by the Hispanic community, it, too, focuses principally on new and emerging policy developments rather than the fundamental question posed above. The authors believe that, notwithstanding the need to study and develop responses to address new and emerging policy developments affecting the civil rights of Hispanic Americans, the likelihood that appropriate policy responses actually will be adopted in response to such developments is dependent largely on whether the conditions which prevented the provision of even basic civil rights protections to Latinos in the past are also identified and addressed. Toward that end, we discuss below some possible answers to the question posed above.

## ***B. The "Problem is Exaggerated" Explanation***

A number of conservative scholars and advocates, joined, albeit with more subtlety, at times by otherwise "progressive" forces, have articulated a set of arguments which suggest that expanded civil rights enforcement efforts for Latinos are simply unnecessary. At its extreme, one conservative scholar has been known to suggest that because Hispanics are not a racial minority, they do not experience racial discrimination. He goes on to argue that, based on his interpretation of the legislative history and intent of the civil rights laws, the principal beneficiaries of civil rights enforcement and affirmative action should be African Americans; ergo, Latinos do not "deserve" special enforcement initiatives.<sup>12</sup> Other, somewhat less extreme proponents of this view have suggested that while some modest level of discrimination against Latinos may exist, the social science research purporting to demonstrate significant housing and employment bias against Hispanics is exaggerated or methodologically flawed; is principally an artifact of high rates of Latino immigration (see below); is less deserving of policy attention than discrimination faced by other groups; and/or that it is largely attributable to "group consciousness" promoted by civil rights groups themselves. Thus, according to this view, the discrimination experienced by Hispanics is not worthy of more, and may be alleviated by less, policy attention.

The argument that no enforcement is necessary because discrimination against Latinos is not significant flies in the face of the above-cited evidence of discrimination, including survey research and empirical hiring and real estate audits. The argument that Hispanics do not experience "racial discrimination" because Hispanics are not a "race," strikes us as silly at best; it is in this context a classic example of a "distinction without a difference."

Even the more serious methodological criticisms of the research advanced by these proponents are ultimately unpersuasive, for two reasons. First, they fail to address the fact that, taken together, the research documenting high levels of discrimination is quite robust. The fact that any single study has methodological weaknesses is not particularly compelling if other studies with somewhat different methodologies come to essentially the same conclusions.<sup>13</sup>

Second, the standard expressed by some of these critics is unreasonably high. While the question of "how much evidence is enough?" in order to justify policy intervention is an important one (Edley, 1993), for some critics, even evidence that a policy generated more than 100,000 new incidents of employment discrimination annually was insufficient to justify a reconsideration of that policy.<sup>14</sup> We conclude that, for most of these critics, no amount of evidence would ever be enough to justify any policy intervention in this area.

## ***C. The "Immigration" Explanation***

Some observers have suggested a variant of the explanation described in Section B, above, that focuses on immigration. They argue that the phenomenon of high Latino immigration largely explains either the appearance of significant discrimination against Hispanics, or the

lack of civil rights enforcement on behalf of Hispanics, or both. These observers note, for example, that previous European immigrant groups (e.g., Irish, Italians) experienced substantial discrimination, but that such discrimination was largely mitigated over time. It is also argued that, even when discrimination occurs, because Latino immigrants are not knowledgeable about civil rights laws, perhaps fearful or wary of contact with the government, they fail to seek and are thus not entitled to redress. A variant of this argument suggests that new immigrants should not be afforded compensatory remedies such as affirmative action resulting from certain civil rights enforcement actions. Thus, according to this perspective, because many Latinos (about 35% in the 1990 Census) are immigrants, some portion of the discrimination faced by Hispanics is transitory, the failure of the civil rights enforcement system to protect Latinos is based on their own failure to use the system properly, and in any event Hispanic immigrants are not entitled to certain remedies including affirmative action.<sup>15</sup>

The "immigration explanation" perhaps has some merit, but not much. Indeed, some discrimination against Latinos may be based on immigration, rather than national origin, status and may thus be viewed as transitory. Furthermore, it is undeniably true that many Hispanic immigrants may not be sufficiently knowledgeable about the civil rights enforcement system to use it effectively.

However, the argument has no explanatory power with respect to the two-thirds of Latinos who are native-born U.S. citizens. Moreover, as a group composed primarily of citizens who, despite their tenure in this country are widely perceived to be "foreign," a powerful argument can be made that immigration-based discrimination against Latinos is not transitory but permanent. One need look no further than the employment discrimination attributable to the employer sanctions provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) for substantiation of this claim. In the wake of IRCA's enactment, more than a dozen independent studies, including one by the General Accounting Office, concluded that nearly 900,000 employers adopted practices that discriminated against Latinos and others perceived to be "foreign" (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1990; Munoz, 1990).

Regarding the correct argument that many foreign-born Latinos do not know how to access the civil rights enforcement system, again we note this does not (or at least should not) apply to U.S. citizens and long-term residents. Ultimately, however, the argument is unpersuasive even with respect to newer immigrants because simple lack of knowledge is amenable to policy intervention through outreach programs, and because the system fails to work even for citizens and long-term residents (See Endnote 11).

Depending on one's perspective, the argument that immigrants should not be eligible for affirmative action programs may be persuasive, although implementing such a restriction would be extraordinarily vexing.<sup>16</sup> In any event, it is difficult to stretch this argument to extend to basic civil rights protections as well. Should employers or landlords be allowed to discriminate openly against persons because they are immigrants? We think not, in part

because it is unlawful, but also because it would inevitably "spill-over" to affect U.S. citizens as well, and because the moral case for doing so is weak at best.

#### *D. An "Accident of History"?*

Perhaps the most benign explanation for the failure of the civil rights enforcement system to adequately protect the civil rights of Hispanics goes something like this: Although Latinos were involved in the civil rights movement, they were, or at least were perceived to be relatively minor players.<sup>17</sup> Historically, because discrimination against Hispanics was, or at least was perceived to be less formal and serious than that faced by African Americans, they lacked major institutions like civil rights organizations, professional associations, and colleges and universities to help generate, document, and support claims of discrimination, and to hold the government accountable. The rapid population growth of the Latino community, and the concomitant if not necessarily commensurate increase in community institutions and political power did not take place -- or at least was not recognized -- until sometime after the 1980 Census, which unfortunately coincided with the emergence of the "New Right" as a powerful political force and the beginning of a sustained attack on civil rights enforcement and affirmative action. With civil rights advocates in essentially a defensive posture during this period, there was simply no additional "political space" for major initiatives to protect the civil rights of Latinos.

Thus, according to this explanation, it's not that any person or institution actually intended not to effectively serve Latinos, it sort of just happened; the confluence of a set of unfortunate historical, institutional, demographic, and political circumstances combined to prevent the kind of policy and program responses necessary to assure more effective protection of the civil rights of Hispanics.

