

2017 Policy Recommendations

1) Keep Iowa's children and families safe in schools and their communities.

Nearly 55,000 Latino youth were enrolled in Iowa's elementary and high schools during the 2015-2016 school year. Most of these children are U.S. citizens; some have undocumented parents. HF 265 prohibits public organizations from restricting enforcement of federal immigration laws. This bill may have the unintended consequence of keeping these children out of school due to fear of encountering enforcement officials at school and risk having the family separated. Under federal law, all students are entitled to equal access to elementary and secondary education regardless of their immigration status or their parents' immigration statuses.

By ensuring that all children in our communities have access to a world class education, we offer them a greater chance of becoming prosperous, self-sufficient adults. Schools should be a safe place for education professionals, children and their parents to collaborate in delivering that world class education free of fear.

2) Provide driver's licenses for all residents of Iowa, regardless of immigration status.

Providing driver licenses for all Iowa residents, regardless of immigration status, ensures public safety. Driver licenses contain addresses and other identifiable information, helps drivers understand the rules and responsibilities of the road through a proficiency examination, and reduces the number of insured motorist because drivers are more likely to register their vehicle and obtain adequate insurance. Having a driver's license allows residents to engage in Iowa's economic, social and cultural life.

3) Increase the budget for the Iowa Department of Human Rights' Division of Community Advocacy and Services (CAS).

The CAS division carries out the important work of building resourcefulness among Iowans by:

- Building capacity for people to become agents of change in their communities.
- Helping with navigation for those who need access to services.
- Creating resourcefulness and improving systems for youth through a focus on developing non-traditional leaders.
- Elevating issues, ideas, cultures and contributions to improve connection among all Iowans.

The Commission on Latino Affairs relies on CAS staff to carry out much of the work identified by the Commission. Increasing the CAS budget would preserve programs and services that benefit our most vulnerable populations.

The Iowa Commission of Latino Affairs is a governor-appointed Commission comprised of public members who:

Study opportunities and changing needs of the Latino population of this state;

Serve as a liaison between the Department and the public;

Recommend legislative and executive action to the General Assembly and Governor;

Establish advisory committees, work groups of other coalitions to achieve goals.

2017 Commission Members

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