

PSC-ED-OUS

Moderator: Emmanuel Caudillo
June 26, 2015
3:30 pm CT

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants will be on a listen-only mode until the question and answer session of today's conference. At that time to ask questions, please press Star 1 on your touch-tone phone. Un-mute your phone and record your name when prompted.

This call is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the call over to Mr. Francisco Morales. Sir, you may begin.

Francisco Morales: Thank you. Well thank you everybody for joining us today. I know it's been a very exciting day in the news. But we're also excited that you're here joining us on this call, you know, as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the White House Initiative on Excellence.

We have on the line some great speakers that we're going to be talking about some very important aspects of education. And I don't want to speak too long. We have some fabulous speakers. And at this point I'd just like turn it over to Congresswoman Dina Titus.

Dina Titus: Well thank you very much Francisco. I appreciate you helping us to coordinate this and to get some great people on the line who are working on education in Nevada especially in the Hispanic community.

Also here in the Washington office is Liz Decker who has been working on this and does all my policy work in the area of education. So consider her a friend and a resource as well.

I'm very pleased to be hosting this. I think it's a very exciting time to be talking about ways that we can enhance the education opportunities for our Hispanic students.

It's the 25th anniversary as you hear Francisco say of the White House Initiative. And so we're very pleased to have the Deputy Director, Mr. Marco Davis and the Senior Advisor Ms. Cortez Wang on the phone to describe some of the things that are going on in the Obama Administration and talk about some ways that we can increase outreach, get more people involved and committed to action to support Hispanic education and also just kind of hear what the national blueprint is that's coming out of the administration for ways that we can address some of the serious issues that this community faces.

I'm sure it's going to be a very productive conversation. And I want them to hear from you all as well because you're on the front line and you can have some valuable input to the White House that goes both ways.

I'm especially interested in this as an educator myself. This has always been a priority of mine. And also District 1 is the most ethnically diverse district in the state.

We have about 1/3 of the population is Latino but, the school population is about 40% under 18. So this is a very important issue. I've always felt that education is the key to the future, not just of individuals but also to their families and to our communities as well.

One of the things that I'm working on specially which is part of the topic that you all are going to be discussion is STEM education.

We're seeing that more and more of the jobs that make us competitive in the global market are in the STEM field. And so we need to expand opportunities for students to go into those areas of science and math.

What we're finding that a number of a studies is that two piece studies choose that initially and the problems are even worse for minority students. They are very much underrepresented in the STEM field.

In fact, according to the US department of Commerce only 12% of STEM workers in the country are minority. And so we've got to address that. There's no reason why we should be losing that brainpower from those communities in these fields.

One of the things that I've done is introduce a bill that's called a Training Highly Skilled Americans Act. And this would provide funding for institutions that serve minority communities. And that would be UNLV and CSN.

They qualify because of their student body ratios to get funding to set up special curricula and special assistance for minority students who go into these fields and would create scholarships for student to get directly who want to study in these areas.

So we're going to be pushing that here because there are just so many opportunities not just nationally and internationally but right there in Las Vegas.

You know, Zappos is expanding. Nevada has become a drone center for testing. We have all those new startups in downtown Las Vegas. I just think they're great opportunities.

So I want to ask you for your help and support on that. And also as we talk about how to recruit more Latino teachers, how to be sure we address the dropout problem, early learning because that's the key it's - that so many statistics show the earlier you start, the better you do, the longer you stay and the more successful you are.

So you all are the experts. We have on the phone some elected officials. We've got representatives from the different chambers to bring the business perspective, some activists and also educators. So, I think you very much for joining us. And I look forward to hearing the conversation and also for getting additional information after it's over.

And what's one of the things I want to ask your help with too. This needs to be the first, not the last of these kinds of gatherings. So if you'll be kind of an advisory committee to me and help me figure out how we can get the word out on all these initiatives I would certainly appreciate it.

So I'll stop there and turn it over to our White House representatives and thank them very much for helping us set this up.

(Michael): Great. Well thank you so very much Congresswoman. And we're grateful to you first and foremost for the - for putting together this call and for convening so many of your constituents there in the Las Vegas and Clark Community. But secondly and equally if not more important we really want to thank you for leadership in the area of education and all the work that you've done thus far and the topics you've just discussed, the support you've had for early childhood Ed, for increasing STEM, for helping students find ways to access and afford post-secondary education, all the work that you're doing.

We're just really, really pleased to be able to partner with you on this call and to be able to share the opportunity that we have but wanted to certainly thank you for your leadership.

