

The National Council of La Raza became a national organization in 1972. NCLR has grown and evolved over the course of its history to become the most authoritative voice on Hispanic issues today. Latinos are strengthened through participation in NCLR and in the political process through its various civic engagement projects. NCLR also works to strengthen emerging community-based organizations in areas where there is a growing Latino population.

Now in its 44th year, NCLR is busy building communities as an industry leader in homeownership counseling, operating programs in 40 sites throughout the country. Its Charter School Development Initiative has helped create more than 40 new schools and strengthen more than 45 others, and its Institute for Hispanic Health develops and implements health education and prevention programs and conducts health advocacy activities in partnership with its network of affiliates.

NCLR's education component is dedicated to increasing educational opportunities, improving achievement, supporting college-readiness, and promoting equity in outcomes for Latinos. The efforts of the education team build the capacity and strengthen the quality of the community-based education sector and inform the broader public education system.

NCLR's economic and workforce advocacy seeks to ensure the Latino community's ability to contribute to and share in the nation's economic opportunities by promoting policies that boost Hispanic employment in good jobs, provide safe and fair workplaces, bridge Latino workers' education and skills gaps, and offer a secure retirement.

With the Raza Development Fund, NCLR's community development lending arm is one of the nation's largest and most successful community development banks. It has approved more than 117 loans totaling \$54.6 million, leveraging more than \$267 million in financing to community-based housing projects, schools, health clinics, and day care centers.

More recently, in efforts to provide NCLR's affiliates with more direct access to elected officials in Washington, DC, earlier this year NCLR held its first annual NCLR National Advocacy Day. The event convened affiliate members from 22 states who were briefed on the most important issues facing Latinos at the national level, including education, economic mobility, health, and immigration, and who met with Members of Congress to educate them about the needs of the community.

As the Representative for Nevada's First Congressional District, it gives me immense pride to recognize the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the role they play in educating and training our community members, developing community leaders and fighting for equal rights and fair representation throughout the United States. I am especially pleased to welcome NCLR's members and the tens of thousands of attendees for its 2012 annual conference to Las Vegas, Nevada. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the great work of NCLR and wish them a most successful 2012 conference.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TAXPAYER
BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2012

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I have introduced the Taxpayer Bill of Rights every Congress since 2008, and today I am proud to introduce the Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2012, legislation that contains important provisions to improve services for and protect the rights of American taxpayers, particularly those with modest incomes. Senator Bingaman of New Mexico, a dedicated advocate for taxpayer rights, is introducing companion legislation in the Senate. Many of these provisions are based on proposals from the National Taxpayer Advocate, Nina Olson, who has long been a champion of improving taxpayer services and tax administration at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

As former Nixon Treasury Secretary William Simon said, "The nation should have a tax system that looks like someone designed it on purpose." As we look for ways to restructure the tax code to make it fairer and more transparent for all taxpayers, it is critical that ideas to help improve IRS service and accessibility are included in this conversation. Every year, millions of taxpayers file their returns with the IRS and inevitably issues of tax administration come to the forefront. These issues range from taxpayers not knowing their legal rights when interacting with the IRS, to taxpayers enlisting unscrupulous or poorly-trained preparers to help them complete one of their most important financial transactions of the year. This legislation aims to help prevent taxpayers from finding themselves in these avoidable situations, and to build on and improve taxpayer services provided through the IRS.

The centerpiece of this Act is the requirement that Treasury publish a Taxpayer Bill of Rights. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights will be a simple and straightforward statement that enumerates all taxpayers' rights and obligations, as well as reference their location in the tax code. As the National Taxpayer Advocate explained in her 2011 Report to Congress: "In a time when the IRS will feel pressure to bring in additional tax revenue, it is crucial to provide taxpayers with strong protection for their rights." Currently, these rights and obligations are scattered throughout the tax code and Internal Revenue Manual, making them neither accessible nor written in plain language that most taxpayers can understand.

This Act also helps improve the quality and accessibility of tax preparation services and advice available to taxpayers in several different ways. First, it builds on the IRS's initiative to regulate unenrolled tax preparers through examination and continuing education requirements, for which I have been a long time advocate. Implementation of the IRS tax return preparer framework is well underway, and this legislation will simply codify the existing authority of the IRS to regulate tax return preparers. The Act also helps ensure moderate income taxpayers have access to qualified tax assistance by supporting a grant program for free income tax assistance services, and by allowing IRS referrals to Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics, which provide representation to modest income taxpayers in their disputes

with the IRS. The Act also provides for oversight over facilitators of high cost tax refund anticipation loans and other tax refund delivery products, and significantly increases penalties on preparers of fraudulent tax returns.

Finally, this bill includes several provisions that would improve IRS taxpayer services. One important provision provides greater protections for taxpayers when they are faced with a Notice of a Federal Tax Lien filing (NFTL). Filing of an NFTL can result in significant, long-term hardship to a taxpayer, and may adversely affect the taxpayer's credit, thus impairing his or her ability to conduct financial transactions or secure employment. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act requires the IRS to make individualized determinations before the filing of an NFTL, and also requires consideration of hardship factors and a taxpayer's history of compliance before these determinations are made.

Many of the problems identified in this bill have gone unaddressed for too long, causing confusion and undue hardship for taxpayers across the country. I encourage all of my colleagues to support these common sense provisions to promote taxpayer rights and services for all Americans.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL
DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,778,950,543,472.67. We've added \$5,152,073,494,559.59 to our debt in just over 3 years. This is debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

On this day in 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed in Paris, ending World War I. Without a balanced budget, the United States will no longer be able to bring peace to warring nations.

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED
WAY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 125th Anniversary of United Way.

Founded in 1887, United Way has become a celebrated organization committed to improving communities throughout the United States and around the world. Through locally targeted initiatives, United Way strives to advance the common good, helping communities reach their full potential in the spirit of volunteerism and service. United Way mobilizes thousands of individuals and organizations worldwide to improve education, help people achieve financial stability and promote healthy lifestyles in their communities, building the foundation for a stronger, healthier society.