There is much merit to this hypothesis, at least until about the mid-1980 period. However, by that time, substantial social science research, some cited herein, was published which documented significant discrimination against Hispanics. Similarly, the results of the 1980 Census -- the first Census to count Hispanics -- showed that the community was growing rapidly but also highlighted severe economic and social disadvantages. And while there is much truth in the notion that civil rights enforcement was under political attack in the Reagan-Bush era, it is also true that many major civil rights initiatives were enacted during that period.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, if it were true that no "political space" existed to protect the rights of non-African Americans for historical reasons, then legislation to expand protections for persons with disabilities would not have been enacted, and the enforcement system would be as unresponsive to women and the elderly as it is to Latinos. Clearly, other factors are at work, as discussed below.

## V. Conclusions

### A. A "Passive Conspiracy"?

If none of the explanations listed above satisfactorily answers the fundamental question -- why the current enforcement system fails to protect the civil rights of Hispanic Americans -- then what is the answer? The authors have previously articulated one view that might be summarized as follows. It starts where the "Accident of History" hypothesis leaves off -- with a civil rights enforcement system that for a variety of reasons never effectively served Latinos. However, we add that several conditions that might be termed a "passive conspiracy" worked to impede changes in policies, programs, and allocation of resources to address the growing Hispanic population.

Initially, we note that Hispanics are severely underrepresented in the federal workforce overall, as well as within the civil rights enforcement agencies themselves (see Kamasaki and Yzaguirre, 1994-95; Merit Systems Protection Board, 1997). Moreover, until recently, Latinos lacked the political clout to effectively command attention by policy makers. Furthermore, we suggest that, notwithstanding the relative absence of merit to the "Problem is Exaggerated" and "Immigration" explanations discussed above, the attention these arguments receive in the press and policy debates provide comfortable rationalizations for those otherwise disinclined to take affirmative steps to improve civil rights enforcement on behalf of the Hispanic community.

As a result, there is in effect a tacit, but conscious, acceptance of the status quo. We call this phenomenon a "passive conspiracy" because we do not believe that policy makers or civil rights enforcement officials actually get together to plan and design programs and policies to assure that Latino civil rights remain unprotected. Rather, we believe that, given the circumstances, the combination of simple inertia, the fact that improving services to Latinos would require some difficult resource allocation choices, the relative absence of sanctions for failing to equitably protect Hispanics, and the multiplicity of rationalizations and defenses available, have made and continue to make it politically acceptable to simply ignore the issue.

We note above that inequities in the distribution of federal assistance, services, and benefits follows a similar pattern, and may be similarly explained. When the failure to fully include Latino interests is the rule rather than the exception with respect to the federal government, and not just confined to the narrow area of civil rights enforcement, we believe it likely that something other than a benign set of unfortunate circumstances (the "Accident of History") is responsible.

## B. A "Paradigm Lost"?

But if the "Accident of History" hypothesis is too benign, then perhaps the "Passive Conspiracy" explanation has the opposite problem. We previously have argued quite forcefully that many in the civil rights community are either unwilling or unable to live up to the shared values of the civil rights movement (Kamasaki and Yzaguirre, 1994-95; Yzaguirre and Kamasaki, 1992). While we do not regret seeking to hold policy makers and our colleagues in the civil rights community accountable to uphold our shared standards and values, we are unsatisfied with the "Passive Conspiracy" as an exclusive or even principal explanation of the problem. One reason is that our experience confirms that at least some people of good will are willing to do the right thing if they're convinced it's right, even if it's hard to do; we think most policy makers and our colleagues in the civil rights community are people of good will. So again, the question recurs -- why this persistent lack of attention to Latino concerns?

We believe, in short, that the "Accidents of History" have not been overcome, and that the "Passive Conspiracy" survives, because many in the civil rights and policy-making community, as well as the general public, are largely unaware of the scope and degree of discrimination against Hispanics, and are equally unaware of the virtual complete failure of the civil rights enforcement system to address such discrimination. Although this underscores the continuing need to scholars and advocates to continue to develop and disseminate information about Latinos, the problem is not so much the lack of information but the inability to "process" the information that is already quite widely available.

The principal issue, we believe, is that the Hispanic experience in this country exists outside the most widely understood paradigm about race. The traditional "black-white" paradigm rests on two concepts. The first is the legacy of *slavery*; the second is the "demarcation line" of *skin color*. In this paradigm, the rationale for discrimination has its roots in the practice of slavery, and the continuing basis for discrimination is skin color. For Latinos, however, the rationale for discrimination has its roots in *conquest* -- the acquisition of California and the American Southwest, possessions formerly held by Mexico in 1848; and Puerto Rico (and for a time, Cuba and the Philippines), from Spain after the Spanish-American War in 1898. The continuing basis for discrimination against Hispanics includes skin color in some cases, but also includes *culture* -- characteristics such as surname, language, and speech accent.<sup>19</sup>

The two concepts underlying the "Latino paradigm" -- conquest and culture -- thus form the basis for past and continuing discrimination. More importantly for this discussion, because policy makers, the public, and even many of our colleagues in the civil rights community are unaware of or do not fully understand this paradigm, they lack both the philosophical and moral rationale to undertake and the pragmatic expertise to implement clear, effective policy responses to address discrimination against Latinos. In the starkest terms, when it comes to the Latino civil rights crisis, most Americans -- with an able assist from the media, which

consistently ignores or distorts portrayals of the condition of Hispanic Americans (Navarrete and Kamasaki, 1994) -- just "don't get it."<sup>20</sup>

If this hypothesis is correct, it has powerful explanatory value for those seeking to reconcile the existence of enormous discrimination on the one hand, and the failure of those responsible for addressing such discrimination to do much about it on the other hand. It helps explain *why* critics who blithely assert in the face of massive amounts of social science research that discrimination against Hispanics is simply not a serious problem are not widely dismissed and ridiculed. It helps explain *why* Latinos are pigeon-holed into outmoded paradigms which do not apply. It helps explain *why* the "Accidents of History" have not been reversed, and *why* the "Passive Conspiracy" remains alive and well.

### *C. The Challenge*

If our analysis is accurate, advocates for policy interventions to address discrimination against Latinos face a formidable challenge. We need to go beyond merely documenting the size and scope of the problem, framing and analyzing policy options, and promoting and mobilizing support for the most promising interventions; while all of these are necessary, they are insufficient to address the problem unless the underlying rationale for doing so is better understood by policy makers and the public. Thus, a major challenge facing us is to help create not just the "political space" but the "intellectual space" necessary to identify, promote, enact, and implement serious, effective responses to address the Latino civil rights crisis.

Moreover, we need to go beyond simply explaining and promoting the "Latino paradigm." An exclusive focus on promoting one paradigm risks alienating not just the majority community but many of our potential allies within the civil rights community as well. In this connection, we recognize the need to characterize the "Latino paradigm" as one that is intended to complement, and not replace or supersede, the more familiar "melting pot," "black-white," and "immigrant" paradigms. As we indicated to the President's Initiative on Race, we need to help shape a new paradigm that "...is sufficiently broad to encompass the condition of all Americans, and our relationships to each other" (National Council of La Raza, 1997).

