



NATIONAL LATINA INSTITUTE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH  
INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE LATINAS PARA LA SALUD REPRODUCTIVA  
[www.LatinaInstitute.org](http://www.LatinaInstitute.org)

Dear Activist,

It is with great pride that we share this Action Kit, “Health, Dignity, and Justice – Inclusive Immigration Reform for our Communities.” The 2012 General Elections made it clear that 1 in 10 voters in the United States is Latin@. Our community is paying attention to immigration reform and wants to see our deeply flawed immigration laws and policies fixed. NLIRH recognizes that this is an important priority not only for Latin@s but for all communities in the United States– we all look forward to reforms that will advance health, dignity, and justice for immigrant Latinas, their families, and their communities. However, we also know that in order for our voices to be heard, we need to engage our entire communities – friends, families, neighbors – as this issue affects everyone. It is up to us to educate our communities, raise awareness, and mobilize each other in support of reforms that will include and support our families being together, ensure that we have access to affordable health care, be inclusive of our LGBTQ sisters and brothers, advance a clear and fair roadmap to citizenship, and lastly ensure our neighborhoods are safe. The time for action is **now**, but we know that we cannot do this alone.

Our hope is that this Action Kit will equip you with the tools necessary to speak to your neighborhood leaders and legislators about what reforms your community demands, and to mobilize your community to fight for women’s health and rights in immigration reform.

This Action Kit includes:

- ☀ Immigration Reform: Bill Analysis;
- ☀ Immigration Reform: Talking Points;
- ☀ Immigration Reform: Social Media Action Tools.

“Health, Dignity, and Justice – Inclusive Immigration Reform for our Communities,” is available on our website at <http://latinainstitute.org/soypoderosa/LatinaWeek4RJ>

We look forward to your participation in this campaign and to the impact that we will have for years to come. ¡Pa’lante, Siempre Pa’lante!

In Solidarity,

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health



## **Inclusive Immigration Reform Action Kit**

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## 1. INCLUSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: VALUES, GOALS, & STRATEGIES (Not for distribution)

### Overview

NLIRH recognizes that the reproductive health and justice of immigrant Latinas is profoundly affected by injustices in our current immigration policies and practices. The last election made it clear that voters, including Latin@s, Asian & Pacific Islander Americans, and many others, are deeply invested in improving our immigration system to strengthen our families and our nation. Now more than ever, it is crucial that **the perspectives and interests of community members, specifically immigrant women and Latinas, are heard**. After all, our communities know immigrations laws better than anyone – they live with them every day. Current immigration policies deny reproductive justice for immigrant Latinas and their families living in the United States in the following ways:

- ☀ Attacks on immigrant Latinas' reproductive decision-making have included laws that ban or restrict immigrant women's participation in state and federal health care programs like Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, on the basis of their immigration status. As a result, these unjust laws have denied access to health services like prenatal care, contraception, cervical cancer screenings, and family planning services to many immigrant Latinas.
- ☀ Immigrant Latinas are over-represented in industries that are devalued, underpaid, and hazardous to one's health, including reproductive health. Despite that fact that immigrant Latinas have high labor force participation and employment rates, they are much less likely than U.S- born women to have access to their employer's health insurance and are more likely to be low-wage and live in poverty.
- ☀ Since 9/11, the detention and deportation of immigrants has dramatically increased, resulting in a record number of immigrant Latinas and their family members torn apart and detained in facilities that deny potentially life-saving reproductive health care and where sexual assault has been documented.
- ☀ Programs that involve local police to enforce immigration laws undermine community trust and threaten the safety, health, and well-being of Latinas. Under programs like "Secure Communities," the Criminal Alien Program, and 287(g), immigrant Latinas face



an impossible choice: if Latinas seek protection from domestic violence or emergency health services, they run the risk of being deported, detained, and separated from their families.

- ☀ Profound challenges in our immigration system keep citizenship and reunification of families out of reach for many, including LGBTQ families.

In the 2012 election, Latinas comprised nearly 6% of the electorate, and immigration was a top issue motivating Latinas to go to the polls. Since the election, there has been much discussion from leaders in both political parties over the need to pass commonsense solutions to our immigration laws and policies. The need for reform is great. However, Immigration Reform must take into account the lives, experiences, and needs of immigrant Latinas and their communities. Immigration Reform must ensure that immigrant women can fully contribute to their families, communities, and our nation's economy and live with health and dignity. Health care is a human right, and all women regardless of immigration status must have access to comprehensive, affordable, and quality reproductive and sexual health services and information.

**Goals for Inclusive Immigration Reform (IIR): Advance inclusive, humane reforms to our immigration laws and practices that promote reproductive justice for Latinas, their families, and their communities by:**

- ☀ Establishing a direct and equitable roadmap to citizenship that is accessible for all 11 million immigrants, including immigrant Latinas, currently living in the United States without status;
- ☀ Expanding access to quality and affordable health care, including reproductive health care, to all Latinas regardless of immigration status;
- ☀ Reforming current immigration enforcement laws and practices to uphold the human rights, dignity, and civil rights of immigrant Latinas and prioritize the unity of all families regardless of family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status;
- ☀ Ensuring that Latinas fleeing violence from their home country or facing violence in the United States can come forward and seek the protections and services they need;
- ☀ Advancing immigrant Latinas' ability to seek employment opportunities in the United States and to access to fair wages and full labor protections;



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- ☼ Improving systemic challenges in our immigration system to make citizenship, immigrant integration, family unity, and LGBTQ inclusion a reality for immigrants and their families.

### **Campaign Strategies**

- ☼ Mobilize your community to speak about the injustices they face as a result of immigration laws and other laws that treat immigrants unfairly;
- ☼ Educate your community, local leaders, the media, the White House, members of Congress, and advocacy partners on what reforms your community needs and your values;
- ☼ Build alliances with local women's rights, reproductive justice, immigrant rights, faith, labor, LGBTQ, civil rights, and other groups.



## 2. INCLUSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: QUICK FACTS

*Our current immigration system harms immigrant Latinas by undermining civil and human rights, promoting unfair treatment of immigrants, and denying a roadmap to citizenship.*

- ☀ Over the past four years, the Obama Administration has deported approximately 1.6 million people instead of creating a roadmap to citizenship and/or improving legal channels of migration.<sup>1</sup> Latinas have been detained in facilities that have failed to provide important and life-saving reproductive health care,<sup>2</sup> and many immigrant Latinas have been deported and permanently separated from their children and families.<sup>3</sup>
- ☀ In 2011, 45% of immigrant Latinas did not have health insurance. Only 34% of immigrant Latinas had access to health care through their job.<sup>4</sup> Current laws deny access to health care on the basis of immigration status, leaving many Latinas without any options for health care.
- ☀ In 2011, immigrant women earned 64 cents for every dollar U.S.-born women earned. Furthermore, nearly half (49.3%) of women-headed immigrant households lived in

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<sup>1</sup> The New York Times Company. Growth in Deportations. February 22, 2013. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/02/22/us/politics/growth-in-deportations.html?ref=us&gwh=30CF43E35C2D41CC158528C0B58CAA26> . Accessed on February 28, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch. Detained and Dismissed: Women's Struggles to Obtain Health Care in United States Immigration Detention. March 2009. Available at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2009/03/16/detained-and-dismissed> . Accessed on January 19, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Women's Refugee Commission. Torn Apart By Immigration Enforcement: Parental Rights and Immigration Detention. December 2009. Available at [http://womensrefugeecommission.org/component/docman/doc\\_download/667-torn-apart-by-immigration-enforcement-parental-rights-and-immigration-detention?Itemid=155](http://womensrefugeecommission.org/component/docman/doc_download/667-torn-apart-by-immigration-enforcement-parental-rights-and-immigration-detention?Itemid=155) . Accessed on February 18, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. Trabajadoras: Challenges and Conditions of Latina Workers in the United States. March 2012. Available at [http://www.lclaa.org/images/pdf/Trabajadoras\\_Report.pdf](http://www.lclaa.org/images/pdf/Trabajadoras_Report.pdf) . Accessed on February 28, 2013.



poverty.<sup>5</sup> The economic injustices faced by immigrant women impact their ability to obtain health care and make and exercise decisions about their family, future, and reproductive health.

