



# State of Connecticut

## Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

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## 2008 Legislative Agenda

Hartford, CT – While the State of Connecticut's outlook for the upcoming fiscal year remains strong in the midst of a national economic downturn, there are many other significant socio-economic indicators that show a different picture for the Latino population in the state. The Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC) will soon announce the results of the fourth edition of the *Latino Socio-Economic Study* conducted by the *Center for Research & Public Policy*, which will show an overall declining quality of life and standard of living for Latino households. The State of Connecticut currently saves 8.1% of the net general fund in what is known as the "Rainy Day Fund" to be used against an economic downturn<sup>1</sup>. Well, in the Latino community the rain started a while ago and it is already turning onto a full blown thunderstorm. The LPRAC believes that the legislature and the Governor should be made aware of the social and economic costs of inaction and, therefore, lawmakers should seriously consider promoting a strategic plan that changes this negative outlook. The LPRAC suggests the following actions for the upcoming session at the Connecticut General Assembly:

### Education

- Support the creation of universal pre-school education
- Support the Multicultural Education reform legislation
- Enhancement of a pedagogically appropriate secondary education curriculum
- Increase financial aid resources for post secondary education
- Improve truancy reporting & prevent changes to the "in-school" suspension law

### Economic Development

- Support the passage of a State Earned Income Credit Tax
- Reform Connecticut's Business Entity Tax
- Increase financial assistance to counter act high energy costs

### Health

- Support the passage of universal health care legislation
- Support funds for interpreters under Medicaid and linguistic access in emergency hospitals
- Protect and enhance funding for persons with HIV/AIDS
- Restore continuous eligibility for HUSKY recipients

### Housing

- Strengthen state anti-predatory lending law & provide foreclosure assistance

### Judicial Reform

- Improve legal representation of abused or neglected children
- Increase court interpreters in the judicial system
- Diversify the court system by appointing additional Latino judges

### Immigration

- Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform at the federal level
- Support the in-state tuition bill

<sup>1</sup> In CT, per state statute, any unappropriated surplus at the end of the fiscal year is deposited into the Rainy Day Fund – until the funds equals ten percent of the net General Fund appropriations for the following fiscal year.