



HISPANIC DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION  
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## **Latino Organizations Release Immigration Report on "Broken Immigration System"**

### **Report Critical of State and Federal Governments**

**For Immediate Release: May 2, 2007**

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The Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey and the Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey today released "*On the Verge of Crisis: The Broken Immigration System*" at press conferences in Hightstown and Morristown.

The eight-page report, in English and Spanish, was drafted as a result of a two-day Roundtable held at Rutgers University in March and attended by 14 panelists drawn from a cross-section of the Latino community. It sets forth seven recommendations for the federal and state governments that can be taken in the near term to ease the growing national immigration crisis.

"As the nation grows more divided on the issue of immigration reform and attacks against the civil rights of immigrants increase, the federal government remains in a decade-long state of paralysis," according to the introduction to the report.

*On the Verge of Crisis* goes on to criticize the state government and the Administration of Governor Jon S. Corzine for neglecting the issue. "The case of New Jersey offers little in the way of encouragement. Governor Jon S. Corzine is a friend of the immigrant community and yet in 16 months in power has done virtually nothing to safeguard their civil rights, not even a timid objection to the increasing federal raids that are displacing children and separating families."

The panel's recommendations are:

\*\*\* The federal government must pass comprehensive immigration reform which includes an earned path to citizenship for immigrants.

\*\*\* Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Raids must be suspended during the debate about immigration reform.

\*\*\* Governor Corzine must sign an executive order guaranteeing that New Jersey will not discriminate against children in undocumented families in providing for the health care and psychological needs of children traumatized by the federal raids and the resulting family separation.

\*\*\* The adoption of the Dream Act on the federal level and barring that passage of its key provisions in New Jersey. The state should allow undocumented students who have lived most of their lives in New Jersey to pay in-state tuition rates.

\*\*\* Adoption of a driving privilege card for those who cannot verify their immigration status.

\*\*\* Reform of the NJ Department of Labor's fair wage hearing structure. Workers ripped off by unscrupulous contracts often wait months, if not years, for an opportunity to be reimbursed for unpaid wages.

\*\*\* A public education campaign by the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs to inform immigrants about rip-off schemes targeting them, particularly "*notarios*" and lawyers promising a quick fix to complicated immigration issues.

"This report aims to push the debate on immigration reform forward by setting forth some core principles and goals around which all immigrants and immigrant advocates can agree," said Martin Perez, President of the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey. "The report is also, in part, an open letter to the immigrant community seeking greater unity and a more rapid response to anti-immigrant measures across the state."

Daniel Santo Pietro said the Latino community must "mobilize and respond more quickly on a statewide basis when objectionable measures are proposed by local municipalities. We cannot allow Latinos and immigrants in general to be scapegoated and villainized by those who choose not to recognize the enormous accomplishments of the immigrant community."

A copy of the entire report is enclosed with this press release. The Spanish version of this report can be found at [www.hdanj.org](http://www.hdanj.org).

The Hightstown and Morristown locations were chosen for the press conferences because of the dual nature of the government responses to the immigrant communities in those two municipalities. In Hightstown, Mayor Robert Patten has embraced the community and sought to inform immigrants of their rights and responsibilities. In Morristown, Mayor Donald Cresitello has sought to ostracize and stigmatize the community. Recently, Mayor Cresitello applied to federal government to deputize local police to handle immigration issues, while at the same time using scare tactics to suggest that immigrants were responsible for increasing crime in the community. It is an accusation without any basis.