- ☀ Immigrant Latinas are overrepresented in industries that are hazardous to their health, including their reproductive health.<sup>6</sup> Often these industries do not offer workplace protections and benefits, like maternity leave, paid sick leave, and health care.<sup>7</sup>
- ☀ Programs like the so-called “Secure Communities,” which turn local police into immigration enforcement agents, make immigrant Latinas and families less secure by undermining the community’s trust in the police. Immigrant Latinas have been placed into the immigration enforcement system as a result of reporting domestic violence or requesting emergency health care and other services.
- ☀ In the absence of Congressional improvements to our immigration laws, states like Arizona, Alabama, and Georgia have taken up their own immigration reform measures – but these laws have only undermined women’s rights further. Laws like Arizona’s SB1070 and Alabama’s HB658 have created a hostile environment for immigrants by permitting racial profiling and undermining Latinas’ civil and human rights.

*Inclusive and humane reforms to our immigration laws are long overdue. Latinas and their communities are demanding solutions that embrace the contributions of immigrant Latinas and advance their civil and human rights, including the fundamental human right to health care and reproductive justice.*

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<sup>5</sup> United States Census Bureau. 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations. Available at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>. Accessed on January 15, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Reproductive Health Technologies Project, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. Chemical Injustice: the Unequal Burden of Toxic Chemicals on Women of Color and Low-income Families. Available at <http://www.rhtp.org/fertility/vallombrosa/documents/EJRJFactsheetRHTPandNLIIRH.pdf>. Accessed on January 19, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. The Role of Employer-Sponsored Coverage For Immigrants: A Primer. June 2006. Available at <http://www.kff.org/uninsured/upload/7524.pdf>. Accessed on October 5, 2012.



### 3. INCLUSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: SENATE BILL ANALYSIS

#### What does the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act” (S. 744) do for women and families?

##### Preliminary Analysis

On June 27, the U.S. Senate passed in a 68-34 vote the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act”, or S. 744 – a bill for Immigration Reform. The bill was written by Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Marco Rubio (R-FL), John McCain (R-AZ), Lindsay Graham (R-SC), and Jeff Flake (R-AZ). Below is a summary of the impact of S. 744 on immigrant women’s health and rights.

- ☀ **Roadmap to Citizenship:** The Senate bill creates a long, onerous, restrictive roadmap to citizenship that requires aspiring citizens to pay fines and taxes, demonstrate work history, learn English, and meet other requirements. The Senate bill may leave as many as 3 million people behind, including: low-income people who are unable to pay fines; women and others working in the informal economy who are unable to produce proof of work history; transgender women who are frequently targeted by police and other people who may have been convicted of crimes; and disabled people.
- ☀ **Keeping Families Healthy:** Most women and families on the roadmap to citizenship are excluded from quality and affordable health care options and economic supports – **despite the fact that they’d be working and paying into health care programs the whole time.** Under S. 744, qualified aspiring citizens would have to wait 15 years or longer to access affordable health insurance and family supports, even while working and paying fines, fees, and taxes.
- ☀ **Family Unity:** The bill makes important advances for family unity by reducing the family visa backlog in approximately 9 years; unfortunately the bill also eliminates the ability of U.S. citizens to sponsor siblings and does not include lesbian and gay bi-national partners (although a recent Supreme Court decision grants recognition to married same-sex partners under immigration law.) Concerns around family unity remain.
- ☀ **Border Communities & Civil Rights:** The Senate bill contains unprecedented funding and requirements to further militarize the southern border. With the addition of the “Corker-Hoeven” amendment to S. 744, the Senate bill for immigration reform will now double the number of border patrol agents along the southern border to over 40,000;





require over 700 miles of fencing; and increase the use of drones, helicopters, and other surveillance technology. These measures will cost the U.S. government at least \$47 billion. S. 744 has raised tremendous concerns about due process, the civil and human rights of border communities, and how these policies will impact women.

- ☀ **Detention, Deportation & Due Process:** S. 744 calls for the Department of Homeland Security to explore alternatives to detaining immigrants in jail-like conditions. S. 744 also contains provisions to improve the rights of parents who are facing deportation and to expand access to legal counsel to children. However, S. 744 does nothing to end local law enforcement's increasing role in immigration enforcement, a practice which undermines community trust in the police and harms women's health and safety.
- ☀ **Protections for Survivors of Violence:** This immigration proposal removes the arbitrary one-year filing deadline for asylum seekers, an important step to ensuring immigrant women fleeing violence can seek protection here in the United States. S. 744 also increases the number of U-visas available for immigrant survivors of crimes, like domestic and other forms of violence. However, increased border enforcement measures may undermine the safety and security of border communities and women fleeing discrimination and abuse in their home countries.
- ☀ **Employment-Based Immigration:** While the Senate bill expands employment-based migration opportunities to fill future workforce needs, it remains unclear whether women will have equitable access to these visas. And while the legislation expands protections for workers, notably through the expansion of U-visas for employer abuse, the mandatory 5-year phase-in of E-Verify may undermine workers' rights, particularly for low-income women, women who have changed their name due to marital status, and transpeople who have experienced a name change.

**Background:** More than 230 National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights (NCIWR) members and allied organizations have joined together to call for the full inclusion of immigrant women's rights in Immigration Reform. In addition, earlier this year a group of over 360 health, immigrant rights, faith, children's advocacy, LGBTQ, and women's groups sent a letter supporting access to health care and family economic supports to the President and Congress.