We conclude with a plea for urgency. Discrimination against Latinos in the housing and labor markets, and in the distribution of federal assistance (and in other areas, e.g., education), is offensive to the principle of equal opportunity, and immediate and firm policy intervention is justified wholly on that basis.

But equally important, there is substantial social science research that links discrimination with much of the growing and persistent poverty in the Hispanic community (National Council of La Raza, 1997a). Furthermore, such research demonstrates that even modest reductions in discrimination hold the potential for significant improvements in the economic status of Latinos in the U.S. (Perez and Martinez, 1993). Finally, we note that the failure of

the federal government to do more to assure equitable distribution of services and benefits further exacerbates the poverty by reducing Hispanic access to educational and job training programs which can help promote economic opportunity. At a time when the Hispanic poverty rate has reached record levels in both relative and absolute terms, improving the responsiveness of the civil rights enforcement system to address discrimination against Latinos is thus not just a moral obligation but an economic imperative.

## ENDNOTES

1. The authors are President and Senior Vice President, respectively, of the National Council of La Raza. In preparing this brief comment, the authors relied heavily on previous research and analysis carried out by many past and present colleagues at NCLR; most of these are listed in the References which follow. Special thanks to Carmen Joge, Civil Rights Policy Analyst, and Concepcion Romero, Administrative Assistant, who compiled many of the source materials cited herein for a prior submission to the President's Initiative on Race. Policy Analyst Lillian Hiraes assisted in editing this comment; Deputy Vice President Lisa Navarrete also provided helpful insights. The authors regret that time constraints prevented extending this analysis to cover other aspects of discrimination, particularly with respect to education.

This analysis was made possible in part by the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, through its support of NCLR's Policy Analysis Center, and the Rockefeller Foundation, through its support of NCLR's Hispanic Employment Policy Project. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of any NCLR funders.

2. Verdugo, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, James, Carnoy, et. al., and Melendez estimated based on survey research that after holding key variables constant, employment discrimination may be responsible for 10%-50% of the Hispanic-White "wage gap," with the lower bound based on Hispanic male-White male comparisons and the upper bound based on Hispanic female-White male comparisons. Reimers estimated that Hispanic males earn 5% less than equally qualified White counterparts, a figure consistent with the other studies cited. DeFreitas found, also based on survey research, that Hispanics had a higher probability of experiencing unemployment than similarly qualified Whites.

3. It should be noted that a 1991 study in the Denver metropolitan area involving both White-Hispanic and White-African American paired testers did not find statistically significant levels of employment discrimination (James and DelCastillo, 1991). See Fix and Struyk (1993) for a discussion of possible methodological explanations for the differences between these and the Urban Institute's studies.

4. Compare, for example, results produced by Cross, et. al. (1990) regarding job discrimination against Latinos with those reported by Turner, et. al. (1991) regarding employment discrimination against African Americans. While hardly definitive, the net negative differential treatment for the two groups as reported by the Urban Institute's similar sets of hiring audits (Cross, et. al., 1990 and Turner, et. al., 1991) is as follows:

Net Unfavorable Treatment  
By Group and Stage of Hiring Process

	Black/White Audit (%)	Hispanic/Anglo Audit (%)
Application	2	4
Interview	6	16
Job Offer	4	16

Source: Adapted from Mincy (1993).

Were these data interpreted at face value and presumed to be nationally representative (which the authors would admit is a "stretch") one might conclude that Latinos encounter hiring discrimination at a rate three times higher than that faced by African Americans. While we do not proffer this argument, we do conclude that, at least in

these markets (Chicago and San Diego), the scope and degree of hiring discrimination experienced by Latinos is at least of the same order of magnitude as that experienced by African Americans. As Mincy (1993) noted:

Overall, the audit results show that blacks and Hispanics experience roughly equal treatment at the application stage; but at subsequent stages black, and especially Hispanic, applicants are more likely to encounter unfavorable treatment.

5. The actual "net differential" in treatment attributable to discrimination as estimated by the authors and the Department varied by location and type of discrimination; there also have been a variety of methodological questions raised about the Housing Discrimination Survey. Some would argue that the cited figures amount to an upper bound of the level of housing discrimination faced by Latinos.

6. These studies and others mentioned in this section are discussed in somewhat more detail in Raul Yzaguirre, "Testimony for Oversight Hearing on Fair Housing," *House Hearings: Oversight of the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity*, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, September 28, 1994.

7. With respect to real estate audits, a 1982 HUD-funded study in Denver, for example, found that discrimination against Latinos was substantially lower than that faced by Blacks in the same market, while a 1981 telephone survey in Boston found essentially equal levels of discrimination. Similarly, the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington found in one 1997 test that discrimination against Latinos was higher than that experienced by African Americans, and found the reverse in a second test. The *Housing Discrimination Survey* found that, overall, discrimination faced by Blacks was slightly higher than that experienced by Hispanics, although the results varied by market and levels of discrimination faced by the two groups overall were comparable.

Various analyses of HMDA data have also produced diverse results. Some studies have found substantially higher mortgage denial rates for African Americans than for Latinos, while others have found essentially similar denial rates. The results of the relatively few audits on homeowner insurance have also produced diverse results.

8. Data in this section were calculated and/or compiled by NCLR from public sources; see Rodriguez, 1997.

9. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in the distribution of federal financial assistance, services, and benefits. Absent evidence of intentional discrimination, at least two additional sets of facts would need to be demonstrated for each specific program before any conclusive finding of discrimination under Title VI could be made. First, the disparity in assistance, benefits, or services would have to be attributable to a specific federal policy or practice that has a disparate impact on Latinos. Thus, if benefits were made uniformly available to all groups and some eligible Latinos simply chose not to apply (as may be the case with respect to some entitlement programs), then no finding of disparate impact would be made.

Second, the specific policy or practice would be analyzed, under traditional disparate impact analysis, to determine whether "program necessity" justified the existence of the practice, e.g., whether "educational necessity" required that traditional (read: non-Latino) providers of TRIO programs be given preference in the distribution of program funds.

Having said that, the fact that Latinos are underrepresented in virtually all federal programs, regardless of type, nature, or purpose, would seem to suggest that something other than mere coincidence is taking place, as discussed later in the text.

