

CIPC 2008 Legislative Agenda

Immigrants play a vital role in California's success as one of the world's largest economies, and their effective integration into the state's communities is essential to our future. Immigrants pay taxes and are an integral part of California's work force and economic growth.¹ The children of immigrants represent the state's future and are critical to the vitality and growth of the labor force in the coming decades. Yet immigrant families and their children are often unable to secure the health care and basic services they need to lead healthy and full lives.² For the well-being of all Californians, legislators must prioritize immigrant integration - by guaranteeing access to basic health care and other services and by advocating for effective immigration policies at the federal level.

Maintain California's Safety-Net for Immigrants – In these difficult economic times, as California faces a serious budget crisis, it is particularly important to preserve critical health and human services programs that serve low-income residents. Cutting these programs places the health and safety of Californians at risk and is not an effective way to address the budget problems. We support maintaining current funds for the Medi-Cal program, CalWORKs, the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) and the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI), as well as cost-of-living adjustments for seniors and persons with disabilities who rely on SSI/SSP. In addition, we support maintaining the state's investment in the Naturalization Services Program, which helps immigrants who wish to become U.S. citizens.

Protect Immigrant Workers – The federal government is debating efforts to mandate employers to use E-Verify, a system that is inherently flawed, plagued with inaccuracies, and results in discrimination against workers – particularly foreign-born citizen immigrant workers. In response, CIPC is working at the state and federal levels to halt the use of this deficient employment verification system.

- **AB 2076 (Fuentes)** – CIPC is a sponsor of this bill. E-Verify signals the State of California's concern with the E-Verify program by prohibiting the State from using the flawed program, encouraging private employers to follow suit, and prohibiting localities from requiring private employers to use the system. CIPC also **OPPOSES** the **federal SAVE Act (H.R. 4088)**, which expands immigration enforcement measures and mandates the use of the employment verification program by all employers.

Ensure Equal Access – It is critical that everyone receive fair and equal access to services in times of disaster or hardship.

- **SB 1523 (Kuehl) – Domestic Violence Victims: Limited English Proficiency Procedures** – This legislation improves services provided by law enforcement and other service providers to domestic violence survivors with limited English proficiency.

¹ "Looking Forward: Immigrant Contributions to the Golden State," California Immigrant Policy Center, January 2008.

² "Opportunities & Challenges for the California Economy" California Economic Growth Chapter 2, 2006 Edition. Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy.

- **AB 2327 (Caballero) – Effective Disaster Assistance Act: Humanitarian and Relief Services** requires entities providing disaster-related services to strive to ensure that all victims receive the assistance they need and for which they are eligible, and prohibits public employees from asking for information or documents that aren't necessary to determine eligibility for these services.

Support Immigrant Integration— To successfully integrate immigrant families into the state's economic, political, and civic life, we must provide them with citizenship services, economic and educational support programs, and civic participation opportunities. All Californians benefit when our diverse communities are healthy and strong.

- **Maintain funding for the Naturalization Services Program** – NSP is a program that provides citizenship assistance to a fraction of the **3.2 million lawful permanent residents** (LPRs) who are eligible for naturalization in California. Studies show that as immigrants naturalize their civic participation and economic contributions to California increase.
- **Support programs that provide integration opportunities for immigrants** – the Legislature is considering a variety of legislation, such as an Office of Immigrant Affairs, linguistic access programs, and others that allow immigrants to fully integrate into California's communities.

Improve Access to Affordable, Meaningful Health Care for All – Everyone in California should be able to secure affordable, comprehensive health insurance through public or private coverage. This year, CIPC has prioritized advocacy and legislation that advance California's progress towards meaningful reform of the healthcare system.

- **Health care Coverage for Children.** CIPC and our ally organizations are working with children's groups to achieve universal coverage for all children. Advocates are committed to supporting a ballot initiative or legislative measure that accomplishes this goal. **SB 32 (Steinberg)** is one such measure that achieves universal health care coverage for all children by expanding eligibility for Healthy Families and Medi-Cal to 300 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) for children regardless of citizenship status.
- **AB 1472 (Leno) California Healthy Places Act of 2008**, which provides resources to underserved communities to help ensure that land use, including housing, transportation, and public spaces such as parks are all considered as part of the overall impact on community health when making decisions.
- **SB 1622 (Simitian)** California Benefits Health Service Program, which would create the California Health Benefits Service Program within the State Department of Health Care Services, with various powers and duties relative to creation of joint ventures between certain county-organized health plans and various other entities.

A Statewide Partnership of:

APALC Asian Pacific American Legal Center • **NILC** National Immigration Law Center • **CHIRLA** Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles • **SIREN** Services Immigrant Rights & Education Network •