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#### 4. INCLUSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: TALKING POINTS

##### Senate “Gang of Eight” Bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill - Talking Points

- ☀ **If we want to have a fair conversation about immigration policy, we need to include women’s health and rights.** Currently, women make up 51% of migrants in the U.S.; 55% of all green card recipients in 2010 were women. Our immigration policy needs to catch up to that reality, and prioritize issues of concern to women, including access to health care, family unity, and equitable access to citizenship for women.
- ☀ **15 years is too long to wait to see a doctor.** Under the Senate proposal, immigrants on a path to citizenship would have to wait 10 or more years before being able to apply for Lawful Permanent Resident status, and would then be subject to an additional 5 year mandatory delay (5-year bar) before access to a full range of affordable health care options and family supports. This means that for many families, it will be 15 years or longer before they can see a doctor.
- ☀ **Aspiring citizens on the roadmap to citizenship are paying fees and taxes, working, and contributing to our economy and communities.** It’s only fair that they have an opportunity to pay into, and participate in, the same affordable health care and family supports as their friends and neighbors.
- ☀ **For a woman with undiagnosed breast or cervical cancer, 15 years may be the difference between life and death.** Preventive care like cancer screenings and checkups saves lives, and saves money. For example, treatment for cervical cancer costs between \$20,000 and \$37,000.00, compared to \$13.00-66.00 for one Pap test. Additionally, most cases of cancer occur between the ages of 20-50– the critical years in a woman’s life where she may be going to school, starting a career, or raising a family. Forcing people to wait only increases human suffering and health care costs in the long run.
- ☀ **When parents, students, and workers are healthy, the economy and community benefit.** Under the Senate proposal, aspiring citizens would be working, going to school, raising their families—and, sadly, praying not to get sick or hurt for 15 years. Good health care is essential to worker and student productivity and the opportunity for women and families to realize their full potential. Studies have demonstrated that access to health insurance and lower out-of-pocket health costs promote worker productivity. If immigrant women are healthy, they are better able to support their family economically and contribute to the success of their children.



- ☀ **Anyone could get hurt or sick, and so everyone should have access to basic health care.** No one should live in fear that because they lack health coverage, one accident or illness could threaten their family's economic security. Access to affordable, quality health care is a widely-shared goal.
- ☀ **Most Americans believe that immigrants on the roadmap to citizenship should be able to access Medicaid (63 percent) and subsidies to affordably buy insurance on the new marketplaces (59 percent)<sup>8</sup>.** The Senate proposal is out of step with most Americans' values on this issue.

**Solution:** Congress must lift the restrictions on access to safety net programs, including affordable health care, included in S. 744. Immigration Reform must advance a roadmap to citizenship that ensures all taxpayers, regardless of immigration status, are eligible for tax dollar-supported safety net programs, including affordable health coverage programs.

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<sup>8</sup> 63% of Americans believe those on the roadmap to citizenship should be eligible for Medicaid and 59% believe they should be eligible for affordability options under the ACA. HENRY J. KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION. *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: February 2013*. February 27, 2013. <http://kff.org/report-section/february-2013-tracking-poll-findings/>



## 5. INCLUSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: SOCIAL MEDIA ACTION TOOLS

### Sample Tweets in English and Spanish

#### English

- 🌟 OMG!?! Senate #immigration reform bill will make aspiring citizens wait #15years for health care. #CIR13
- 🌟 #15years w/o health access? Unacceptable! We need healthy families #immigration #cir13 #4immigrantwomen
- 🌟 #15years 2 wait 4 health access is a death sentence #4immigrantwomen w/breast or cervical cancer #immigration #cir13
- 🌟 For #15years #immigrants will be working, paying taxes—& praying not to get sick?! American enough 2 work but not 2 see a doctor?!
- 🌟 No one should have to wait #15years for a checkup-preventive care saves lives and \$\$\$ #CIR13 #undocumented #4immigrantwomen

#### Spanish

- 🌟 ¿PERO QUE? Bajo la reforma migratoria las mujeres inmigrantes tienen que esperar #15años para recibir el cuidado de salud #CIR
- 🌟 #15años sin acceso a cuidado de salud? ¡Inaceptable! Necesitamos familias saludables #cir13 #xMujeresInmigrantes #inmigracion
- 🌟 #15años de espera para el acceso a la salud=una sentencia de muerte para mujeres con cáncer de cuello uterino #xMujeresInmigrantes #inmigracion
- 🌟 Cuidado de la salud debe ser accesible para todos sin importar su estatus migratorio Esperar #15años=inaceptable #4immigrantwomen
- 🌟 ¡Cuidado preventiva salva vidas y dinero! #xMujeresInmigrantes #inmigracion #15años
- 🌟 ¿#15años de espera para un chequeo? ¡NO! inmigrantes deben tener acceso a servicios de salud AHORA #CIR13 #xMujeresInmigrantes #inmigracion



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## **6. INCLUSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: INFORMATION ON KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS**

### **U.S. Senate**

**All U.S. Senators** – Two (2) Senators represent you in Congress

#### **Find your Senators:**

[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

#### **Members of “Gang of 8” - Authors of the Immigration Reform Bill in the Senate**

Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) @SenatorMenendez  
Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) @ChuckSchumer  
Senator Dick Durbin (D- IL) @SenatorDurbin  
Senator Michael Bennet (D- CO) @SenBennetCO  
Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) @JeffFlake  
Senator John McCain (R-AZ) @SenJohnMcCain  
Senator Marco Rubio (R- FL) @marcorubio  
Senator Lindsey Graham (R- SC) @LindseyGrahamSC

#### **Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee**

<http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/about/members.cfm>

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) @SenatorLeahy  
Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) @SenFeinstein  
Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) @ChuckSchumer  
Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) @SenatorDurbin  
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)@SenWhitehouse  
Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) @amyklobuchar  
Senator Al Franken (D-MN) @alfranken  
Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) @ChrisCoons  
Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) @SenBlumenthal  
Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) @maziehirono  
Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IO) @ChuckGrassley



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Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) @OrrinHatch  
Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) @SenatorSessions  
Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) @LindseyGrahamSC  
Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) @JohnCornyn  
Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) @SenMikeLee  
Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) @tedcruz  
Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ) @JeffFlake

### **U.S. House of Representatives**

Find the member of the House of Representative that represents you and your community:  
<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

### **Members of the “Gang of Seven” working on the Immigration Reform Bill in the U.S. House of Representatives (*as of July 3, 2013*)**

Rep. Xavier Becerra (D) CA-34 @repbecerra  
Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D) CA-19 @repzoelofgren  
Rep. Luis Guterierrez (D) IL-4 @luisguterierrez  
Rep. John Yarmuth (D) KY-3 @repjohnyarmuth  
Rep. John Carter (R) TX-31 @judgecarter  
Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R) FL-25 @mariodb  
Rep. Sam Johnson (R) TX-3 @samspressshop

### **Members of the House Judiciary Committee**

Chair – Rep. Goodlatte (R) VA-6 @repgoodlatte  
Rep. Conyers (D) MI-13 @repjohnconyers  
Rep. Sensenbrenner (R) WI-5 @jimpressooffice  
Rep. Nadler (D) NY-10 @repjerrynadler  
Rep. Coble (R) NC-6 @howardcoble  
Rep. Scott (D) VA-3 @repbobbyscott  
Rep. Smith (R) TX-21 @lamarsmithtx21  
Rep. Watt (D) NC-12 @melwattnc12  
Rep. Chabot (R) OH-1 @repstevechabot  
Rep. Lofgren (D) CA-19 @repzoelofgren  
Rep. Bachus (R) AL-6 @bachusal06  
Rep. Jackson Lee (D) TX-18 @jacksonleetx18  
Rep. Issa (R) CA-49 @darrellissa  
Rep. Cohen (D) TN-9 @repcohen