10. The data cited above, based on NCLR calculations of EEOC data, are reported in Gonzales, 1993.

11. The absence of knowledge about and understanding of the civil rights enforcement system, language barriers, and certain cultural factors undoubtedly affect the proclivity of Hispanics to file civil rights complaints; NCLR's focus group research has documented that these factors indeed deter many Latinos from filing formal discrimination complaints. Having acknowledged that, the authors would make three points. First, these same factors can be addressed through effective outreach and public education programs targeted to Latinos. Second, even where enforcement agencies have greater discretion to proactively pursue cases on behalf of Latinos without awaiting formal charges, they have failed to do so. Third, our focus group research also demonstrates profound mistrust among Latinos of the government overall and of civil rights enforcement agencies in particular, a mistrust that seems to be well-placed given such agencies' records. Put another way, if the agencies demonstrated a greater propensity to vigorously enforce the civil rights laws on behalf of Hispanics, then one would expect a concomitant increase in the proclivity of Latinos to enlist such agencies' help in seeking redress for acts of discrimination.

12. Peter Skerry is perhaps the most forceful exponent of this view. Skerry's argument is almost a caricature of the "ivory tower" view of academic studies. Because the empirical research documenting discrimination against Latinos does not fit his racial paradigm, Skerry argues, we should ignore the real world evidence because it does not fit his theoretical model. Moreover, the somewhat tortured attempt to point to the legislative history of the civil rights laws ignores the plain language of the relevant statutes, which clearly state that discrimination on the basis of national origin is prohibited.

13. With respect to the survey research (Verdugo, 1982; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1982; James, 1982; DeFreitas, 1985; Reimers, 1985; Carnoy, et. al., 1990, and Melendez, 1991), for example, some of the studies control for region, others do not. Some control for a single broad measure of educational attainment; others use multiple variables. Some studies control for occupation by using an industry breakdown (e.g., agriculture, mining, retail), while others cite occupational status (e.g., white collar, blue collar). One study controls for marital status, others do not. Despite this diversity, all of the cited survey research studies conclude that discrimination accounts for between 10%-20% of the Hispanic male-White male wage gap and 30%-50% of the Hispanic female-White male wage gap, or have findings consistent with these conclusions.

With respect to hiring audits, with the single anomaly of the Denver study (James and DelCastillo, 1991), the audits in Washington, D.C. (Bendick, et. al., 1992), Chicago, and San Diego (Cross, et. al., 1990) show a consistent pattern: about Latino testers experienced *net*, negative treatment about 20% of the time, compared to Anglo testers. With respect to the real estate audits, perhaps the most interesting pattern is that the *Housing Discrimination Survey* (Turner, et. al., 1991) showed consistently higher levels of housing discrimination against Latinos than previous, less carefully-designed tests.

14. See, for example, Kamasaki, 1993. Critics of the General Accounting Office (GAO) study on discrimination related to employer sanctions argued that methodological weaknesses in the GAO's study invalidated its finding of a "widespread pattern" of discrimination attributable to the 1986 immigration law. (GAO found that at least 891,000 employers had adopted discriminatory practices as a result of the employer sanctions provisions of the 1986 law.) We argued that in 1993 that, even if these critics' arguments were accepted, and each of the alleged methodological problems reduced the discrimination attributable to employer sanctions by a factor of 50%, that the result would be at least 111,375 net, new discriminatory incidents annually.

15. The authors note that most of these observers conveniently ignore substantial evidence that significant levels of employment discrimination against Latinos are attributable to attempts to enforce the immigration laws, affecting both immigrants and citizens perceived to be immigrants (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1990; Munoz, 1990). A related issue is the extent to which highly-charged public debates about immigration policy

and the use of immigration as a political "wedge issue" are themselves responsible for civil rights violations against Latinos and/or the failure of the civil rights enforcement system to equitably enforce the laws on their behalf.

16. Among other issues, the apparent moral power of the argument is not apparent with respect to long-term immigrants and naturalized citizens, who presumably have resided in the U.S. long enough to have experienced discrimination and thus ought to be considered as deserving of remedial action. Moreover, the mere existence of such distinctions, we believe, could generate employer sanctions-like responses, i.e., native-born Latinos being excluded from affirmative action programs because they are incorrectly perceived to be immigrants.

17. The "civil rights movement," in this context, might be termed the "black civil rights movement." There is a long history of civil rights activism within the Latino community.

18. These included, for example, the Civil Rights Restoration Act reversing the *Grove City* decision; the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, which strengthened the enforcement system and extended Title VIII coverage to families with children and persons with disabilities; redress for Japanese American internees; the Americans with Disabilities Act; expansion of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (FIRREA); expansion of language assistance under and extension of the Voting Rights Act; etc. In addition, attempts to repeal or weaken affirmative action, the appointment of several federal judges perceived to be "anti-civil rights," and similar measures were defeated.

19. Similarly, as noted in the text, the "immigrant" paradigm in which Latinos are often pigeon-holed does not satisfactorily explain the Hispanic condition in the U.S. Moreover, because it reinforces the notion that Hispanics are "foreign," in many respects it also reinforces the legacy of conquest -- the idea that Latinos are "outsiders" no matter how deep their roots in this country. Furthermore, it provides "permission" to discriminate based on certain characteristics -- surname, language, and speech accent -- that are inextricably linked to national origin.

20. Although well beyond the scope of this brief comment, the role of the media in both perpetuating stereotypes which form the basis for discrimination and failing to promote public understanding of the condition of Latinos in the U.S. is enormously important.

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March 24, 1997

Ms. Maria Echaveste  
Office of Public Liaison  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Echaveste:

On behalf of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), I write to share some information with you regarding Hispanic poverty, a serious and growing problem for both the Hispanic community and the nation as a whole. As you may know, recent data from the Census Bureau show that the poverty rate of Hispanics -- soon to be the largest minority group in the nation -- has reached 30.3%, a rate which is now higher than that of African Americans. Almost one in every three Hispanics and, equally troublesome, two in every five Latino children, are poor.

For at least a decade, NCLR has been documenting and calling attention to the issue of growing poverty in the Latino community. Our research has shown that poverty is a complicated issue for Latinos as well as for other population groups. Many factors contribute to the persistence of poverty within the Latino community, including low education levels, the decline of decent-paying blue-collar jobs, and the generally poor status of Latino immigrants.

The data suggest that Hispanic poverty can largely be explained by the socioeconomic status of four groups:

- The "working poor." Census data show that Hispanic men have the highest labor force participation rate of any group of workers, yet because of their inadequate preparation for the current labor market, Hispanics are a significant segment of the U.S. working poor. These working, low earners include not only immigrants, but also second-, third-, and fourth-generation Hispanics.
- Mainland Puerto Ricans. Partly because of the decline in manufacturing jobs (an industry in which Puerto Rican workers were concentrated), changes in family structure, and the uneven labor force activity of Puerto Rican women, the poorest of all Latino subgroups are U.S. citizens by birth.



