
2006 STATE OF THE UNION AND HISPANIC AMERICANS

Bolster U.S. Competitiveness/Keep America #1

There are 1.2 million Hispanic Americans looking for work – 242,000 more than when President Bush took office. [BLS, 1/06] Over the last five years, the number of Hispanic Americans living in poverty has grown by more than 1 million; there are now 9.1 million Hispanic Americans (or about 22 percent) living below the poverty line. [CPS, 8/05] Today, the median household income of Hispanic American families is down \$2,141 since the beginning of the Bush Administration. But Republicans have ignored the economic challenges facing Hispanic American families -- delivering instead for wealthy special interests and corporations which are shipping jobs overseas. Democrats are promoting an Innovation Agenda, investing in R&D and technology to spur innovation, growth, and prosperity. The Innovation Agenda would also help the more than 1.6 million Hispanic-owned small businesses in America. [Census, 7/28/05]

Excellence in Education

About 18 percent of the children enrolled in K-12 school are Hispanic. [Census, 6/1/2005] More than 25 percent of Hispanic students drop out of high school, Republicans have failed to provide promised funding for education reforms, denying 3 million children help in reading and math and denying 1.7 million children after-school programs to boost academic achievement and keep kids safe. Only 12 percent of Hispanic Americans adults have graduated from college. [Census, 3/28/05] And yet, Republicans are pushing historic cuts in the student loan program, at a time when college costs are up 46 percent since 2001. To promote U.S. competitiveness, we must give all American children the needed tools and opportunities to succeed in science, math and literacy -- through quality early childhood education, good teachers in strong public schools, and an affordable college education.

Health Care That Works for Everyone

In 2004, the number of Hispanic Americans without health insurance climbed to 13.7 million. Over the last five years, the number of Hispanic Americans without any health insurance coverage has grown by 1.8 million. Over 21 percent of Hispanic children lack health insurance. [CPS, 8/05] For the past five years, health care costs have increased by nearly 60 percent. Instead, Republicans have created a flawed Medicare prescription drug plan, written by the drug industry, which is failing to meet the needs of the nearly 3 million Hispanic American Medicare beneficiaries – with many being denied medications or charged too much. [2002, KKF, Summer 2005] Democrats will create a health care system that works for everyone by continuing to fight for an affordable, meaningful Medicare prescription drug program, repealing the special interest provisions, and lowering the costs of health care.

End Out of Control Deficits

The national debt has increased to \$8 trillion. Instead of balancing the budget, Republicans are fighting for tax breaks for the wealthy few – providing millionaires with tax cuts averaging \$12,000 in 2009, while middle-income families would get \$39. [CTJ, 11/18/05] Democrats will stop the mortgaging of our children's future by restoring pay-as-you-go budget discipline.

Strong National Defense/Protect America Here At Home

More than 15,000 (or 11 percent) of the soldiers currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are Hispanic American. [DOD, Active Duty Forces Deployed as of 9/30/05] But Republicans have failed to provide our forces with needed equipment and resources to get the job done and return home safely. There are 1.1 million Hispanic American veterans. [Census, 9/8/05] Latinos are the most decorated group in the U.S. armed forces, and have won the most medals for outstanding military service. And yet last year, Republicans shut 260,000 veterans out of the VA health care system. Democrats are fighting to provide needed health care for veterans and end the Disabled Veterans Tax to provide promised benefits for about 400,000 military retirees. Democrats will strengthen our national security and invest in our first responders and tighter security at U.S. ports and borders.

Reduce Energy Costs and U.S. Dependence on Foreign Oil

On average, homeowners will see a 25 percent increase in home heating costs this winter. The average family using heating oil or natural gas will pay double what they paid in 2001-2002, the first winter President Bush was in office. [EIA, 1/06] Americans families are also paying \$2.34 a gallon on average for gasoline – which is 48 cents higher than a year ago and 89 cents higher than in 2001. [EIA, 1/06] Republicans have refused to address high energy costs, instead giving away billions in subsidies for profit-rich oil and gas companies. Democrats are fighting to reduce energy costs and decrease dependence on foreign oil through clean energy alternatives and through investing in energy assistance.