Dina Titus: Well you're very kind.

(Michael): No, not at all, not at all. We're glad to be able to partner with you in this way. And for the folks on the call we're really grateful to be able to take just a few moments of your time on this afternoon to share with you a little bit about the opportunities that the Congresswoman was alluding to.

You see our initiative actually is in its 25th year. We were first charged the first executive order establishing our office was signed in September of 1990 by then George H. W. Bush. And we've been renewed by each successive president. And so in September we'll be celebrating our 25th anniversary.

And the way we thought most appropriate and effective to celebrate our anniversary was by actually doing a year of action which we've - we embarked on late last fall which will culminate in September.

And what we're really trying to do through this year of action is essentially as I like to describe it is to use this as an opportunity to tell the story of Latinos in education in the United States.

We want to be sharing, taking a look back and sharing information about the progress that's been made by the Latino community over the last 25 years in the realm of education looking at all the progress we've made of reducing the dropout rate of increasing college enrollment, of spreading the word and helping to increase participation in early childhood Ed and so on and so forth and to acknowledge the tremendous work that's been done by communities throughout the country to address those challenges but to also look forward and to highlight some of the challenges that still remain and some of the issues that are still on the table.

We want to share this information both with the Latino community to help them sort of see the broader narrative, the broader context beyond just individual communities of what progress has been made.

But we also want to tell the story as I mentioned going forward about what needs to be done and to really that in many ways our focus is on the non-Latino communities to share with the larger general public the challenges that remain and to help make the case for folks to understand how critical it is that we all, all of us as a society all focus our attention and make investments in supporting increasing educational achievement for the Latino community because it's in all of our interested.

It's something that will benefit everyone, our nation as an economy, our nation as a global competitor will depend on our future workforce which we know is going to be increasingly Latino and how successful, how competitive

that workforce is will depend obviously on the education that it receives today.

And so there are two ways in which we're undertaking this year of action. And there's two opportunities for, um, you all to participate in this effort.

And we really are eager and excited. And we're grateful to Congressman Titus for pulling together this call because we want to make sure that vibrant, dynamic communities like Las Vegas and Clark County area there in Nevada and the state of Nevada overall is really well represented in our work and in the telling of this story so that you can a- and others can cheer for your successes and also others are aware of the challenges that still remain and can hopefully support them.

So I'll describe the first opportunity and then I'll turn it over to my colleague (Jack Aneen) who can talk to you about the second.

Um, the first is - is what we're calling a call for bright spots in education. And bright stops in our minds are essentially programs, organizations, schools, initiatives that in some way are benefitting Latino communities and students that have shown results that have, um, not just beat the odds but in fact have changed the odds in favor of success.

So again, those are programs that are helping to increase achievement or provide support for Latino communities. And so, what we're planning to do is launch and roll out an online catalog of these bright spots throughout the country.

And so we're looking for folks to nominate those bright spots. And you can find information for how to nominate a bright spot. It's actually a fairly simple process.

We need just sort of basic overview information about this program organization, some examples and some information about the success it's had, what kind of results, what kind of hopefully tangible measurable results have been achieved that demonstrate its effectiveness and its success.

And so folks can find information on how to nominate a bright spot on our Web site which is simply www.ed.gov. That's ED as in short for education, ed.gov/Hispanic initiative. And so there folks can get information about this bright spot opportunity and guidance on how to submit a nomination to us.

The deadline for that is July 17 which is in just a few weeks. But, as I mentioned, the process is fairly simple. And again we hope to see really strong representation from I'm sure the many programs and schools and organizations that are there in Nevada that are doing great work so, that they're included in this online catalog so that when folks are looking for a program to learn from or to adapt to their own community or when folks are looking to volunteer or to support or to invest in a program they'll be able to identify some there in Nevada among all the others throughout the country which also again helps weave that narrative that we want to tell about the fact that there is work being done throughout the country by leaders from all backgrounds investing in Latino folks and who are in fact yielding positive results and that have over the past 25 years throughout the course of the past 25 years have managed to really help us make strides that we've made.

So with that I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Jacqueline Cortez Wang who will share with you the other opportunity which is about looking forward

and figuring out ways to help continue this progress and invest in success moving forward. Jacqueline?

Jacqueline Cortez Wang: Thank you (Michael). Throughout our anniversary we not only want to highlight and bring much deserved attention to the current work being done through our bright spots in Hispanic education but we really want to focus on the future work through our call for commandments to action.

