



## Action Alert ©

July 18, 2010

Dear Friends of NOPA,

To better inform and empower our community, we send out our **Action Alerts** which provide information on issues of importance to Portuguese Americans. Take a look below and **make your voice heard on Capitol Hill!**

To maximize the purpose and value of the alerts, please send us your comments and what types of issues you would like to see included. All comments and suggestions can be sent to [info@nopa-us.org](mailto:info@nopa-us.org), or you can call 703-389-3512.

Thank you.

## August Recess Is Not a Vacation

While Congress has moved forward on many important issues, work has stalled on fixing our country's broken immigration system. Congress has also fallen short when it comes to job creation and strengthening the economic recovery. **You know better than anyone that this lack of progress over the past year has negatively impacted on our community.**

During the month of August, Congress gets a break from Washington and goes to their home districts. **But this is not a vacation for them -- it is a time when they need to hear from you!** Take advantage of this opportunity to remind your members of congress to act on the issues that matter to you most. Make sure your Congressional policymakers and their staff hear your voice before they return to Capitol Hill on September 13<sup>th</sup> for their final working session before the November elections.

Register your in-district visit with NOPA at [info@nopa-us.org](mailto:info@nopa-us.org) and address some of the following priorities with your members of Congress!

## Key Legislative Issues

### Immigration

Hold Congress accountable for its inaction on immigration reform! A lack of leadership has led to the proliferation of varied confusing and potentially harmful state laws, such as Arizona's SB 1070. Ask your representative to support comprehensive immigration reform, such as the REPAIR Proposal ([summary](#)), or passing the bi-partisan "[DREAM Act](#)" and "AgJobs" this year as a stepping stone to immigration reform!



The current U.S. immigration system is in need of fundamental reform. NOPA supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes the following principles:

- *Strong Border Security and Interior Enforcement* - The United States must commit to securing its border as a predicate to seeking any meaningful immigration reform.
- *Strong Employment Verification* - Immigration reform must include a tough, fair, and effective employment verification system that holds employers accountable for knowingly hiring illegal workers.
- *Economic Prosperity* - Reform efforts must include a rational, legal immigration system as essential to ensuring America's future economic prosperity.
- *Fair Path to Legalization* - Immigration reform must provide a tough, fair, and practical system for illegal immigrants already in the country.

For more information on NOPA's official position on immigration reform, visit:

<http://www.nopa-us.org/resources/NOPA+Immigration+Reform+Press+Release.pdf>

### **Wealth-Protection**

Families and honest businesses alike won a significant victory when the landmark legislation, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, was recently passed. Thank your congressional members for securing improved consumer protections and stronger bank accountability. Remind them, however, that they must still address the challenges of foreclosures, as our nation will soon see a second wave of them in the coming year. An estimated 17% of immigrant homeowners have already lost their homes to foreclosure or are now at imminent risk.

### **Protecting Family Farms and Ranches**

Urge your policymakers to support the bipartisan legislation (*S. 3664, Family Farm Estate Tax Deferral Act of 2010*) designed to provide relief for family farms and ranches from the federal estate tax. The federal estate tax can hit family farms and ranches especially hard. The value of farmland in some regions of the country has increased substantially in recent years, and many family farmers do not have sufficient assets to pay the federal estate tax in the event that they pass away. This sometimes forces family farmers and ranchers to sell all or part of their operation in order to foot the bill.

The estate tax was never intended to put family farms and ranches out of business or to prevent a legitimate family farmer or rancher from passing their business on to their children, ensuring that it remains in the family. This legislation would recognize that important principle by exempting family owned and operated farms and ranches, that stay in the family, from the estate tax.

### **Preserve the Middle Class Tax Cuts and Tax Credits**

At the end of this year, the tax relief from the 2001 stimulus legislation is set to expire.



While the economy is in the early stages of recovery, we want to ensure middle class families do not get hit any harder during these tough economic times.

Be sure to urge your policy makers to make the 2001 middle class tax cuts and improvements in the Child Tax Credit and EITC marriage penalty relief from the Recovery Act permanent (all of these provisions are exempt from PAYGO).

### **Economic and Employment Policy**

Experts say the economy has turned a corner, but Congress has had difficulty in using its power to put the 15 million unemployed Americans back to work. Tell Congress that unemployment is at nearly 10% for the nation overall and over 12% for some immigrant populations -- and this is unacceptable. It must pass legislation to put people to work in their own communities.

Congress and the administration must take bold action to create more jobs quickly, with specific strategies for reaching immigrant communities. NOPA recommends a range of investments in human and community capital development that would lead to large-scale direct job creation in communities hit hardest by unemployment.

### **Health**

Health care reform passed in March, and many changes are already coming into effect. How are the new laws working for you? If you are one of the families that are eligible for the first set of reform benefits, let NOPA know what's working for you and what's not at [info@nopa-us.org](mailto:info@nopa-us.org). Then tell your members the same during your visits this August.

### **Education**

NOPA has advocated for increased funding for key education programs, including funding support for English language learners and family literacy programs. While these education programs are often early targets for spending cuts, we must let our voices be heard to hold the line for these funds and push back against any additional cuts that will impact the education of our children and future generations.

## **About Us**

NOPA is a national organization that empowers US citizens and residents of Portuguese descent through advocacy, community development, education, and organizational support. Established in 2009, NOPA is a private, non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt organization created to address the many growing needs of the Portuguese-American community. NOPA conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Portuguese-American perspective in critical policy areas. In addition, NOPA provides



capacity-building assistance to its collaborative network or organizations that work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

If you feel inspired to join our mission, please donate online at:

<http://www.nopa-us.org/16.html>

Or you can send your tax deductible contribution to:

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