

**Statement by Concerned Members of the
White House Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

September 11, 2017

For more than a quarter of a century, through both Republican and Democratic administrations, the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics has strived to shine a light on the educational challenges and assets in the Hispanic community. Twenty-nine commissioners have put aside their day-to-day responsibilities of running colleges and universities, conducting cutting-edge research, and heading up major corporations and non-profits to work on issues affecting the education of Latino youth. And we have seen progress, but not enough. Much is left to be done.

Today nearly two-thirds (62%) of Latino children live in or near poverty. They are the least likely of all racial/ethnic groups to get a college degree that could lift them out of poverty, and those who do manage to attend college are saddled with more debt than ever before. Yet, current federal policies and proposed budget cuts could exacerbate their already precarious position. Cutting funding that serves low income students and that prepares teachers to meet their needs, reducing funding for federal student loans, and shifting education funds to private schools are all policies that stand to further harm this community. However, immigration policies that separate U.S. citizen children from their parents and destabilize Latino communities are perhaps the most pernicious of all. Children, already hampered by poverty are frightened to go to school, and distracted and anxious while there. *Will my parents be home when I return from school?*, they ask. The recent announcement about the termination of the DACA program is an additional cruel attack on young people who are making important contributions to this country.

In this time of acute stress for Hispanic students and their families, the Commission, first established by President George H.W. Bush, stands ready to offer its expertise to the current administration. After 27 years of service it is about to cease to exist. Latino youth, now representing one-fourth of all U.S. students, and by 2050 one third, are the future of America. Our fate as a nation rests in large part on the fate of these young people. *We do know* how to improve the future for them, and thus for the country as a whole. The Commission has offered many research-based recommendations.

We call on the new administration to meet with the Commission, heed our recommendations and renew its commitment to Latino youth in this country, and to the educators who strive to support their American dreams.

Signed by

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