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- Female-headed households. An increase over the past two decades in families headed by single women, due to both divorce and unwed childbearing, has affected all groups, including Latinos. These families tend to be poor partly because of: one (usually low) income; low child support receipt rates; lack of high-quality, low-cost child care; and lack of health benefits common in low-wage work.
- Children. An especially important segment of the poverty population is Latino children. Currently, 40% of Latino children in the U.S. are poor. One of the consequences of child poverty including dropping out of school -- which perpetuates poverty. Poor Latino children also face other threats, including illness (since many live in families which lack health insurance); high rates of teenage pregnancy; and overall poor future outcomes. Also, while many might believe that poor Latino children are mainly immigrants, it is Puerto Ricans who have the highest child poverty rate (56%). Child poverty has grown even among Cuban children: from 1989 to 1993, their poverty increased by more than 50%, from 17.7% to 27.0%.

Moreover, while many point to immigration as the sole or principal explanation for Latino poverty, almost two-thirds of Hispanics are U.S.-born. In fact, analyses of the Census indicate that, even when foreign-born Latinos are removed entirely from the data, native-born Hispanics are three times more likely than Whites to be poor.

We believe that Hispanic poverty can be reduced through a sustained commitment from every sector and level of society. NCLR has developed a body of data, research, and knowledge regarding Hispanic families and their socioeconomic status, and is eager to work with the Administration to identify, develop, and implement appropriate public policy responses. We have enclosed for your review a sampling of NCLR poverty-related materials. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these concerns in more detail.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,



Raul Yzaguirre  
President

enclosures

# The Fair Housing Act: A Latino Perspective

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Raul Yzaguirre  
National Council of La Raza

Laura Arce  
National Council of La Raza

Charles Kamasaki  
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The 30th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act is a bittersweet occasion for Hispanics.<sup>1</sup> It represents an important milestone in the Nation's journey toward the ideal of equal opportunity for all. However, a review of the legislation's history reveals that, for too long, housing discrimination against the Hispanic community has been unjustifiably ignored.

In this article, we review briefly the importance of fair housing to the Hispanic community, discuss emerging research documenting the scope and degree of housing discrimination against Latinos, describe recent developments in Federal enforcement of the Act on behalf of Hispanics, and conclude with a few recommendations.

Many working-class and low-income Latinos face severe problems in obtaining "safe, sanitary, and decent" housing. Recent research shows that Hispanics are more likely than other Americans to live in substandard housing and to experience overcrowding. The percentage of Latinos with "worst case housing needs"<sup>2</sup> has risen dramatically in recent years. The link between low income and housing deprivation is well-established. Indeed, Hispanics now have the dubious distinction of being the poorest of Americans. Thirty percent of Latinos live below the Federal poverty level compared with 29 percent of African-Americans and 11 percent of Whites.<sup>3</sup> Data (National Council of La Raza, 1995) reveal that Hispanics are about twice as likely as Whites with similar resources to be inadequately housed and more than three times as likely to live in overcrowded conditions.

Low incomes alone cannot explain completely the housing conditions in which many Latino families live. Clearly, factors other than income are at least partially responsible for the housing deprivation experienced by many Hispanics. Undoubtedly, one of these factors is unlawful housing discrimination.

Beginning in the early 1980s the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and other advocates called for greater policy attention to the problem of housing discrimination against Latinos. Citing anecdotal evidence and a small but compelling body of research, these

advocates called for more outreach to the Hispanic community on fair housing issues and greater proactive efforts by Federal enforcement agencies.<sup>4</sup> These efforts initially were unsuccessful. However, in recent years, they appear to have resulted in heightened policy attention to, and stepped-up enforcement efforts on behalf of, Hispanics.

## Early Hispanic-Focused Research

Early studies on housing discrimination often did not include data on Latinos. When the studies did include this data, the findings were often inconclusive. Some early findings suggested that discrimination against Hispanics was less severe than discrimination faced by African-Americans.<sup>5</sup> Later studies, based on a somewhat standardized methodology using carefully matched, paired testers, increasingly showed that Hispanics and African-Americans experienced the same degree of housing discrimination in most housing markets.

In 1988 NCLR published *Hispanic Housing Crisis*, the first comprehensive study of housing issues facing Latinos. This study outlined the findings of many early housing discrimination studies addressing the effects of discrimination on Hispanics seeking housing. Some of the key findings of this research follow.

In 1979 HUD conducted its first research on the extent of housing discrimination against by Hispanics by including one Hispanic site (Dallas) in a multistate national survey. Initially, researchers in the Dallas study assumed that Hispanics faced a lower incidence of discrimination than African-Americans for two reasons: Hispanics made up a smaller portion of the population than African-Americans and Hispanic renters had higher incomes than African-American renters. However, the study findings proved otherwise. According to those findings, a dark-skinned Mexican-American had a 96-percent chance of experiencing at least one instance of discrimination. For light-skinned Mexican-Americans, the chance of encountering discrimination was 65 percent. Dark-skinned Mexican-Americans were more than twice as likely to experience discrimination than African-Americans or light-skinned Mexican-Americans. Dark-skinned Mexican-Americans were more likely than either African-Americans or light-skinned Mexican-Americans to receive less favorable lease terms and conditions. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1979).

In 1981 HUD funded a telephone survey of selected Boston real estate agents who advertised housing units for rent. Three callers conducted 42 test calls. One caller could be identified by voice as White, one as Black, and one as Hispanic. In all 42 tests, White callers were invited to see a unit. In 31 of the 42 calls, Black and Hispanic callers were informed that no units were available. During 23 of 47 site visits, White testers were shown units while Black and Hispanic testers were told that nothing was available (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1983).

In 1982 HUD funded a Denver study that used White and Latino auditors to test the incidence of housing discrimination against Hispanics in the sales market. The study reported that Whites and Hispanics received significantly different information from real estate agents. When inquiring about homes available in a given community, 60 percent of Hispanic auditors were told there was nothing else available, while only 31 percent of White auditors were so informed. White auditors were offered considerably more information in their home search than were Hispanic auditors.

The incidence of housing discrimination in Denver was found to be more prevalent in the sales market than in the rental market. However, some differences in treatment did occur in the rental market. For example, Hispanic auditors were twice as likely as White auditors to be told that advertised units were no longer available, and twice as likely as White

auditors not to be told of other available units. However, the findings were not statistically significant in either case due to small sample sizes (Colorado Civil Rights Division, 1983).

In 1986 a HUD-funded study in Phoenix found evidence of discrimination against African-American and Hispanic renters. In 13 percent of the cases, African-Americans and Hispanics were charged higher rents than Whites, while Whites were given rental inducements (City of Phoenix, 1986).

These early studies were the first to document incidences of discrimination against Hispanic renters and homebuyers and paved the way for future housing discrimination studies. Subsequent research has tended to include appropriate samples of Hispanics, thus documenting with greater precision the scope and degree of housing discrimination faced by Hispanic homebuyers and renters.

### Latino Housing Discrimination: Recent Findings

In 1989 HUD sponsored the *Housing Discrimination Survey*, a national fair housing study audit conducted by the Urban Institute. This survey was based on 3,800 fair housing audits conducted in 40 metropolitan areas using teams consisting of one White and one minority tester. In each metropolitan area, team members responded separately to randomly selected newspaper advertisements and tracked their experiences with real estate and rental agents. The survey reported a 56 percent discrimination rate for Hispanic homebuyers and 50 percent for Hispanic renters (Turner, 1991).

