



CALIFORNIA

January 3, 2011
The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via Fax: 916.558.3160

RE: Congratulations on Your Victory

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we would like to congratulate you on your recent victory and welcome you as our new Governor.

These organizations are composed of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles a regional immigrant and civil rights organizations, and members of a statewide coalition dubbed *Reform Immigration For America, California*. We have worked together in the past two years urging the U.S. Congress and the President to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

In 2010, California's general voter turn-out was greater than expected. According to Secretary of State Debra Bowen, 59.6 percent of California voters participated in the gubernatorial election. However, the untold story is that the voter-turnout of Latino and immigrant communities surpassed the expectations. In California the Latino and immigrant turnout was higher than in 2008, with one of every five votes (22%) in California being cast by a Latino and or immigrant.

Currently, more than 9.9 million immigrants naturalized, authorized, and undocumented reside in our state. They are part of our communities, and they contribute to our local, state and national economies. Furthermore, immigrants and their children constitute nearly one-half of California's population and comprise one-third of the State's workforce.

Our State is recovering from one of the worst financial crises since the great depression. It is imperative that your Administration consider a comprehensive approach to integrate immigrants in our state. While immigration policy is set by the federal government, the benefits and challenges of immigration are felt at the state and local level, thus it is imperative for our State to develop sensitive policies to address these challenges and reap the benefits of immigrant communities.

We hope that leaders of this coalition can meet with you, after you are sworn into office.

Again, congratulations on your victory. If we can be a resource, feel free to contact Joseph Villela at 213-353-1782 or via e-mail at jvillela@chirla.org.

Sincerely,

American Jewish Committee
Anti-Defamation League

Californians for Humane Immigrant Rights Leadership Action Fund
Center for Community Change
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles
Colombianos en Accion
Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization
Council of Mexican Federations in the USA
Dolores Street Community Services
Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Southwest District
Justice for Immigrants Task Force of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles
Laborers International Union North America
Libreria Del Pueblo Inc.
Los Angeles County Federation of Labor
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
People United for Economic Justice Building Leadership Through Organizing
Service Employer International Union, United Service Workers West
Service Immigrants Rights and Education Network
The Justice for Immigrants Coalition of Inland Southern California
Training Occupational Development Educating Communities

Cc: District Office in Los Angeles

January 3rd, 2010

Honorable Governor Brown,

On behalf California's immigrant community and immigrant youth, we ask you to embrace California's historic tradition as a national leader in enacting progressive legislation and pass the California Dream Act and driver's license legislation for undocumented immigrants in 2011.

The CA Dream Network, a statewide network composed of over 40 college campuses that have undocumented student support groups, congratulates you for being elected as the 39th governor of California and look forward to work with you on important issues that affect the immigrant community and all Californians alike. The 2010 gubernatorial race was by far one of the most heated in recent history and a decisive one for the future of California. The debate around immigration and the xenophobic attacks on undocumented immigrants led record number of Latino voters to come out and vote in November 2nd. The complexity and diversity of immigrant families is best seen in their composition of members from different cultures and ethnicities and citizens and non-citizens alike, and could explain the high turnout among Latino and immigrant voters in the face of distasteful rhetoric and threats to the immigrant community. The Latino vote was one of, if not the most important factor, in your election as governor. According to a Latino Decisions poll Latinos voted overwhelmingly for you by a margin of 86 percent to 13 percent giving you a net contribution of 13.1 points to your overall margin. Latino voters took a choice and decided to give a voice to their beloved and disenfranchised family members and friends by overwhelmingly voting for you, and now expect you to do the same and stand on their side and do what is morally right.

The California Dream Act would allow thousands of bright, determined undocumented students pursue and achieve their higher educational goals at their fullest potential and provide the much needed equality and access to higher education. Allowing undocumented students who currently qualify for AB540 status to have access to state financial aid makes moral and common sense since they and their families contribute to the vitality and economy of California by paying hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales and state income taxes. According to a report from the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education about 65,000 undocumented students graduate from U.S. high schools each year and roughly 40 percent of them reside in the state of California. How could California call itself a champion of democratic values and of higher education if it does not allow 40 percent of the nation's brightest undocumented students to pursue their academic endeavors at their full potential? We can lead the nation on this issue and offer practical and ethical solutions for other states to mimic and thus show Congress what ought to be done at the federal level. The failure of the 111th U.S. Senate to pass the DREAM Act has been one too many times that the dreams of undocumented students are put on hold, and it would be a huge disappointment and blow to California's historic tradition if the California Dream Act

does not get signed into law this year.

Undocumented immigrants live under constant fear and face incredible obstacles to move freely in their daily lives. Many of them are victims of crimes and are afraid to report it to local law-enforcement agencies because of the implementation of anti-immigrant ordinances such as secure communities and 287g. This lack of trust towards and cooperation with law-enforcement officials is worsened by the fact that the state of California does not provide driver licenses to undocumented immigrants. This allows for unnecessary seizures and/or impound of people's vehicles and places an enormous burden on working immigrant families. Again, where does California stand when it comes to provide and protect the civil and human rights of immigrants? California can make the right decision and stop the exploitation, dehumanization, and humiliation of hard-working, caring, and law-abiding individuals who only want to provide a better life to their families and live in peace. Driver's license legislation is an economic incentive and would motivate uninsured drivers to become insured and many others to buy new vehicles. If enacted into law, driver's license legislation might stimulate California's economy and the private sector and provide the much needed tax revenue to the state of California. Most importantly, it would increase public safety in the streets, allow law-enforcement officials to go after those that truly commit crimes, and improve the trust and relationship of the immigrant community with local law-enforcement officials.

Just as we stood by your side, we hope you do the same and pass the California Dream Act and driver's license legislation in 2011. We are looking forward to work with you and your administration in the months and years to come. We congratulate you for your efforts and extraordinary legacy in providing and working for practical solutions for the state of California. For these reasons, we remain optimistic and have few doubts in our minds that you will do the right things for our undocumented youth and the rest of the immigrant community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Thousands of immigrant youth from across the state of California and
Maria Rodriguez*

Statewide Youth Organizer

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)

CA Dream Network

213.201.4450

www.chirla.org

www.cadreamnetwork.org

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=24709359975&v=info>