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Rep. Forbes (R) VA-4 @randy\_forbes  
Rep. Johnson (D) GA-4 @rephankjohnson  
Rep. King (R) IO-4 @stevekingia  
Rep. Pierluisi (D) – Puerto Rico At Large @pedropierluisi  
Rep. Franks (R) AZ-8 @reptrentfranks  
Rep. Chu (D) CA-27 @repjudychu  
Rep. Gohmert (R) TX-1 @replouiegohmert  
Rep. Deutch (D) FL-21 @repteddeutch  
Rep. Jordan (R) OH-4 @jim\_jordan  
Rep. Gutierrez (D) IL-4 @luisgutierrez  
Rep. Poe (R) TX-2 @judgetedpoe  
Rep. Bass (D) CA-37 @repkarenbass  
Rep. Chaffetz (R) UT-3 @jasoninthehouse  
Rep. Richmond (D) LA-2 @reprichmond  
Rep. Marino (R) PA-10 @reptommarino  
Rep. DelBene (D) WA-1 @suzandelbene  
Rep. Gowdy (R) SC-4 @tgowdysc  
Rep. Garcia (D) FL-26 @joegarcia  
Rep. Amodei (R) NV-2 @markamodeinv2  
Rep. Jeffries (D) NY-8 @hakeemjeffries  
Rep. Labrador (R) ID- 1 @raul\_labrador  
Rep. Farenthold (R) TX-27 @farenthold





## 7. INCLUSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM: SAMPLE PETITION

Dear Senators and Representatives:

As our nation moves forward with Immigration Reform, we the undersigned Latinas, immigrant women, and families and allies, are deeply concerned that the health care needs of immigrant women and children have been left behind. Today, many immigrant women in our communities struggle to obtain the necessary health care to live full, productive lives – and many live without any health care options at all. **Under the immigration bill that just passed the Senate (S. 744), these families would be forced to wait 15 years or longer before seeing a doctor—despite the fact that they’d be working and paying into health care programs the whole time.**

We know that being able to take care of her health better prepares a woman immigrant to start a business, go to school, and contribute to her workplace, family, and community. We also know that **for a woman with undetected cervical cancer or other untreated illness, a 15-year delay in getting health coverage could be the difference between life and death.**

In addition to the human costs, forcing women and families to wait over a decade for health care undermines the social and economic potential of entire communities and hurts our nation’s economy. Denying aspiring citizens the ability to benefit from the very health programs they pay into with their tax dollars makes it harder for those families to be successful in the long term. **The restrictions on access to health care in S. 744 are unjust, unwise, and un-American – simply out of line with our values as a nation.**<sup>9</sup>

**Latinas, immigrant women and allies will be watching the ongoing Immigration Reform debate in Washington, D.C. very carefully.** We urge lawmakers to listen to our concerns and take these important issues seriously. After all, no member of Congress would want their sick mother or child to wait 15 years for health care. We urge Congress to advance a roadmap to citizenship that ensures immigrant women and families can access

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<sup>9</sup> 63% of Americans believe those on the roadmap to citizenship should be eligible for Medicaid and 59% believe they should be eligible for affordability options under the ACA. HENRY J. KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION. *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: February 2013*. February 27, 2013. <http://kff.org/report-section/february-2013-tracking-poll-findings/>



all tax dollar-supported safety net programs, including affordable health care, without waiting periods or other barriers.

We demand Immigration Reform that respects and supports the health, success, and human dignity of our communities, and allows aspiring citizens the opportunity to fully contribute to our families, communities, and economy. **Congress should deliver nothing less.**

Sincerely,  
[Names]

## 8. TOWN HALL MEETING: FACILITATOR'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

### \*Guided Remarks for Immigration Town Hall

- ☀ Welcome and thank everyone for attending. Introduce yourself and your group and layout the reasons for organizing this Town Hall: “My name is...I want to thank you all for coming out today to discuss this important issue. As you know, the Senate has passed an Immigration Reform bill. It is called the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act.” As policymakers are discussing what they think Immigration Reform should look like, we want to have conversations with our communities about what we want Immigration Reform to look like. So we’ve come up with a list of questions that we want folks to discuss. Ultimately, we want to get on the same page to advocate for the reforms that we need, the reforms that will strengthen our communities, not tear them apart.
- ☀ Share personal stories: “Before we get into the questions that we want to discuss, we want to make sure our conversations are grounded in reality, in the lived experiences of people in our community who are most directly affected by immigration policy. First, we want to share a story from one of the activists we work with in New York (See Town Hall Meeting: Story from New York Activist in Part 10.)
- ☀ Give participants a chance to read and respond to discussion questions in writing. “Now we want everyone to turn to the discussion questions posted on your table. And we want to give people a chance to read the questions on your own, jot down



your ideas and experiences and when people are finished, we want to open up a discussion on these questions.”

- ☀ Begin discussion.

### **\*Discussion Guidelines**

- ☀ “Now we’d like to give people an opportunity to share their ideas, experiences and thoughts on these questions. Please limit your comments to 2 minutes or less to give as many people as possible a chance to speak.” Then read out the first question and go on like that.

\*\*Make sure to keep remarks down to 2 minutes. Have a timer handy to keep track of time\*\*

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ☀ What does it mean to fully integrate immigrants into our society?
- ☀ What is the impact of detention and deportation on families?
- ☀ Is accessing health care a priority for immigrant families?
- ☀ What are the concerns of immigrant women?
- ☀ How should the LGBTQ community be included in this reform?
- ☀ Is it fair to create a roadmap to citizenship that does not include full access to health care, public benefits, and social services?
- ☀ What immigration policies matter most to YOUR community?

### **\*Brief Presentation of Senate Immigration Reform Bill**

#### **Brief Analysis of Senate Immigration Reform Bill, “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act” (S. 744)**

- ☀ **Roadmap to Citizenship:** The Senate bill creates a long, onerous, restrictive roadmap to citizenship that requires aspiring citizens to pay fines and taxes, demonstrate work history, learn English, and meet other requirements. The Senate bill may leave as many as 3 million people behind, including: low-income people who are unable to pay fines; women and others working in the informal economy who are unable to produce proof of work history; transgender women who are frequently targeted by police and other people who may have been convicted of crimes; and disabled people.



- ☀ **Keeping Families Healthy:** Most women and families on the roadmap to citizenship are excluded from quality and affordable health care options and economic supports – **despite the fact that they’d be working and paying into health care programs the whole time.** Under S. 744, qualified aspiring citizens would have to wait 15 years or longer to access affordable health insurance and family supports, even while working and paying fines, fees, and taxes.
- ☀ **Family Unity:** The bill makes important advances for family unity by reducing the family visa backlog in approximately 9 years; unfortunately the bill also eliminates the ability of U.S. citizens to sponsor siblings and does not include lesbian and gay bi-national partners (although a recent Supreme Court decision grants recognition to married same-sex partners under immigration law.) Concerns around family unity remain.
- ☀ **Border Communities & Civil Rights:** The Senate bill contains unprecedented funding and requirements to further militarize the southern border. With the addition of the “Corker-Hoeven” amendment to S. 744, the Senate bill for immigration reform will now double the number of border patrol agents along the southern border to over 40,000; require over 700 miles of fencing; and increase the use of drones, helicopters, and other surveillance technology. These measures will cost the U.S. government at least \$47 billion. S. 744 has raised tremendous concerns about due process, the civil and human rights of border communities, and how these policies will impact women.
- ☀ **Detention, Deportation & Due Process:** S. 744 calls for the Department of Homeland Security to explore alternatives to detaining immigrants in jail-like conditions. S. 744 also contains provisions to improve the rights of parents who are facing deportation and to expand access to legal counsel to children. However, S. 744 does nothing to end local law enforcement’s increasing role in immigration enforcement, a practice which undermines community trust in the police and harms women’s health and safety.
- ☀ **Protections for Survivors of Violence:** This immigration proposal removes the arbitrary one-year filing deadline for asylum seekers, an important step to ensuring immigrant women fleeing violence can seek protection here in the United States. However, increased border enforcement measures may undermine the safety and security of border communities and women fleeing discrimination and abuse in their home countries.
- ☀ **Employment-Based Immigration:** While the Senate bill expands employment-based migration opportunities to fill future workforce needs, it remains unclear whether



women will have equitable access to these visas. And while the legislation expands protections for workers, notably through the expansion of U-visas for employer abuse, the mandatory 5-year phase-in of E-Verify may undermine workers' rights, particularly for low-income women, women who have changed their name due to marital status, and transpeople who have experienced a name change.