The Housing Discrimination Survey was the first large-scale endeavor of its kind to include many Hispanic testers and to be conducted in multiple markets. The study validated what Latino and civil rights practitioners and smaller scale studies had been saying: Hispanics experience the same magnitude of housing discrimination as African-Americans. Several other local and regional studies reported similar findings.

In 1995 the Fair Housing Council of Fresno County, California, conducted its first rental audit to document and quantify the incidence of discrimination against Hispanic, Asian, and African-American renters in the Greater Fresno area. The study was based on 58 paired tests conducted in northern Fresno County and the city of Clovis. According to 1990 census figures, the city is less than 5 percent minority, while the county as a whole is 49 percent minority. The study found a 77-percent rate of discrimination against Hispanic renters seeking housing in predominantly White neighborhoods compared with 74 percent for African-Americans and none for Asian-Americans. The incidence of discrimination in these neighborhoods was 100 percent for Hispanic families with children seeking rental housing, while it was 80 percent and 50 percent, respectively, for African-American and Asian families with children (Fair Housing Council of Fresno County, 1995).

In 1997 the San Antonio Fair Housing Council conducted a rental audit of the San Antonio metropolitan area utilizing 66 paired testers who conducted surveys throughout the city of San Antonio and Bexar County. The study found that Hispanic renters faced discrimination 52 percent of the time when seeking housing and received differential treatment in lease terms and conditions (51 percent); information on availability (21 percent); a facially discriminatory policy (14 percent); access to appointments (7 percent); and access to rental application (7 percent) (San Antonio Fair Housing Council, 1997).

That same year, the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington conducted audits of housing discrimination in the Washington-area rental and real estate sales markets. The rental housing study found that the incidence of discrimination was 37 percent against

Latino renters and 44 percent against African-American renters (Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, 1997a). The real estate sales study found that Hispanic homebuyers experienced discrimination 42 percent of the time while African-American homebuyers faced discrimination 33 percent of the time (Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, 1997b).

## Other Housing-Related Discrimination

While direct housing discrimination is a large problem in the Hispanic community. Latinos also face many other forms of housing discrimination, including lending discrimination, insurance redlining, and unequal access to credit.

Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data have shown differences in mortgage loan denial rates among Whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics. Low-income Whites (69 percent) were about as likely as moderate-income Hispanics (68 percent) to obtain a mortgage, according to 1990 HMDA data, which also showed that low-income Whites had significantly greater approval rates than upper income Hispanics for refinancing and home improvement loans. A 1993 study of 1991 HMDA data showed that denial rates for mortgage loan applications were 50 percent higher for Latinos than for Whites of equal incomes (Avery, Sniderman, and Beeson, 1993).

For years banks and other mortgage lenders have attributed these inequities to differences in credit histories, asserting that African-Americans and Hispanics have poorer credit ratings overall. However, a 1992 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston found that, holding credit histories equal, Hispanics and African-Americans were still 60 percent more likely to be turned down for a mortgage loan than their White counterparts (Munnell et al., 1992).

In 1992 the California Reinvestment Committee conducted a study on the lending records of California's largest mortgage lenders. This study found that, overall, Latinos fared better than did African-Americans but much worse than Whites when seeking mortgage loans. However, it also found that the total number of loan applications received from Latinos decreased by 16 percent from 1992 to 1993. Latinos who did apply for mortgage loans were twice as likely as Whites to have their application rejected (California Reinvestment Committee, 1995).

One often-ignored form of potential discrimination relates to the distribution of Federal housing assistance. Because Hispanics constitute about 23 percent of all poor families, and because Federal housing assistance is means-tested, one might expect that Latinos would constitute about 23 percent of families receiving Federal housing assistance. However, actual participation data reveal that Hispanics are severely underrepresented among Federal housing assistance recipients. For example, in 1996 Hispanics constituted less than 16 percent of renters living in public housing (13 percent), or receiving tenant-based Section 8 (13 percent) and project-based Section 8 (10 percent) assistance (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996).

These national Federal housing assistance data mask even more dramatic disparities in certain large metropolitan areas (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1997). Other factors, such as the rapid growth of the Hispanic population at a time of contraction in Federal housing assistance, are clearly responsible for some of this disparity. However, focus group research and other data strongly suggest that discrimination in the distribution of housing assistance also plays a role (Luna and Perez, 1997). One compelling example of the discrimination hypothesis was presented by Latinos United, a coalition of community groups in Chicago that filed suit against HUD and the Chicago

Housing Authority alleging both intentional and disparate impact discrimination against Hispanics in the distribution of housing assistance in that city.

In 1998 the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington conducted an audit of race and national origin discrimination in the Washington area's mortgage lending market. The audit of almost 50 of the area's largest volume lenders used similarly situated African-American, Latino, and White testers, controlling for income. The study found the incidence of discrimination was 48 percent for Latinos and 37 percent for African-Americans (Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington, 1998).

Insurance discrimination is another problem faced by Hispanic homeowners, although relatively little research has been conducted in this area. In 1994 the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) conducted a number of neighborhood tests in four cities and uncovered disturbing findings. For example, Hispanic testers seeking homeowners insurance in Chicago experienced discrimination in 95 percent of their encounters with insurance agents (Tisdale, Smith, and Cloud, 1994). In 1994 the Texas State Office of Public Insurance Counsel conducted a review of homeowners insurance redlining guidelines used in six Texas markets (Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Lubbock, Houston, and San Antonio). The study concluded that the greater the concentration of Latinos and other minorities in a community, the less likely that an owner-occupied home in that community will be covered by standard homeowners insurance (Kincaid, 1994).

## Latino Housing Discrimination: Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Complaint Case Load

Until the 1990s Hispanics were severely underrepresented in the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity's (FHEO's) housing discrimination case load, despite advocate claims of and emerging research substantiating the high incidence of discrimination faced by Hispanic renters and homebuyers. Throughout most of the 1980s, complaints filed by Hispanics constituted less than 7 percent of the total FHEO case load. At this time Hispanics constituted between 7 percent and 9 percent of the total population and a much higher percentage of those protected by Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968.<sup>6</sup>

The Federal enforcement record has improved dramatically in recent years. Between 1992 and 1993 the case load for discrimination complaints based on national origin increased by 32.8 percent. Hispanics now account for almost 10 percent of the FHEO caseload,<sup>7</sup> a figure that is approximately equal to their percentage of the U.S. population but lower than the percentage of All persons covered by Title VIII. Several factors account for HUD's improved performance.

