



Obama Administration Record for Hispanic Americans

"At more than 52 million strong, including 4 million in Puerto Rico, Hispanics constitute the country's largest and fastest growing minority group. They have had a profound and positive impact on our country through, among other things, their community's strong commitment to family, faith, hard work, and service... Our country was built on and continues to thrive on its diversity, and there is no doubt that the future of the United States is inextricably linked to the future of the Hispanic community." — President Barack Obama, October 19, 2010

President Obama knows we need to do more than just recover from this economic crisis that has hit Hispanic Americans especially hard. We need to provide the opportunity for every American to be part of the middle class and reclaim the security middle class Americans have lost. That begins with restoring the fundamental values that made our economy the strongest in the world—making sure everyone does their fair share, everyone plays by the same rules and gets a fair shot, and hard work and responsibility are rewarded. That's why President Obama has worked to promote job creation for Hispanics and all Americans; make access to health care a right, not a privilege; make college more affordable; and protect all Americans from financial abuses. The Obama Administration has made improvements to immigration enforcement even as the President continues to call on Congress to work with him to comprehensively fix our nation's broken immigration system. The Obama Administration's record supporting Hispanics includes:

- **Restoring Economic Security to Hispanic Families:** In the last two years, over 3.9 million private sector jobs have been created, and putting Americans back to work and restoring economic security remains the President's top priority. He has taken a series of steps to achieve these goals:
 - **Putting Americans Back to Work and Helping Those Struggling Because of the Economic Crisis:** In 2009, President Obama took swift action to address the immediate jobs crisis by signing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, creating jobs, spurring economic growth, and investing in our communities. The Recovery Act has been vital to the Hispanic community. A report from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office showed that the Recovery Act, at its peak impact, increased employment by as many as 3.5 million jobs. According to a study released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, policies in the Recovery Act, including tax cuts for working families and improvements in unemployment insurance, have kept over 2 million Hispanics out of poverty.
 - **Laying the Foundation for Long-Term, Middle Class Job Growth:** The President fought to continue the payroll tax cut into 2012, ensuring that taxes do not go up on nearly 25 million Hispanic workers, and to extend unemployment insurance so that Americans looking for work do not lose this crucial support. In addition, the President put forward a broader jobs package that would cut taxes for small businesses, put teachers and first responders back on the job, help the unemployed get back to work, and rebuild our infrastructure.

- **Providing Tax Relief for Millions of Hispanic Families:** In December 2010, the President passed a bipartisan tax cut agreement that not only secured vital tax relief and investments for workers—creating jobs and accelerating economic growth—but also provided specific support for Hispanic families. Building off the Recovery Act, the tax agreement extended key expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) that directly benefit an estimated 3.7 million Hispanic families, including 8 million Hispanic children.
- **Expanding Access to Credit for Hispanic-Owned Businesses:** President Obama has helped firms owned by Hispanic Americans by cutting taxes for small businesses and helping them get the loans they need to grow and hire. Between 2009 and 2011, over 9,000 Small Business Administration-supported loans totaling over \$2.4 billion went to Hispanic-owned small businesses.
- **Expanding Access to Federal Contracting for Minority-Owned Businesses:** The White House launched an interagency initiative to increase contracting with small businesses. More than 20 Cabinet and Senate-confirmed Obama Administration officials have participated in 19 small business matchmaking events around the country. These events have helped more than 10,000 small, minority- and women-owned businesses by promoting access to capital and access to Federal government contracting opportunities. Through Fiscal Year 2011, over 30 percent of Federal agency Recovery Act contracting dollars, totaling nearly \$10 billion, have gone into the hands of small businesses; more than 16 percent, totaling \$6 billion, went to minority-owned firms. Additionally, for non-Recovery Act funds, Hispanic-owned small businesses were awarded over \$11 billion in Fiscal Year 2010 alone. Hispanics, who open businesses at a rate three times faster than the national average, have benefited from these efforts.
- **Expanding Health Care Coverage for 9 Million Hispanics and Ending the Worst Practices of Insurance Companies:** Nearly a third of Hispanics are uninsured, more than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States, and about half of Hispanics do not have a regular doctor. The reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program and the passage of the Affordable Care Act give all hard-working Americans, including Hispanics, the security they deserve and health care coverage they can rely on. The Affordable Care Act stops insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions, provides no-cost preventative care, and creates new, competitive state-based exchanges, where individuals and small businesses can access affordable insurance options. As a result of these reforms, over 6 million more Hispanics are receiving expanded preventive services coverage in the private insurance market and over 500,000 Hispanics received no-cost preventive services through Medicare. The Affordable Care Act also expands the Medicaid program to families with income below 133 percent of the Federal poverty level, such as a family of four with income up to \$29,000. And Puerto Rico will receive more than \$900 million dollars to expand coverage to their residents. Nine million Hispanics will be eligible to get the health care coverage they lack today thanks to the Affordable Care Act.
- **Protecting Families from Financial Abuses, Hidden Fees, and Deceptive Practices:** Too many responsible Hispanics, as well as other Americans, have paid the price for an outdated regulatory system that left families without adequate protections against financial abuses and deceptive practices. That's why President Obama overcame a furious lobbying campaign by big banks to pass the most far reaching Wall Street reform in history, a bill which created the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to prevent mortgage companies, credit card lenders, and payday loan companies from exploiting consumers with hidden fees, penalties, and other deceptive practices. The CFPB is also charged with enforcing fair lending laws that protect Hispanics from discriminatory lending practices, establishing a consumer response center to