- ☀ Summarize the six key points and facilitate a conversation to draw out what each of the points mean. You could even have members of your group be prepared to draw out some of the pros and cons of each bullet. **For example**, the issue of increased border militarization brings up a number of problems for some folks:
  - From an anti-war perspective, having drones policing the borders further props up the military industrial complex and uses resources that could be going elsewhere (housing, education, jobs, health care).
  - From the voice of someone living on the border, this means the militarization of their neighborhoods.
  - From an economic perspective, immigration is part of a larger process of economic globalization, a consequence of free trade agreements and US imperialist intervention and war policies abroad. Additionally, increased border militarization has not (and will not) stop immigration. It has pushed immigrants further and further into the desert increasing the number of deaths on the border and making it more dangerous for those who are crossing.
  - From a labor perspective, keeping immigrants out of this country does not improve the living conditions of American workers. Only organizing and fighting for better wages and living conditions does that. We do know that no worker benefits from having second class citizens or workers without protections and legal rights, which is why legalization is fundamental for any Immigration Reform.

**\*Additional Focus on Access to Health Care:**

Review the points to engage your audience in a critical discussion on access to health care for immigrant women:

- ☀ **If we want to have a fair conversation about immigration policy, we need to include women's health and rights.** Currently, women make up 51% of migrants in the U.S.; 55% of all green card recipients in 2010 were women. Our immigration policy needs to catch up to that reality, and prioritize issues of concern to women, including access to health care, family unity, and equitable access to citizenship for women.
- ☀ **15 years is too long to wait to see a doctor.** Under the Senate proposal, immigrants



on the roadmap to citizenship would have to wait 10 or more years before being able to apply for Lawful Permanent Resident status, and would then be subject to an additional 5 year mandatory delay (5-year bar) before access to a full range of affordable health care options and family supports. This means that for many families, it will be 15 years or longer before they can see a doctor.

- ☀ **Aspiring citizens on the roadmap to citizenship are paying fees and taxes, working, and contributing to our economy and communities.** It's only fair that they have an opportunity to pay into, and participate in, the same affordable health care and family supports as their friends and neighbors.
- ☀ **For a woman with undiagnosed breast or cervical cancer, 15 years may be the difference between life and death.** Preventive care like cancer screenings and checkups saves lives, and saves money. For example, treatment for cervical cancer costs between \$20,000 and \$37,000.00, compared to \$13.00-66.00 for one Pap test. Additionally, most cases of cancer occur between the ages of 20-50– the critical years in a woman's life where she may be going to school, starting a career, or raising a family. Forcing people to wait only increases human suffering and health care costs in the long run.
- ☀ **When parents, students, and workers are healthy, the economy and community benefit.** Under the Senate proposal, aspiring citizens would be working, going to school, raising their families—and, sadly, praying not to get sick or hurt for 15 years. Good health care is essential to worker and student productivity and the opportunity for women and families to realize their full potential. Studies have demonstrated that access to health insurance and lower out-of-pocket health costs promote worker productivity. If immigrant women are healthy, they are better able to support their family economically and contribute to the success of their children.
- ☀ **Anyone could get hurt or sick, and so everyone should have access to basic health care.** No one should live in fear that because they lack health coverage, one accident or illness could threaten their family's economic security. Access to affordable, quality health care is a widely-shared goal.
- ☀ **Most Americans believe that immigrants on the roadmap to citizenship should be able to access Medicaid (63 percent) and subsidies to affordably buy insurance on the new marketplaces (59 percent).** The Senate proposal is out of step with most Americans' values on this issue.

\* **Discussion**– 20 min

\***Ways to Get Involved:**



YOUR ASK/keeping your community involved: Speak about other opportunities to organize and mobilize around reproductive justice issues in your community (this is very important to our efforts to keep activists engaged in reproductive justice advocacy and campaigns):

- ☀ “We all know this doesn’t end here. Regardless of what Congress proposes we have to make our own demands and show our collective power in the streets. In order to affect the change we want, our communities need to get organized and for that we need people to volunteer with us, join our organization, and push for the legislation we want and need.”
- ☀ The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health is a leader in the National Coalition for Immigrant Women’s Rights (NCIWR), a leading collaboration of over 80 grassroots and national advocacy organizations to elevate women’s rights and gender issues in immigration. Please send a digital postcard to your member of Congress through NCIWR’s “I’m Fighting #4ImmigrantWomen” campaign. Send a message to your members of Congress that Immigration Reform must advance immigrant women’s rights, including full access to affordable health care programs. Take action at [http://nciwr.org/campaigns/im\\_fighting\\_for/](http://nciwr.org/campaigns/im_fighting_for/) and spread the word on social media.
- ☀ The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health is also engaging in a #15years campaign to urge Congress advance a roadmap to citizenship that ensures immigrant women have full access to all affordable health care programs, which are supported by their tax dollars.
- ☀ Use the NLIRH Action Kit to take action in your community to improve access to health care for immigrant women, families, and communities.
- ☀ [DISCUSS LOCAL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING IN-DISTRICT MEETINGS, LOCAL MOBILIZATIONS, AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE ACTION WITH YOUR LATINA ADVOCACY NETWORK]

### **\*Post-Discussion**

- ☀ Thank everyone for coming and sharing: “Thank you everyone for coming and sharing in this discussion space.”
- ☀ Contact information for leader(s) and participants: “Before you leave, I just want to remind everyone to make sure they signed the sign-in sheet so that we can continue to involve you in our activities. If in the upcoming days or weeks you have thoughts



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to add to our conversation or to respond to the work that we are doing, please feel free to contact me at\_\_\_\_\_.”





## **9. TOWN HALL MEETING: SAMPLE AGENDA**

### ***Immigration Town Hall***

**7-7:15 PM**

Open time, people help themselves to snacks. Make sure to introduce yourselves to new people who come in—you want everyone to feel welcome. Hand out any materials you might have brought and ask people to fill out their contact information on your sign-in sheet.

**7:15-7:25 PM**

Welcome and Introduction – 10 min  
(See Facilitator’s Discussion Guide for guided remarks)

**7:25-7:35 PM**

Share Personal Stories – 10 min  
(See personal stories below, or have participants share their own stories)

**7:35-7:50 PM**

Answer Questions – 15 min  
Give participants a chance to read and respond to Discussion Questions in writing.

**7:50-8:20 PM**

Discussion of Questions– 30 min  
Go over questions and give people a chance to share their experiences or thoughts. Before beginning a discussion, this is a good opportunity to lay out some ground rules for the discussion (See Facilitator’s Discussion Guide).

