



## Senator Harry Reid

# A Report to Latinos in Nevada

Spring 2002

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## LETTER TO THE LATINO COMMUNITY FROM SENATOR HARRY REID

Dear Friends,

The Latino community continues to grow quickly throughout the United States and especially in Nevada. The 2000 U.S. Census showed that our state's Latino population had increased 216 percent since 1990. With Latinos representing more than 19 percent of the population, Nevada has the fifth largest concentration of this budding constituency in the United States.

I want to make sure that your problems and concerns are addressed, as well as make sure that you have the opportunity to prosper in our state. In an effort to provide families with the resources needed to succeed, I am pleased to announce that Nevada has recently been awarded three grants to help fund the Head Start program.

Head Start concentrates on helping children from eligible families by giving them pre-school lessons that they would not otherwise receive. The Early Head Start program assists families with children from 0-3 years old with either a day care or a home based program. The Head Start program for children 3-5 years old offers day care for four and a half hours a day, five days a week. This includes nutritional meals and learning activities.

I am the father of five children, and I know it is important for children to develop good learning habits starting at a young age. I grew up in Nevada, in the small town of Searchlight, and my wife and I raised our children in Las Vegas. In a 24-hour town with varying work shifts, many parents have difficulty designating time to prepare their children for educational success. I know how hard it is for working parents to help their children excel in school, and when English is not a common language spoken at home it can be even harder, but the ability to read, write, speak and understand English is fundamental to children's success in school and throughout their future. In the Clark County School District alone we have more than 39,000 students who either speak limited or no English. I am proud to say that Head Start and CCSD, which currently has more than 40,000 English Language Learners enrolled, are doing their part to provide translators and classes to create better futures for these children.

In addition to educating your children, you can help them by getting involved in your community. I encourage you to take part in our government and to make sure your voices are heard through your votes. Through civic participation, you can have an impact on how the future of our state unfolds.

*Senator Harry Reid*

## Immigration and Section 245i

Numerous immigrants have been living and working in the United States and paying taxes here for many years. They are good neighbors and dedicated employees who contribute to our community, and they should be allowed to remain with their families in the U.S. while filing for their green cards.

Currently, the U.S. Senate is considering legislation that would help people seeking to become permanent residents by extending section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

The Senate passed the Section 245(i) Extension Act of 2001 on September 9, 2001. This legislation would extend the filing deadlines for some alien children, spouses, and employees. It also would extend the deadline for eligible beneficiaries applying for labor certification or a petition for classification, if they can demonstrate that the required familial or employment relationship existed when this Act was enacted.

The Section 245(i) Extension Act of 2001 would allow eligible immigrants about to become permanent residents to apply for their green cards in the United States rather than returning to their home countries to apply. The U.S. House of Representatives amended the Senate version of the bill on March 12, 2002. Now, the Senate must again take action on the legislation.

Extending Section 245(i) is an important benefit for many immigrants and an issue which their families are concerned about. It is good policy and makes fiscal sense. I am hopeful that legislation to extend 245(i) will be passed before the end of the year.

## H.A.R.T. FUNDING

On Friday March 22, 2002, I requested federal funding for the Hispanic American Resource Team (HART) of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. The three year pilot program would enable the Metropolitan Police Department to employ full-time Field Interpreters to assist officers in translation when helping non-English speaking victims of crime in Clark County.

Clark County now has over 300,000 Hispanic residents and has the fastest growing Hispanic population in the United States. However, the police department currently does not have any Field Interpreters. Many residents who are unable to speak English have difficulty reporting criminal activity. HART therefore will fill a critical need.

Since HART began in March 2001, it has created an environment of mutual understanding and respect between the community and police. I strongly support the HART program and all that it is working to achieve, and I want HART to receive the funding it needs to expand and continue its valuable civic service.

Spanish speakers can call the HART hotline at 702-229-1999 to report a crime.

### KEEPING IN TOUCH



Please feel free to contact me or my staff offices with questions or concerns you might have regarding these or any other issues. We value your input and stand ready to work with you.

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