- The growing body of evidence documenting substantial discrimination against Latinos may have encouraged more vigorous enforcement. Public awareness of this discrimination has been heightened by the release of *Housing Discrimination Survey: A Synthesis* in 1991 and policymaker attention to a growing and increasingly powerful Hispanic community.
- The emergence of the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and new Federal funding to support private fair housing groups<sup>8</sup> led to increased Latino-focused enforcement activity. This increased activity was due, in large part, to NFHA's strong commitment to include Hispanics. For example, NFHA and NCLR collaborated in a series of outreach, enforcement, and advocacy activities throughout the early- and mid-1990s. In addition, NFHA nurtured a number of newly formed Latino-focused fair housing groups during this period.

- With the appointment of Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros in 1993, NCLR and other fair housing advocates sensed a substantial increase in policy attention to fair housing in general, and enforcement efforts on behalf of Hispanics in particular.

## Recent Department of Justice and HUD Litigation

If HUD's fair housing enforcement efforts on behalf of Hispanics were inadequate until the early 1990s, the performance of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) was dismal. DOJ was charged with litigating cases against municipal governments and cases involving a "pattern or practice" of misconduct. For much of the early 1990's, however, DOJ did not have a single Latino-focused lawsuit in its housing discrimination case load.<sup>9</sup> The situation has changed substantially in recent years.

In 1995 DOJ settled a case against Security State Bank of Pecos, Texas, which was found to be in violation of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act because it overcharged Hispanic borrowers in more than 300 separate incidents. These borrowers, on average, paid significantly higher rates for loans than equally creditworthy Whites (U.S. Department of Justice, October 1995).

In 1996 HUD settled *Latinos United v. Chicago Housing Authority and HUD*. The Plaintiff alleged that HUD knowingly condoned various policies and practices that illegally limited access to Chicago Housing Authority and HUD Section 8 benefits by Latinos. As part of the settlement, HUD earmarked 500 vouchers for Latinos, funded mobility counseling, and promoted voucher use (*Latinos United*, 1994).

That same year HUD filed a complaint against the city of Waukegan, Illinois, citing allegations that in 1994, after experiencing significant increases in its Latino population, the city revised its housing code to include more restrictions on overcrowding. DOJ alleged that Hispanic families often were asked to vacate their homes even when they did not live in overcrowded conditions. Furthermore, city records indicated that all the families who were evicted from their homes pursuant to the new city codes were Hispanic (U.S. Department of Justice, 1996).

In 1997 DOJ and the village of Addison, Illinois, settled a case involving allegations that the village had violated the Fair Housing Act by illegally tearing down Latino neighborhoods under the guise of urban renewal (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997).

In March 1998 HUD settled a discrimination case alleging that managers and owners of El Granada Mobile Home Park in Moss Beach, California, discriminated against current and prospective Hispanic residents. Discrimination came in two forms: managers imposed higher qualifying standards for Hispanic tenants and made disparaging statements about Hispanic people living in the park (*Project Sentinel*, 1998).

## Conclusion

Social science research has demonstrated conclusively that Latinos experience substantial housing discrimination. In recent years, Federal agencies and private fair housing groups have begun to carry out increased enforcement efforts to protect the civil rights of Hispanics under the Fair Housing Act. Despite the progress outlined in this article, the Act has not lived up to its promise.

Given the magnitude of discrimination against Hispanics, African-Americans, and others, it is clear that simple, decisive remedies remain elusive three decades after the Fair Housing

Acting became law. There is, in short, no single magic wand that policymakers and advocates can wave to eradicate housing discrimination. However, the goal of equal housing opportunity remains worthy of pursuit. Toward that end, we offer these recommendations.

- Educate the public about the problem of housing discrimination. We are not so naïve as to believe that a public education program alone will end housing discrimination or change the minds of policymakers opposed to stronger civil rights enforcement. However, we are also not so cynical that we think that attitudes cannot be changed. We believe that few Americans are aware of the compelling social science research on housing discrimination. One useful step recommended by the advisory board to the President's Commission On Race would be to publish regular report cards documenting the scope and degree of housing discrimination in American society. In addition, explaining how our entire society suffers as a result of discrimination against any one group might effectively appeal to the public's self-interest and conscience.
- Market discrimination data more effectively. This proposal was recommended by Marc Bendick, a pioneer in the field of paired testing to uncover discrimination. For example, television news magazines have carried several features on paired testing studies using hidden cameras. Greater use of these and other techniques might trigger a change in attitudes and behavior among many Americans.
- Continue to focus attention on funding issues. From an enforcement perspective, it is clear that both HUD and DOJ need more resources to enforce the Fair Housing Act. The FY99 Federal budget includes a major increase in funding for civil rights enforcement agencies, including both HUD and DOJ. This funding increase was achieved, in part, as a result of public attention to President Clinton's race initiative and vigorous advocacy by several organizations led by the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. To prevent this increase from becoming a one-time occurrence, policymakers and civil rights groups must maintain continued attention to the funding issue.
- Sustain and expand the increasing interest in protecting Latinos against housing discrimination. This interest on the part of HUD, DOJ, and the private fair housing enforcement community comes after decades of neglect. Early in the next century, Hispanics will become the Nation's largest ethnic minority. It is not unreasonable to expect civil rights enforcement efforts to reflect that reality.
- The Latino community must make fair housing a higher priority. Hispanic advocates need to pull their weight in coalition with other supporters of fair housing to strengthen the law so it works for all groups. Simultaneously they must work to assure that the Latino community's interests will never again be ignored. More work also is needed to educate Hispanics about their rights and legal options. Local Latino housing and civil rights organizations should work collaboratively with private fair housing groups where they exist and try to fill the gap in areas that lack such capacity.

If we can accomplish all of this by working together with the small but committed network of fair housing enforcement officials, advocates, and practitioners, perhaps future generations will claim the Fair Housing Act as an unqualified, rather than bittersweet, success for Latinos and all Americans.

## Authors

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## Notes

1. In compiling this article, the authors relied heavily on, and excerpted liberally from, previous research, analysis, and congressional testimony produced by various past and present colleagues at the National Council of La Raza. These documents are cited in the references. The terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are used interchangeably in this report to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Spanish, and other Latin American descent.
2. *Worst case housing needs* refers to households that do not receive Federal housing assistance, pay more than 50 percent of their income for rent, and earn less than 50 percent of the median family income for their areas.
3. These data, principally from HUD and the Bureau of the Census, are cited in Luna and Perez (1997).
4. See, for example, statement of Charles Kamasaki on the Fair Housing Amendments Act, House Hearings: Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, July 17, 1986.
5. For example, a 1973 League of Women Voters study in Houston and a 1978 study in San Jose, California, found that Mexican-Americans encountered discrimination at a dramatically lower rate than comparable African-Americans.
6. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
7. Data provided by HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity by telephone, August 1998. HUD/FHEO's national origin case load was 10.91 percent of its total complaints in 1997 (National Fair Housing Alliance, 1998).

8. The Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) provides funding to support outreach and enforcement activities carried out by private fair housing groups.
9. See also the article by Bill Lann Lee in this issue.