**8:20-8:30 PM**

Brief Presentation of Senate Bill for Immigration Reform – 10 min  
(See Facilitator’s Discussion Guide)

**8:30-8:50 PM**

Discussion– 20 min

**8:50-9:00 PM**



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Next Steps: What are we doing? How can people get involved? – 10 min  
(See Facilitator’s Discussion Guide) Total: 105 mins, (1 hour, 45 minutes)



## **10. TOWN HALL MEETING: LETTER FROM NEW YORK ACTIVIST**

**Maria\*\*\* is 20 years old, and she has two children, ages 4 and 2 years old. She came to New York City from Puebla, Mexico when she was 8 years old with her mother and her siblings. She is eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Maria is taking care of her children and taking courses in Culinary Arts. This is her story.**

“It is not fair that so many members of our community (immigrant families) work so hard in this country, yet we cannot go to a doctor when we get sick... Even when we are close to dying, we can barely go to the Emergency Room.

“When I was 15 years old, I felt a strong pain in my appendix. I could not tolerate it anymore and I went to the Emergency Room. The first question they asked me was if I had health insurance. Thankfully, at that time, I did have health insurance thanks to the fact that my father was paying for health insurance. I was sent back home and they told me that if I continued to feel the pain, that I might have to have surgery. Two years later, I felt the strong pains again and I felt terrible. My siblings and I no longer had health insurance. When I went to the Emergency Room again, they asked me again if I had health insurance and they asked me why I did not have my appendix taken out. I told them that I had been in the Emergency Room before for the pain, but never had my appendix taken out. I spent one hour in the Emergency Room and it cost me more than \$500.00. I went to the office to talk to them about how to pay the bill, and they told me it was my problem. I could not afford to pay the bill.

“So now when I get sick, I take a Tylenol and I have to put up with it. I cannot afford a visit to the hospital.

“The exclusion of undocumented immigrants from the Affordable Care Act causes me much pain. They cause me anxiety because my children are young and it’s difficult.”

\*\*\*Name has been changed to respect confidentiality



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## 11. TOWN HALL MEETING: SAMPLE LETTER TO COLLEAGUE LETTER

Dear Colleague,

As policymakers in Washington D.C. are discussing what *they think* Immigration Reform should look like, *how are you making your voice heard?* The last election made it clear that voters, including Latin@s, Asian & Pacific Islander Americans, and many others, are deeply invested in improving our immigration system to strengthen our families, our communities, and our nation. Now more than ever, it is crucial that the perspectives and interests of community members are heard. After all, our communities know immigrations laws better than anyone – they live with them every day.

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) will be hosting Town Hall meetings throughout the country to lift the voices of communities on what YOU want to see in Inclusive Immigration Reform. We'll be asking questions like:

- What does it mean to fully integrate immigrants into our society?
- What is the impact of detention and deportation on families?
- Is accessing health care a priority for immigrant families?
- What are the concerns of immigrant women?
- How should the LGBTQ community be included in this reform?
- Is it fair to create a roadmap to citizenship that does not include full access to health care, public benefits, and social services?
- What immigration policies matter most to YOUR community?

We want participants to feel comfortable and safe enough to make their voices heard and be a part of a constructive discussion. Please join the conversation.

**We would like to invite you to attend a Town Hall meeting in a community near you. Below you will find the tentative list of event locations:**

[DATE]  
[TIME]  
[LOCATION]

These Town Hall meetings are just one tool that we are using to organize and mobilize our community for the passage of compassionate and inclusive Immigration Reform. For more information about Immigration Reform, please contact Natalie Camastra at [natalie@latinainstitute.org](mailto:natalie@latinainstitute.org).



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In Solidarity,



## 12. TAKE ACTION FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S HEALTH: **In-District Meeting Script**

### Introductions:

- **Group Leader:** We're with the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health and we're here representing concerned constituents in your district [List cities] to talk about an issue that is really important to our communities: immigrant women's health. Let's start by introducing ourselves [**EXCHANGE BUSINESS CARDS**]
- **Participants Introduce Themselves:** [Name, hometown, other basic info]

**Advocate 1:** Talk about why immigrant women need health care, why Immigration Reform **MUST** include health insurance for immigrant families.

- As you know, the U.S. Senate has passed its bill for immigration policy reform. **We are deeply concerned that under S. 744, immigrant women and families would be forced to wait 15 years or longer before seeing a doctor—despite the fact that they'd be working and paying into health care programs the whole time.**
- We are concerned because current laws unfairly restrict access to health care based on immigration status. Even most lawfully present immigrants are now forced to wait 5 years to access Medicaid and other important programs.
- Not having a way to access health insurance leads to poorer health outcomes and higher costs for immigrant Latinas. For example, while cervical cancer, a largely preventable disease, has been on the decline for U.S. born women, rates for immigrant women have been on the rise.
- During these 15 years, immigrant women and families would be working, paying taxes - and sadly, praying not to get sick or hurt.
- We know that 15 years is a lifetime to a young person and could mean the difference between life and death for an immigrant Latina suffering from undiagnosed cervical or breast cancer.

### Ask/Urge the Senator or Representative:

- Immigrant women and families need access to health care so that all communities could thrive. Will you support a roadmap to citizenship that ensures immigrant women and families can participate in affordable health care programs (like Medicaid), which are supported by their tax dollars?



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**SHARE ACTIVIST STORY: WHY DO YOU BELIEVE THAT 15 YEARS IS TOO LONG FOR IMMIGRANT LATINAS TO WAIT FOR ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE?**

**Questions/ Wrap Up – HAND THEM THE FOLDER:**

- Do you have any questions for our group or items you would like us to follow up on?
- Will the Representative/Senator support lifting restrictions on access to health care in S. 744 and ensuring that no taxpayer, regardless of immigration status, is denied access to taxpayer-supported safety net programs, like affordable health care?
- Thank you for meeting with us today. We appreciate your time and attention to this important issue. Please let us know how we can be helpful to you in the future.

**[GROUP LEADER ENDS MEETING]**





### 13. TAKE ACTION FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S HEALTH: **Phone Script**

**Call Your Member of Congress:** You can reach your member of Congress by calling the Congressional Switchboard at **(202) 224-3121**, or looking up online:

- House of Representatives Directory: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>
- Senate Directory:  
[http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

#### **Introductions:**

- **Activist:** Hello, I am with the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health and I am calling to express concerns from constituents in your district [List cities] about an issue that is really important to our communities: immigrant women's health. May I ask who I am speaking to? (Get first and last name of person on the phone)

**Activist:** Talk about why immigrant women need health care, and why Immigration Reform **MUST** include health insurance for immigrant families.

- Now that the Senate has passed its bill for Immigration Reform, we are deeply concerned that immigrant women's health has been left behind.
- Under the Senate bill for Immigration Reform (S. 744), aspiring citizens on the roadmap to citizenship would have almost **zero** options for getting affordable insurance and seeing a doctor if they get sick - **despite the fact that they'd be working and paying into health care programs the whole time**. Even after a 10-year wait to apply for a green card, these women and families would still be



subject to a 5-year mandatory delay before being able to get Medicaid and other family supports.