field consumer response center to field consumer response center to field consumer response center to field consumer response center to field mortgage and credit card complaints. President Obama also put in place the most sweeping credit card protections in history to protect Americans from unfair rate increases and hidden fees and penalties. For Latinos who send remittances to their families, the CFPB will be able to provide, for the first time, Federal oversight over the larger companies that provide remittance transfer services to consumers, and it will be responsible for enforcing new protections, including requirements to provide consumers easy-to-understand, pre-transactional pricing disclosures and receipts.

- **Making Homeownership More Affordable and Secure:** Hispanic families have been particularly hard-hit by the housing crisis, with nearly 12 percent of Hispanic borrowers who took out loans between 2004 and 2008 having lost their homes to foreclosure. The President has taken action to help responsible homeowners and strengthen the housing market, including expanding access to refinancing—allowing responsible borrowers who are current on their payments to save an average of \$3,000 per year. The Administration has also taken measures to allow homeowners behind on their payments to modify their mortgages to avoid foreclosure, with over 4.8 million borrowers having received permanent modifications through public-sector and private-sector efforts. Since January 2009, more than 250,000 Hispanic households have purchased a home using a mortgage guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and 90,000 Hispanic households have refinanced their mortgages using FHA, in many cases dramatically reducing their monthly payment or getting out of a risky adjustable rate loan.
- **Extending Overtime Protections:** In December 2011, President Obama announced a new rule proposed by the U.S. Department of Labor that would provide minimum wage and overtime protections for nearly two million workers who provide in-home care services for the elderly and infirmed. Many of these workers provide critical health care services such as tube feeding, wound care, or assistance with physical therapy, and deserve the protections provided under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- **Improving the Quality of Education and Expanding Access to College:** President Obama has improved the quality of education—particularly in our lowest-performing schools—and has expanded access to college because every child deserves an education that equips he or she with the skills to find a good-paying job and succeed in the workforce.
 - **Making College More Affordable:** By redirecting subsidies from private lenders to students, the Obama Administration has already raised the maximum Pell Grant award to \$5,550 and increased the number of Pell Grant recipients by 3 million, a 50 percent increase since 2008. The President also helped put a college education within reach by signing the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), a tax credit of up to \$10,000 to help cover four years of tuition. He also strengthened Hispanic-Serving Institutions (public or private nonprofit colleges or universities with a student body that is at least 25 percent Latino) by investing more than \$1 billion in these institutions over the next decade. More than half of America’s Hispanic and Latino undergraduates attend Hispanic-Serving Institutions, which serve a higher proportion of low- and middle-income students than their peers.
 - **Raising Standards and Fixing No Child Left Behind:** Hispanics are one of every five K-12 students and have the highest dropout rate of any group. That’s why investing in education is vital to the Hispanic community, especially as more and more Hispanics join the labor force. As states are working to improve education, some provisions of No Child Left Behind impose unintended consequences that stand in the way of progress. While adhering to the core value of equal

opportunity for all students, the Administration has offered states flexibility from some of the more restrictive elements of the law. Eleven states have already requested—and been awarded—this flexibility in exchange for continuing with significant reforms. This flexibility will enable states, schools, and teachers to ensure that America's students graduate with the knowledge and skills they need to compete for the jobs of the new economy.