These are investments by private non-profit and state and local sectors to increase educational outcomes and opportunities for Hispanic students. We're asking that commitments be made to focus on either the expansion of currently existing programs or the development of entirely new programs.

This is really an opportunity to reinvest in our own communities in order to make an impact for the future of our nation. Commitments to Action will fall under one of five categories - early learning, K12 education and college access, so secondary completion, STEM and Latino teacher recruitment.

Well just to talk a little bit about what commitment actions are and what they look like they really range. Commitments are promises to invest in the Latino community. So for example you can develop an internship program in your company. You can start a fellowship program. You can develop entirely new programs needed in your community.

For example the city of Houston has come together and developed several commitments really focused on the needs that they - they actually had a very similar stakeholder call such as this one.

And after that several leaders across the city came together and decided that they wanted to address all five of the priority areas and decide how their communities needed - how they could address some of their needs.

And so they've come together developing leadership institutes, developing some early learning centers programs. And so it's really about what is it that your community needs and how can leaders such as yourself come together to address those needs.

The applications are due actually next week. But if you're interested in submitting a Commitment to Action application feel free to reach out to me or to - the information is through our Web site but, you can reach out to me by sending me an email at Jacqueline.cortezwang@ed.gov. So I'll quickly go through that.

It's J-A-Q-U-E-L-I-N-E.C-O-R-T-E-Z-W-A-N-G@ed.gov. You can also find it on our Web site as (Michael) mentioned, ed.gov/hispanicinitiative.

And you can always bounce off ideas and we are happy to work with you in terms of an extension. Again, Commitment to Action is due at the end of next month.

So with that I'd like to turn it over to you for question and learn a little bit more about your programs in hopes that we can a Las Vegas representative in our Bright Spots and Hispanic education and our Commitments to Action. With that operator can you please provide some instruction to ask questions?

Coordinator: Thank you. We will now begin the question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question please press Star 1 on your touch-tone phone. Un-mute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Your name is

required to introduce your question. To withdraw your request press Star 2.
One moment please for the first question.

Jacqueline Cortez Wang: I do want to emphasize while we wait for the question that
Commitment to Action once you submit the application you do not have to
have all the resources in place, you do not have the entire p- have to have the
entire plan ready to go.

What we're asking for are promise to make sure that those goals are achieved.
They do not have to start this year. We're really looking for forward work
long term impact starting anytime after September of 2015.

So if you could, if you have any ideas and would love to hear a little bit more
about what you have coming up in the next few years that could potentially be
- fall under the anniversary year of action.

Coordinator: There is no question in queue at the moment. Again, to ask a question please
press Star 1 on your touch-tone phone. Un-mute your phone and record your
name clearly when prompted. Thank you.

(Michael): We'll give folks one - a couple more minutes to get into the queue if they have
a question and to record their name.

One thing we want to mention as the Congresswoman mentioned as well is
that we hope you will share this information with your colleagues and your
peers in your communities encouraging them as well to submit their
information.

We have no limit to the number of nominations we'll accept. We definitely
want to list as many bright spots as we mentioned and we'd love to be able to

announcement as many commitments as possible as part of this anniversary effort so that come September when we're telling this story as I mentioned about all the efforts nationwide that we have a really strong and robust list from throughout the country that certain includes really strong representation from throughout Nevada.

So, if you can, please do share this with your networks or at least just direct folks to our Web site so they can get more information and that they can participate as well.

We would appreciate that and again we think it'll be something that just strengthens the case for the Latino community and really for the nation as a whole.

Coordinator: There is no question in queue at this moment. Again please press Star 1 on your touch-tone phone or mute - and un-mute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Thank you.

(Michael): All right, well if...

Coordinator: We how no question at this time.

(Michael): Thank you. Well if folks don't have questions we will yield back the remainder of the time for you folks to use - to borrow the phrase from Capitol Hill.

We really appreciate everyone's time joining us this afternoon hearing about this information. Again we hope to hear from you. We hope to see a great many submissions in the next coming days and weeks.

And then we absolutely want to thank Congresswoman Titus for convening this call as I mentioned and most importantly for her leadership, her ongoing leadership in the space of education which benefits not just the Latino community but really all children and students throughout the nation.

So with that unless there are any other comments from any of our colleagues here on the line we will thank everyone for joining us today and wish you all a good afternoon and a good weekend.

Coordinator: Thank you. That concludes today's conference. Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect. Speakers please stand by for the post conference.

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