- That's a 15-year wait for a doctor's visit. For a woman with breast or cervical cancer, 15 years could be the difference between life and death.
- We are concerned because current laws unfairly restrict access to health care based on immigration status. Even most lawfully present immigrants are now forced to wait 5 years to access Medicaid and other important programs.
- Not having a way to access health insurance leads to poorer health outcomes and higher costs for immigrant Latinas.
- During these 15 years, immigrant women and families would be paying taxes and paying into the very health care programs they are excluded from. This is unfair, unjust, and un-American.

**Ask/Urge the staffer to pass on the following message:**

- Immigrant women and families need access to health care so that all communities could thrive. Will you support a roadmap to citizenship that ensures immigrant women and families can participate in taxpayer-supported safety net programs, including affordable health care programs?

**SHARE ACTIVIST STORY: WHY DO YOU BELIEVE THAT 15 YEARS IS TOO LONG FOR IMMIGRANT LATINAS TO WAIT FOR ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE?**

**Questions/ Wrap Up:**

- Do you have any questions or items you would like me to follow up on?
- Will the Representative/Senator support lifting restrictions on access to health care in S. 744 and ensuring that no taxpayer, regardless of immigration status, is denied access to the taxpayer-supported safety net programs, including affordable health care?
- Thank you for your time. I appreciate your time and attention to this important issue. Please let me know how I can be helpful to you in the future.



#### 14. RESOURCE GUIDE

- ☼ Immigrant women's advocates announce principles for inclusive, humane Immigration Reform  
<http://latinainstitute.org/media/releases/Immigrant-women%E2%80%99s-advocates-announce-principles-for-inclusive-humane-immigration-refo>
- ☼ White House Fact Sheet: Fixing our Broken Immigration System so Everyone Plays by the Rules  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/29/fact-sheet-fixing-our-broken-immigration-system-so-everyone-plays-rules>
- ☼ Immigrant workers' struggle spurs move towards legalization  
Current proposals for 'comprehensive immigration reform' fall short  
<http://www.answercoalition.org/national/news/immigrant-workers-struggle.html>
- ☼ Gang of 8 Blueprint for Immigration Reform  
<http://www.c-span.org/uploadedFiles/Content/Documents/Bipartisan-Framework-For-Immigration-Reform.pdf>
- ☼ No Obamacare or Safety Net While on Senate's Path to Citizenship, Colorlines Magazine  
[http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/04/no\\_healthcare\\_for\\_newly\\_legalized\\_immigrants\\_but\\_may\\_still\\_pay\\_aca\\_fines.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/04/no_healthcare_for_newly_legalized_immigrants_but_may_still_pay_aca_fines.html)



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- ☀ Invisible Immigrants: What Will Immigration Reform Mean for Migrant Women?,  
Dissent Quarterly [http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online\\_articles/immigration-without-women](http://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/immigration-without-women)
- ☀ Statement of Principles on Women and Immigration Reform  
National Coalition for Immigrant Women’s Rights  
<http://nciwr.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/nciwr-statement-of-principles-on-women-and-immigration-reform-final.pdf>

**Ways to engage and involve your community in-person and via social media**

- ☀ Creative Ways to Engage People Around Your Issue (LOLA Guidebook : 45-46)
- ☀ Organizing A Legislative Advocacy Day (LOLA Guidebook : 47)
- ☀ Using Social Media to Mobilize Your Community (LOLA Guidebook : 49)
- ☀ Media Outreach (LOLA Guidebook : 61)



# LOLA

## SECTION 2: Community Organizing & Grassroots Advocacy

### FACT SHEET

## CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE PEOPLE AROUND YOUR ISSUE

### Poetry Reading, Open Mic, or Slam!

Poetry is a great outlet for expressing your passion for an issue, or spreading a political message. You can find a local venue or coffee shop and host a reading dedicated to reproductive health and rights, or an open mic where other activists and community members can participate freely. A slam, which is a poetry competition, can also be an exciting event for activists to partake in, and you can use a slam as a fundraiser.

### Cafecitos

A cafecito is a casual coffee hour, during which you can grab time with people who are normally very busy. *Cafecitos* give busy people a chance to meet other people in their area who are also passionate about protecting reproductive rights. Schedule it first thing in the morning, at lunch, or early evening. Supply coffee and, if you can, snacks. Hold the cafecito in a quiet location where you have enough space to gather around a table. Make sure that you create an hour long agenda that is carefully timed so that the meeting does not go over time.

### Start a Book Club

Progressive books clubs are a great way to bring together activists who love to read and explore new ideas. Start with a short book and let your book club decide what they want to read next. At meetings, be sure to make announcements about local reproductive rights issues and events. Powerful books have been the inspiration behind world revolutions throughout history!

### Happy Hour

For activists who are 21 and older, talk to your favorite local bar and see if they're willing to donate a happy hour for your group to hold a fundraiser. You can even ask for a custom drink, named after your issue! People love to attend happy hours and socialize with people who care about the same issues as them—make sure you leave plenty of information on the tables and feel free to take a few moments to talk to the attendees about your cause and how they can get involved.

### Film Screening

Sometimes movies can communicate the complex reality of reproductive rights issues better than any fact sheet or newspaper article. Make sure that you introduce the movie with some local information about reproductive rights issues and your organizing efforts. You may want to follow the movie with a discussion session. Ask a few open-ended questions that give everyone an opportunity to process their own complicated feelings about reproductive justice and ideas about change.

### Examples of reproductive justice movies are:

1. If These Walls Could Talk, I & II
2. Aborto Sin Pena
3. Made in LA
4. El Crimen del Padre Amaro
5. The Abortion Diaries
6. The Business of Being Born

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

**Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice** by Jael Sillman, Marlene Gerber Fried, Loretta Ross, Elena Gutierrez

**Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women's Reproduction** by Elena Gutierrez

**Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty** by Dorothy Roberts

**Matters of Choice: Puerto Rican Women's Struggle for Reproductive Freedom** by Iris Lopez

**Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico** by Laura Briggs

**Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement** by Jennifer Nelson

**Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, non-fiction essay** by bell hooks

**Borderlands/ La Frontera: bilingual English/Spanish personal essays and poetry** by Gloria Anzaldúa

FACT SHEET

CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE PEOPLE AROUND YOUR ISSUE

Host a Concert

Know a few activist musicians? A band that's looking for a venue? Find a band and a location, and host a concert. Hosting a concert can be a fun and social way to gain visibility in your community. Have printed information available at the entrance. Be sure to make announcements before and after the concert with some basic information about reproductive rights and your community. Make sure that everyone knows how they can get involved, when the next meeting or activity will be held, and how they can contact you.

Host a Party

Who wouldn't rather attend a party than a meeting? Throw a house party and invite people who might be interested in getting involved with reproductive rights issues in your community. Be sure to give everyone information about reproductive rights and collect their contact information.

Art Shows

There are literally millions of people that would jump at an opportunity to have their art seen. If you don't already know a few creative people, look for progressive or activist art organizations or just check out your local art school. Tell local artists that the theme of your exhibit is going to be reproductive justice and give them information about the wide range of issues that would be relevant: everything from HIV/AIDS to gay rights to healthy communities to safe sex.

Next, find a location for your art show. If you do not have access to an open space, ask around at progressive restaurants, bars, and coffee shops. Make sure that each piece of art will have enough space and lighting to be really appreciated by viewers.

