



HISPANIC EDUCATION COALITION

February 28, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-231 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Sequestration Cuts to Education and Impact on Latino Students

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell,

On behalf of the Hispanic Education Coalition (HEC), which unites more than 20 organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for the more than 54 million Hispanics living in the United States and Puerto Rico, we write to urge a consensus solution that staves off the Budget Control Act's automatic sequestration provision. HEC writes to highlight some of the negative impacts that sequestration cuts would likely have on federal education programs which serve thousands of Latino students and their families.

Sequestration is set to occur on March 1, 2013. Some have argued that because the education expenditures will not come into effect until Fall 2013 for many education programs, that education is uniquely buffered from the cuts. This perspective ignores the fact that school systems cannot turn on a dime; schools and school districts must make staffing decisions today for their 2013-2014 school year.

The Budget Control Act's automatic sequestration presents not just a dramatic reduction in budget numbers, but to our member organizations it represents a drastic divestment in the federal programs that help ensure educational access and support for Latino students. Some have estimated sequestration would be a 5 percent cut, others a 7.8 percent cut, and even others a 9 percent cut. Presuming the *most conservative* of these estimates – based in part on the approach taken by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities – a congressional failure to find compromise could mean:

1. An estimated 1,181,600 fewer students nationwide would be served by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended, and 9,910 educators and school personnel would lose their jobs. **Given that Hispanic students make up 36 percent of the students served by Title I today, any cut to Title I would disproportionately harm Latino students.**
2. Some 209,785 fewer English language learners (ELLs) would be served by Title III of ESEA and 450 educators working with ELLs would be out of work. **Given that almost 80 percent of ELLs speak Spanish as their primary home language, any cut to Title III would mostly be felt by the Hispanic community.**
3. Roughly 48,600 fewer young children would have access to early education through Head Start and 18,965 related jobs would be eliminated. **Given that a third of children served by Head Start come from a Hispanic home, the cuts to Head Start would have a disparate impact on our community.**

Drastic cuts in our federal education budget would take our country in the wrong direction, precisely when we most need to invest in the future. HEC add its voice to the list of organizations urging compromise to avoid sequestration cuts and help safeguard critical programs serving Hispanic students across the country.

Sincerely,

James A. Ferg-Cadima
HEC Co-Chair
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

Brent T. Wilkes
HEC Co-Chair
League of United Latin American Citizens