- **Providing Quality Education:** President Obama signed an Executive Order renewing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics to expand educational opportunities and improve educational outcomes for Hispanics of all ages. In addition, the following states with significant Hispanic student populations in their public school system received Race to the Top funding: Arizona, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.
- **Incentivizing Reform and Rewarding Best Practices in Early Learning:** Approximately 20 percent of the nation's child care subsidy recipients are Hispanic and Latino, and approximately 39 percent of participants in Head Start are Hispanic and Latino. The Administration's \$500 million investment through the Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Fund challenges states to raise the bar on the quality of their early learning and education programs. It will focus on improving standards to ensure critical links with health, nutrition, mental health, and family support for our neediest children. Hispanic children represent the fastest-growing segment of the early childhood population in the nation, and will benefit greatly from this significant investment.
- **Supporting Puerto Rico:** President Obama is the first President to visit the Island on an official trip since President John F. Kennedy's trip to Puerto Rico 50 years ago. This historic visit highlighted this Administration's extensive engagement to improve opportunities for the four million U.S. Citizens who call Puerto Rico home. These efforts began with the President's Executive Order expanding the work of the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status so that it would continue to look at the important issue of status, while also making extensive recommendations to the President and Congress on economic issues affecting the Island. The work of the Task Force continues with in-depth strategic plans for improving education, housing, public safety, health care, clean energy, and economic development. In each of these areas, the Federal government is involved in a close partnership with leaders in Puerto Rico's public and private sectors to ensure that this Administration's work to restore economic security and opportunity reaches all Americans.
- **Restoring Responsibility and Accountability to Our Broken Immigration System:** President Obama has taken key steps to restore responsibility and accountability to our immigration system, and to work toward building a new 21st century immigration system that meets our Nation's economic and security needs.
 - **Working to Fix Our Broken Immigration System:** The President is deeply committed to working with Congress to fix our immigration system. We need to build a 21st century immigration system that meets our economic and national security needs while honoring our legacy as a nation of immigrants. In 2010, the Administration also worked aggressively to pass the DREAM Act, and the President was deeply disappointed when Senate Republicans blocked its passage despite bipartisan support in the House. There are real economic benefits to Comprehensive Immigration Reform and enacting the DREAM Act. For example, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, Comprehensive Immigration Reform would boost GDP by more than 1 percentage point, and the DREAM Act, as approved by the House, would have cut the deficit by \$2.2 billion over the next 10 years.

- **Reforming Legal Immigration and Prioritizing Immigration Enforcement:** Since 2009, the Administration has made significant improvements to our legal immigration system by, for example, providing new tools to prepare applicants for citizenship and keeping citizenship application fees constant; better protecting American workers through reforms to temporary work visa programs; improving immigration services and resources provided to non-citizen members of the military and their families; reducing barriers for high-skilled immigrants; making our immigrant detention system safer and more humane; and providing more staff and better training to our immigration courts. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has improved processing times and cleared backlogs of pending applications by becoming more user-friendly and technologically advanced. For the first time ever, immigration enforcement resources are being focused so that high-enforcement priorities, such as convicted criminals and those who pose a threat to public safety are prioritized for deportation. The Administration has also proposed a new rule that under certain circumstances will significantly reduce the time U.S. citizens are separated from their spouses and children while those family members go through the process of becoming legal immigrants to the United States.
- **Serving Hispanic Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families:** Hispanics serve in our military in record numbers—over 1.33 million Hispanics currently serve in our armed forces and an estimated 5.8 percent of our Nation’s Veterans are Latino. To help ensure every veteran returning home can find a job, President Obama issued a challenge to the private sector to hire or train 100,000 unemployed veterans or their spouses by the end of 2013. President Obama also fought for and signed the VOW to Hire Heroes Act. Originally a part of the American Jobs Act, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act doubled the tax break that businesses receive for hiring long-term unemployed veterans with service-connected disabilities and offered up to a \$5,600 tax credit for businesses hiring veterans who have been unemployed for six months or longer.