Throw an opening party and invite a lot of people from your neighborhood and community. At the opening, introduce the topic of the exhibit and share information about local reproductive rights issues. Make sure that each artist has an opportunity to describe what their piece is meant to convey. Have information about future meetings and events available to everyone who attends!

Table at a Community Fair

Tabling can be a great way to increase your group's visibility! You can talk to people at the fair, give out information, condoms, buttons and stickers, or even ask people to sign a petition or a postcard. There are usually a lot of community fairs happening, especially during the summer time. If you need materials—just ask NLIRH. Don't forget to have a sign-up sheet for new people!





# LOLA

## SECTION 2: Community Organizing & Grassroots Advocacy

### FACT SHEET

## ORGANIZING A LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY

The following are some basic steps to planning and carrying out an effective member visit on your issue. Note: If you are speaking about a specific piece of legislation, it is lobbying. You can lobby with certain restrictions, please see the last section of this curriculum, for *What NLIRH Can & Can't Do as a Nonprofit*.

### 1. Know Your Issue

- Everyone attending the visit should have a strong background on the issue that you are going to be discussing.
- Make sure everyone will be asking for the same thing (i.e. support or opposition for a particular piece of legislation or regulation, and/or introduction of a new bill or policy).

### 2. Identify Your Target Offices

- You should meet with offices that represent your district because legislators listen more closely to their own constituents!
- You should make a list of legislators that would be good targets (i.e. because of their interest in your issue or because they sit on a relevant committee, etc.).

### 3. Schedule Your Visits

- Call the office of the legislator you want to meet with and tell them that you would like to schedule a visit to meet with a staffer or the legislator on your issue.
- Be persistent about scheduling a meeting and don't be discouraged if you have to call a few times.

### 4. Develop Talking Points

- Develop a set of points that you will bring up at the meeting.
- Use your talking points to explain your issue in a way that is easy to understand and to make your position on the issue clear.
- You must be prepared to talk about why this issue is important to you and what you want the legislator to do about it.
- Find specific real life examples to illustrate your points.

### 5. Plan Your Meeting

- The meeting will last anywhere from 10 minutes to one hour, although you will most likely only have ½ hour with the staffer/legislator.
- Create a plan for who will talk about what and when so that you are prepared to present your issue in the most effective way.
- The legislator/staffer will have questions so be prepared. If you don't know the answers, DO NOT guess or give incorrect ones. Tell them that you will get the answer and get back to them.
- If possible, bring handouts on your issue to the meeting to give to the staffers/legislators.

### 6. Stay Focused on Your Issue During the Visit

- If the meeting starts to go in a different direction, try to bring the discussion back to your issue.

### 7. Don't Argue with the Staffer/Legislator

- Sometimes legislators and/or staffers have positions that differ from yours, but you should NEVER argue with a staffer/legislator.

### 8. Take Notes

- Assign someone in the group to take notes during the meeting.
- Be sure to write down the names of everyone you met with and the name of the legislator.
- Plan to share the notes with others in the group after the meeting.

### 9. Follow-up with the Elected Official's Office

- Send a thank you note and any information you promised to provide the staffers/legislators.



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## SECTION 2: Community Organizing & Grassroots Advocacy

### FACT SHEET

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO MOBILIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

Social media networks have revolutionized the way we interact and connect as people. Changes in our daily vernacular and socializing methods have been infiltrated by how social media networks run. Examples can vary from creating online campaigns to documenting community experiences through video for the world to see. Social media has permanently altered the way we communicate. It is important to be abreast of all the different ways we can use social media to help further our vision of reproductive justice, allowing us to stay connected and stay relevant to new methods for mobilizing our communities. Here are a few examples of social media networks and their usage in community organizing:

### **FACEBOOK** [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Facebook is an online social networking site that has grown from being a college student only social network to an international social network for everyone. If Facebook were to be a country it would have the 4th highest population in the world. Consequently, because of its high growth rates, it has become one of the prime ways activists around the world have begun to organize and mobilize their communities through the many tools this website has to offer, such as event planning, fundraising for causes, networking and base building, and interactive fan pages.

### **TWITTER** [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as *followers*. This can be used to develop an extensive social network for reproductive justice and can be a vehicle of education for your constituency. People have used Twitter to promote their cause, to fundraise, or to increase their membership. Twitter has

its advantages by providing a space for short and quick updates and being a simple tool to help educate, communicate, and stay in touch with your membership.

### **YOUTUBE** [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share, and view videos. YouTube can be used as an educational tool to document the work that you are doing in your community. Video sharing is a creative and innovative way to demonstrate to your community and representatives the type of work that you do on the ground.

### **BLOG** [www.blog.com](http://www.blog.com)

A blog is a website, organized by short entries in reverse chronological order (newest one first). The format usually enables commenting and uses hyperlinks as references. The content varies, but most often is comprised of short articles commenting on what is going on in the news from a particular perspective. Some ways that you can use blogs to organize and mobilize your community are: to connect with constituents online, advertise events, raise money, and mobilize readers to take action.





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## SECTION 3: Communicating for Health, Dignity, & Justice

### FACT SHEET

## MEDIA OUTREACH

### Press Releases

If you're planning an event around your issue, a press release is an easy way to alert the media and draw attention to the event you've spent time planning. Use a catchy headline, include quotes, and incorporate your message as clearly and succinctly as possible. You can also use quotes from community activists or members that include soundbites you have already developed. Once your press release is done, send it out via email or fax to local newspapers, radio and TV outlets. Don't forget to include independent, multi-lingual, and student press!

### Use Your Local Media

Local newspapers, magazines, newsletters, e-news, radio, and television can be your allies! Often, local publications are looking for help with articles and ideas for stories. Keep them informed about your events. Write editorials, submit advertisements, and make announcements. Respond to biased reporting! Do not let your local news source get away with covering only half of a story or taking obviously partial stances on reproductive rights issues. Keep an eye out for politicized stories about reproductive rights and write letters to the editor reminding them of their responsibility to the community to publish fair articles!

### Hit the Streets

Hitting the streets might be the best way to reach out to people in your neighborhood! Develop a flashy and informative flyer with contact information and pass it out. Flyer door to door, set up a table on a busy corner or at street fairs, cover kiosks, and

pass out information at activist events. Don't be shy! You will find that a lot of people are also concerned about reproductive justice issues, and just did not know what to do about it. Be open to answering questions and make sure that you are armed with information about the next local action, meeting, or event.

### Guerilla Advertising

Guerilla advertising is a creative way to get information to people in ways that they are not expecting. Think about ways to grab people's attention during their typical everyday activities.

### EXAMPLE

Print stickers with reproductive rights facts and information. Put stickers on coffee cups, napkins, bar coasters, plastic bags, and ketchup packets. Give these products for free to local diners, coffee shops, and restaurants. While some businesses will be eager to promote reproductive rights issues, others will just be glad to save money on free products.

### Stenciling & Chalking

Take your issue to the streets, literally! Street stenciling or chalking is an inexpensive, low-tech way to spread your word to tons of people, even the ones who won't take your flyers or may not have time to attend a meeting. Pick a low-traffic time of day or night, grab some friends, and write on the sidewalks! Try and keep your message short and easy to read, such as "Health Insurance for ALL!—[www.covertheuninsured.org](http://www.covertheuninsured.org)".