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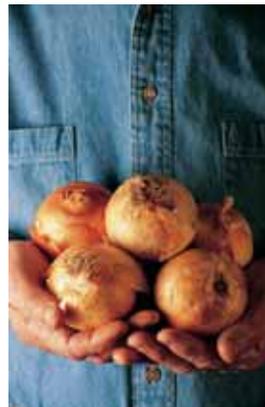
CONTROLLING THE DIABETIC EPIDEMIC

Diabetes is an epidemic. We hear it all the time: Latinos disproportionately effected by a disease that feeds off low-incomes and lack of mobility. Campaigns have been initiated to urge prevention, awareness and control. But is there more local leaders can do to help Latinos and others at risk take charge of their health?

The correlation between higher levels of diabetes among Latinos and the lack of 'green space' seems anything but coincidental. Considering that on average in California there are 0.6 acres of park lands per one thousand Latinos, compared with 33 acres per one thousand Caucasians, it is no wonder that Latinos are twice as likely to develop diabetes. Coupled with infrastructures that restrict opportunities for safe outdoor activity for adults, and particularly youth, the result is a massive population of Californians at a disadvantage in taking control of this life-threatening disease.

But diabetes is a self-determined disease, isn't it? All one has to do to prevent it is maintain an active lifestyle and healthy diet. Easy when you have a car, can afford fresh and organic produce, and have time to prepare wholesome meals from scratch. But for the

millions of low-income Californians, many of whom are Latino, getting to a grocery store with quality fruits and vegetables is a feat on its own. Neighborhood markets typically charge high prices and lack fresh ingredients, leaving many without adequate options for health. Proposed solutions set forth by health organizations nationwide, including the California Latino 5-A-Day Campaign, emphasize



action at the local level in organizing farmers' markets, renovation of neighborhood grocers' produce sections, and improving city infrastructure to provide safer and easier access to park facilities and walking paths.

The future of our children is at stake. Currently, California is phasing in the High School Exit Exam. Its effects highlight not only a growing trend in academics, but also in the health of our youth. Schools are continually dropping

courses of interest, including physical education, for test-preparation classes. This is not new: school districts have been cutting recess time for grade-school children, eliminating sports programs and slashing physical education requirements for years. At the same time, rates of childhood obesity and juvenile diabetes have risen to alarming levels. Nearly forty percent of the state's students are considered unfit and one in three children are overweight. It is time to create solutions for ourselves as Latinos that will ultimately benefit the health of all Californians.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUMMER CONFERENCE & 4TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC
JULY 26-27, 2006 ~ MONTEREY

ANNUAL CONFERENCE & 16TH ANNUAL AWARD RECEPTION
SEPTEMBER 6-9, 2006 ~ SAN DIEGO

REGIONAL NETWORKING RECEPTION
DATE TBA ~ SOUTH EL MONTE

REGIONAL NETWORKING RECEPTION
DATE TBA ~ FRESNO



The Latino Caucus of the League of California Cities serves as a leader to improve the quality of life, advocate on behalf of the Latino community, and provide, promote and develop leadership. The Latino Caucus is an effective voice in the development of public policy affecting our cities, constituents, and all of California.

LEGISLATIVE SPOTLIGHT:

Assembly Member Joe Coto

As Vice Chair of the Legislative Latino Caucus, how can the League of California Cities-Latino Caucus work more closely with you on Legislative issues?

Mr. Coto is a true believer of building relationships and also is aware of the challenges of bringing together hundreds of California organizations that are dedicated to the future of Latinos to broker maximum impact. Since the League of California Cities share the same vision as the Latino Caucus which is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to a good education, affordable health care for all, home ownership opportunities for all families then we should always collaborate and work closely on these issues. Ultimately, what is good for the Latino community is good for California and this should be the basis for our motivation and leadership.

Since being elected into the Legislature and serving in various education-based Assembly Committees, what has been your role in improving California's educational system?

Mr. Coto services on the Assembly Education Committee and Subcommittee #2 of the Budget Committee (which deals with education issues). On these Committees Mr. Coto serves as a strong, consistent and knowledgeable voice about the issues of education in California.

For Mr. Coto, the education of all youth is California's number one infra-structure issue. Without a knowledgeable, successful and skilled workforce, California will not be able to continue as an economic dynamo in the world economy. He has special concern for English Learners (a quarter of our students) and those Brown and Black students who are consistent losers in the achievement gap.

The Latino Caucus, Mr. Coto is vice chair, has made education its number one issue, and supports education bills by many of the twenty-seven Members of the Caucus.

This past spring, Mr. Coto facilitated the English Learner Work Group of the Education Committee. Their work resulted in some of the Education Committee's first ever

bipartisan agreements about major policy issues for English Learners. These include:

- State-wide language acquisition professional development for all of California's teachers
- A three-year 50,000 student pilot project to identify best practices in teaching and learning for English learner students.
- Support for English learners continued success after they exit English language development programs
- Supplementary instructional materials at appropriate reading levels for students not yet fluent in English

Ultimately, what is good for the Latino community is good for California and this should be the basis for our motivation and leadership.

