

Press Release

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network on President Obama's Executive Action

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CONTACT:

Pierre Berastain
Communications and Marketing Coordinator
214 957 0363
pberastain@casadeesperanza.org

November 21, 2014—President Obama's recent announcement that he will enact administrative reforms to prevent the further separation of millions of families and grant them the opportunity to obtain work authorization will significantly contribute to the wellbeing of families and communities. Additionally, the President indicated how this action will help strengthen our economy. Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network also recognizes the significance of President Obama's executive action as an important step to enhance efforts to prevent domestic and sexual violence as well as workplace exploitation of vulnerable populations.

Abusive partners, opportunistic predators, and manipulative employers often exploit a victim's lack of immigration status, or dependence on immigration status, as a way to maintain power and control and keep immigrant victims silent. Granting relief to millions of undocumented immigrants presently living in the shadows in the United States helps protect those vulnerable to exploitation by empowering them to seek redress and life-saving services and enabling them to access legal employment. Additionally, we applaud the new directive issued yesterday by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security discontinuing the "Secure Communities" program, which had undermined community policing and had driven victims and witnesses further into the shadows.

As we move into a new year, our hope is that Congress and the Administration will work together to fix our broken immigration system through comprehensive legislation that can further extend protections and provide more permanent relief to millions of immigrants. It is also important that the Administration revisit its current policies that allow for the incarceration of immigrant women and children in detention facilities. Having suffered horrific domestic, sexual, and gang violence as well as extortion and inhumane conditions in Central America, many of these women and children are likely to qualify for asylum. The Administration should close existing family detention facilities and invest instead in effective, humane, and far less costly alternatives to detention. Our hope is that our laws and policies will reflect the value our country places in human life, safety, and dignity.

The National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities is a network of individuals and organizations committed to improving the health and well-being of Latin@ communities. The National Latin@ Network is led by Casa de Esperanza, a national Latina organization whose mission is to mobilize Latinas and Latin@ communities to end domestic violence. The National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities builds on Casa de Esperanza's experience working in local communities to support families, end domestic violence, and increase meaningful access to services for Latina@s and incorporates a research center, public policy initiative, and training.