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## HISPANIC PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED FEDERAL ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS ISSUE BRIEF

July 1997

Contact: Eric Rodriguez

### Overview

The Hispanic population is currently 10.7% of the entire U.S. population and is projected to become the nation's largest ethnic minority group within the next decade. In fact, Hispanics are projected to constitute one-quarter of the U.S. labor force by 2050, and have now surpassed African Americans as the poorest U.S. population (with 30.3% and 29.3% poverty rates respectively). Most troubling about these data is that many young Latinos, who represent a large proportion of the future U.S. labor force, are now growing up poor; two out of every five Hispanic children today live below the poverty line (40%). Despite this situation federal policies have failed to focus on, or even recognize, Hispanic poverty as a growing and important national problem. Moreover, federal programs designed to address and alleviate poverty and open up opportunities for all disadvantaged Americans continue to underserve and neglect Hispanics.

### Representation

Given that Hispanics in 1995 constituted more than 22% of poor American families and about 28% of American children who are poor, Hispanics should constitute at least 22% of families and 28% of children served by the major federal anti-poverty programs. Most programs listed below are means-tested, i.e., weigh individual and household income and poverty status as the most important criteria in determining eligibility for programs.

#### Children and Youth

**Head Start.** In 1993, Latinos constituted slightly more than one in six (15%) non-migrant, Head Start participants on the U.S. mainland, while almost two-fifths (36%) of enrollees were Black, and one-third (33%) were White.

**Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Youth Programs.** In 1994, Latino youth accounted for one in five (19%) young persons served by JTPA title III employment and training programs for disadvantaged youth (which include Summer Youth employment services). In comparison, in 1994, Black and White youth accounted for more than one-third (35%) and more than two-fifths (41%), respectively, of participants served by JTPA youth programs.

**Job Corps Youth Programs.** In program year 1995, Job Corps, the nation's largest residential education and training program for disadvantaged youth, served more than 68,000 youth. Of those served Latinos constituted fewer than one in six (15.8%) Job Corps participants, while more than one-quarter were White (28.7%) and half were Black (49.4%).

**TRIO Higher Education Programs.** In the 1993-94 school year, Hispanics accounted for slightly more than one in seven (15%) of those served in TRIO higher educational opportunity programs (which include programs like Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement awards), a decrease from almost one-quarter of participants served by TRIO in 1978.

**Medicaid.** In 1995, more than three in five (61.8%) children receiving Medicaid were classified as White (including Hispanics), while fewer than one in three (31.7%) children receiving Medicaid were Black. When data are disaggregated, fewer than one-quarter (23.3%) of all poor children receiving Medicaid benefits in 1995 were Hispanic.

**Apprenticeship/School-to-Work.** In 1994, just one in fifteen (6.6%) newly registered apprentices in the U.S. were Hispanic, while one in ten (10.7%) were Black, and nearly four out of five (79.2%) were White.

### Families and Adults

**Job Training Partnership Act Adult Programs.** In 1994, Latinos comprised slightly more than one in eight (13%) participants of Title II-A adult JTPA employment and training programs. In contrast, White participants constituted half (50.8%), while Black participants made up fewer than one-third (30.6%) of all JTPA adult participants.

**Medicaid.** In 1995, Latinos constituted slightly more than one in six (17.4%) of all Medicaid recipients, compared to White and Black participants, who constituted more than four in nine (45.5%) and one-quarter (24.8%), respectively, of all Medicaid recipients.

**Food Stamps.** In 1995, while fewer than one in five participant households (19%) receiving Food Stamps were Latino, more than two in five (41%) participant households receiving Food Stamp were White and one-third (33%) were Black.

**Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training program (JOBS).** In 1992, Hispanics constituted slightly more than one in eight (12.8%) participants in JOBS -- the employment and training program for welfare recipients -- while they accounted for about one in six (17%) welfare recipients that year. In comparison, White and Black participants were 47.2 percent 32.4 percent, respectively, of JOBS participants, while they constituted 38.9 and 37.2 percent, respectively, of AFDC recipients in 1992.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (welfare reform act of 1996) the JOBS program was abolished and funding for work programs was consolidated into the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant.

**Housing Assistance.** Latinos constitute about 12% of households receiving federal housing assistance (which includes Public Housing, Section 8, and Housing Voucher programs), even though they account for nearly 20% of poor households and 18% of households with "worst case" needs.

### Civil Rights

**Federal Civil Rights Monitoring and Enforcement.** The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) continues to fail to serve Hispanics adequately; for example, in 1996, Hispanic charges alleging discrimination based on national origin accounted for only 8.6% of the EEOC's combined charge caseload, while charges alleging discrimination based on race (Black), gender (female), and age, made up 33.8%, 30.6% , and 20.1%, respectively, of the total charge caseload. In addition, cases involving Latinos typically constitute almost 10% of the caseload of HUD's Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity division's caseload of housing discrimination complaints.

### Employment

**Federal Employment.** Hispanics constitute 6% of federal employees, although they were more than 9.5% of the civilian labor force in 1996. Moreover, data suggest that Hispanics are even more severely under-represented at the state-local level. As a result, one traditional "career ladder" for minorities to escape poverty has been effectively blocked for Latinos.

## Conclusions

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Latinos are severely underrepresented by federal programs and services. Overall, these data show that, literally from "cradle to grave," poor and near-poor Hispanics are denied access to programs designed to alleviate poverty and improve economic opportunity. NCLR is far less concerned about underrepresentation in, say, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs (welfare), which some have argued persuasively does not effectively promote opportunity. However, given the growing importance of Latinos to the nation's future economic well-being, all Americans should share NCLR's concern that Hispanics are denied fair access to education (Head Start, TRIO), job training (JTPA, School-to-Work), and similar programs designed specifically to improve long-term economic opportunities for disadvantaged Americans.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to suggest that federal government involvement decreases opportunity and worsens poverty. Whether or not this is true for other populations, it simply does not apply to Hispanic Americans, who have the dubious distinction of having the highest poverty rates of any major population group, despite having been ignored or neglected by federal anti-poverty initiatives for decades. In fact, the absence of fair treatment of Hispanics in the distribution of government benefits and services -- particularly those that build human capital

skills and support or encourage work -- appears to be a more persuasive explanation of the high and growing incidence of Latino poverty.

NCLR will provide citations for the data used in this Issue Brief. For more information contact Eric Rodriguez at (202) 776-1786.

### Sources

Published and unpublished data were provided by the following agencies: Health Care Financing Administration (Medicaid); the Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Labor (JTPA, Apprenticeships); the Department of Agriculture (Food Stamps); the Department of Education (Head Start, Bilingual Education, TRIO); and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (civil rights data). The following publications were used as source material: *Poverty in the United States: 1995*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, October 1996 (poverty data); "Underrepresentation in Housing Assistance Programs", National Council of La Raza, 1997; and an Annual Report to Congress, Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program, 1996 (federal employment data).