The legislation Mr. Coto has introduced in his two years in the Legislature has focused on educational issues. Among the bills have been:

- AB 9 (Increasing funding for education to among the top five states in the US)
- AB 897 (Math Standards for the Visually Impaired)
- AB 953 (Support for Low Performing Schools)
- AB 1253 and AB 1896 (Enrolling all California high school students in courses to prepare them for college)
- AB 2046 (Full-Day Kindergarten)
- AB 2248 (Extension of the Reading First Program)
- AB 2654 (Ability of Schools to raise extra revenues through sale of surplus textbooks)

What can local leaders do to improve children's health and educational performance in California?

Be strong advocates for services aimed at improving children's health and education. Make sure that your local government is taking advantage of all federal and state resources aimed at children's health and education. Have your local entity endorse proposed state and federal legislation aimed at improving these areas.

The Latino Caucus Newsletter strives to provide a forum for communication among members. If you would like to include an announcement in an upcoming issue, please contact us at CallatinoCaucus@aol.com



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: NORA CAMPOS, SAN JOSE

On Monday, May 1, 2006, many groups nationwide stood in support of immigrants during an event known as "Un Dia sin Inmigrantes" or "A Day without Immigrants." In honor of the spirit of protest, many immigrant businesses and members of the work force removed themselves from the economy of the United States for one day to show their impact on the success of this county. I closed my office on this day as a symbolic gesture alongside all immigrants in the effort to fight bigotry and hateful

legislation.

But it's more than just the current legislation and debate surrounding immigration today. It is our history, it is the contributions that our families have made, and the actions that have changed our individual lives. These same actions that have helped to shape this strong nation throughout history, a nation that has not always seen immigrants as equals. Its about presenting a viewpoint that oftentimes is pushed aside, and giving a voice to the people who go without representation during the rest of the year.

The many positive impacts of immigration can be seen throughout the country, with the economic effects nearly impossible to ignore. Without the contribution of immigrant labor, the output of goods and services in the U.S. would be at least \$1 Trillion smaller than it is today. Immigrants come to this country for better employment opportunities and would prefer to do so legally. However, the limited immigration system does not allow undocumented immigrants to simply apply for a visa. With proposed changes in legislation, and the voice of immigrants being heard, we can work towards correcting the stigma against immigrants to create reform that allows them to be seen as contributing members of our society.

The Gas Company and San Diego Gas & Electric Offers Bill-Payment Assistance for Income-Qualified Customers

For about two decades, Southern California Gas Co. (The Gas Company) and San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) have offered programs that benefit customers and the community by assisting income-qualified households with discounted energy rates.

CARE program: Among the several assistance programs available from the utilities' is the state-sponsored California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program, which offers a 20 percent monthly discount on natural gas bills for income-qualified households.

"We have an ongoing commitment to making sure that every eligible customer is enrolled in CARE and benefits from the 20-percent savings on their natural gas bills," said Michelle Mueller, vice president customer services, for SDG&E and The Gas Company. "We have partnered with community groups throughout our service region to make sure customers, who qualify, regardless of where they live, are aware of the CARE program and are encouraged to enroll as soon as possible."

Other customer-assistance programs: SoCalGas and SDG&E offer a wide variety of residential programs offering bill-payment assistance, appliance and home improvement rebates, and energy audits to help customers save money and energy.

Learn more

To apply, customers can learn more about CARE and the other assistance programs for customers visit the SoCalGas Web site at www.socalgas.com or the SDG&E Web site at www.sdge.com.



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SAVE THE DATE

Summer Conference & 5th Annual Golf Classic July 26-27, 2006, Monterey

5TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC
July 26 @ 11:00am
Rancho Canada Golf Course, Carmel

FORUM Being Street Smart on Ethics
July 27 @ 3:45-5:00pm
Monterey Convention Center

For More Information:
(916) 669-1343
www.cacities.org
Keyword:
Latino Caucus



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: JOHN E. ARRIAGA



This June, the Latino Caucus hosted a groundbreaking Housing Summit in Los Angeles with a group of local elected officials and members of the development community from around Southern California. This two-day intensive session shed light into current trends in the housing market, urbanization and home ownership among Latinos. The Summit kicked off with a fabulous dinner and networking opportunities at the Getty Center on Friday, and Saturday sessions began with a collaborative discussion of the importance of establishing open communication between cities and developers so they can serve each others' needs. The remainder of the sessions put city officials in the shoes of developers so they are in a better position to complete a development project in their communities. We look forward to expanding this Housing Summit venue into Central and Northern California regions.



BECOME A MEMBER!

JOIN TODAY AND EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS!

- \$100.00 Elected Official
- \$150.00 Associate (Municipal & nonprofit staff)
- \$500.00 Small Business (25 employees or less)
- \$1,000.00 Corporate Affiliate

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League of California Cities
-Latino Caucus
770 L Street, Suite 1030
Sacramento, CA 95814

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