

# The Hispanic Leaders Group of Greater St. Louis

## STATEMENT ON IMMIGRATION

The Hispanic Leaders Group of Greater St. Louis (HLG) views the current immigration debate as a momentous opportunity to have comprehensive reform of a contentious issue which has divided the Nation, to date.

Competing interests have polarized the community to the extent that public comments on radio, and elsewhere, indicate the lack of civility and heated passions surrounding this issue.

As members of the Hispanic Community, the Board of HLG, a non-partisan organization, has voted to express its position on several basic points, advanced by partisans on both sides.

### **BORDERS**

As to the question of the Nation's borders, the Board believes that all of the Nation's borders need to be secure. Publicized entries into this country from borders, other than from our southern border, receives little or no publicity in this climate of apprehension. However, we believe that steps need to be taken to stem the tide of undocumented from all borders.

### **GUESTWORKERS**

The Board believes that a guest worker program which allows individuals to work temporarily in the United States is both good for the United States and for those who are seeking only to improve the quality of life for their families and themselves.

The number of guest worker permits should be high enough to satisfy the demand of the United States' economic interests which have unique labor demands.

### **CITIZENSHIP**

The issue of citizenship for those individuals who may find themselves in the United States without the proper documentation has, in the Board's opinion, raised the ire of a great number of citizens, and not without reason. From the Board's experience, the vast majority of those individuals who are here without the proper documentation have come to the United States, not to become citizens, but to find work. Those individuals live in the shadows because of the fear that the authorities (whoever they may be) will put them into the Court system.

The Board's experience indicated that these individuals would be satisfied if they could work without threat of being put into the Court system. Most want the ability to travel to their home country without the impediment of a refusal to return to the United States to continue working. Allowing these individuals an opportunity for legal work status will promote an exodus from their shadow world.

The Board believes that the path to citizenship should not be offered automatically to those who are here without the proper documents. The legislation should have a provision for those families to obtain legal permanent residence, should they so desire.

### **HUMANE TREATMENT**

The legislation should treat these individuals as humanely as possible, understanding the laws of the United States have been transgressed. As such, the legislation should not criminalize the presence of these individuals who are here without the proper documentation, other than what is currently on the books. Likewise, the legislation should not criminalize the efforts of those who assist, or attempt to assist, those individuals.

### **GLOBAL ECONOMY**

The immigration issue comes about because of the shift from a local or national economy to the global economy. Hence, the priorities and goals of the United States will be best served by the Congress recognizing that humanity is driven by the same goals, whoever they are, or wherever they are, and that is to improve one's lot in life, to improve one's family, and to educate children.

### **BIRTH**

The Board supports the law that persons born in the United States are U.S. citizens.

We call upon our elected national officials to take steps to enact laws which address the positions set forth above.

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Statement on Immigration approved by the Board of Directors of Hispanic Leaders Group of Greater St. Louis, on Monday, July 17, 2006.

Attested by,

Guillermo A. Rodríguez  
Recording Secretary  
Hispanic Leaders Group of Greater St. Louis