

La Raza's Growing Influence

Gaining clout and tax dollars in all branches of government

By Barbara Joanna Lucas

Summary: *President Obama's stunning reversal of his own views on deportation policy is only the most prominent example of influence enjoyed by the National Council of La Raza, which calls itself "the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States." In addition to its sway with the president, the group has seen its government revenues rise with help from a high-level White House staffer and also seen a former member be named to the Supreme Court.*

Before President Barack Obama told a primetime TV audience on Nov. 20, 2014, that he was going to bypass Congress and shield 5 million illegal aliens from deportation, he confided the details of his sweeping plan to Janet Murguía, president and CEO of the National Council of La Raza. "I knew a lot of what he was going to say before he said it," Murguía bragged in a C-SPAN interview on Dec. 5. "I met with the president that day, that afternoon."

It's hardly a surprise that Obama's address to the nation sounded like something a La Raza staffer might have written, full of emotional appeals and framing the enforcement of immigration law as an inherent cruelty. "Are we a nation that accepts the cruelty of ripping children from their parents' arms?



Cecilia Muñoz, a former vice president of the National Council of La Raza, is now President Obama's White House domestic policy director.

Or are we a nation that values families, and works to keep them together?" Obama said in the speech.

Obama added that the Department of Homeland Security would focus on recent illegal border crossers, criminals, terrorists, and gang members. "Felons, not families, criminals, not children, gang members, not a mother who's working hard to provide for her kids," would be targeted, he said.

La Raza demanded that Obama "go big" in his executive actions on immigration because the president had been unable in

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previous years to push a comprehensive immigration reform bill—which critics deride as “amnesty”—through Congress. Obama went big indeed. In addition to focusing on criminals facing deportation, he expanded the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, raising the age cap to 31 in order to include anyone who came to the United States from 2007 through 2009.

Less than a year before announcing these actions, hecklers at a San Francisco rally demanded that Obama take similar executive actions to stop deportations. “You have the power to end [deportation],” a heckler told Obama on Nov. 25, 2013.

Obama responded, “Actually I don’t,” as other audience members chanted “stop deportations.” Obama added, “I respect the passion of these young people because they feel deeply about the concerns for their families. Now what you need to know, when I’m speaking as President of the United States, and I come to this community, is that if in fact I could solve all these problems without passing laws in Congress, then I would do so.”

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This means that a year before the president unveiled his unilateral immigration plan, he recognized that the Constitution purportedly created a pesky separation of powers and that Congress serves in more than an advisory role in American governance. So what happened in the intervening year?

La Raza happened.

The Rise of La Raza

The National Council of La Raza was founded in the stormy days of 1968 and has one of the most questionable names in the political realm. La Raza can be translated as “The Race.” (NCLR disputes this translation, saying it is more properly translated as “the people.”) It has gone from a fringe organization that many would view as outright racist to a leading voice on policymaking, influential in the Obama administration and corporate America. It has used this clout to claim it speaks for all Hispanic Americans. But that’s not always the case. The politically connected organization claims 300 affiliates in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Headquartered in the nation’s capital, it has state and regional offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Phoenix, and San Antonio, Texas.

La Raza has pushed for immigration amnesty, opposed workplace enforcement, and fought against even the most basic voter integrity and national security proposals. (La Raza was previously profiled in the December 2007 *Foundation Watch*.)

President Obama, a longtime ally of La Raza, has been taking friendly fire from the group of late, but the drama is left-wing kabuki theater. As President Franklin Roosevelt told his left-wing allies after winning the election in 1932, “I agree with you, I want to do it, now make me do it.”

That’s what La Raza is doing.

A year ago Murguía seemed to turn against

the president. “For the president, I think his legacy is at stake here,” Murguía said. “We consider him the deportation president, or the deporter-in-chief” (*Politico*, March 4, 2014).

“Deporter-in-chief” was an epithet hurled at Obama by amnesty activists throughout the year. The Obama administration frequently touted the speedy clip of enforcement action since 2009, and so the slogan was calculated to shame the president into slowing the pace. But it wasn’t true. Deportations have actually fallen under Obama. The administration has manipulated the numbers by changing the definition of “deportation.”

“We respectfully disagree with the president on his ability to stop unnecessary deportations,” Murguía continued. “He can stop tearing families apart. He can stop throwing communities and businesses into chaos. He can stop turning a blind eye to the harm being done. He does have the power to stop this. Failure to act will be a shameful legacy for his presidency.”

After Obama unveiled his executive action, Murguía decided to walk back the “deporter-in-chief” phrase. “When we had seen the deportations, the number of deportations hit two million—a historic high and much higher than the previous administration under George Bush—there was a lot of frustration and anger in our community, but I actually used that term to really highlight how off-based Speaker [John] Boehner was when he said that the reason he couldn’t move a bill forward on comprehensive immigration reform is because he couldn’t trust President Obama to enforce the laws when in fact, and the fact is, at least two million people have been deported in this fifth year of the Obama presidency,” she said.

Brian Bennett of the *Los Angeles Times* debunked the left-wing claim that Obama is keen on deporting illegal aliens in an April 1, 2014 article:

“Expulsions of people who are settled and working in the United States have fallen steadily since his first year in office, and are down more than 40% since 2009. On the other side of the ledger, the number of people deported at or near the border has gone up – primarily as a result of changing who gets counted in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency’s deportation statistics. The vast majority of those borders crossers would not have been treated as formal deportations under most previous administrations. If all removals were tallied, the total sent back to Mexico each year would have been far higher under those previous administrations than it is now.”

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) publishes an annual Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. Jessica Vaughn of the nonpartisan Center for Immigration Studies wrote in a December 2013 report that “because the Obama administration has blurred the lines of which agencies can take credit for deportations, the only fair way to assess their performance is to count all deportations done by all the DHS agencies.” The DHS Yearbook showed at the time that Bill Clinton’s administration holds the record for deportations. In the Clinton years, an average of 1,536,363 deportations were carried out.

Vaughn writes that “the total number of aliens ‘sent back’ under [the] first four years of the Obama administration is just over 3.2 million.” This represents an annual average of 800,863 deportations. During the presidency of George W. Bush, there were a total of 10,328,850 deportations, which works out to an average of 1,291,106 deportations per year.

Obama is clearly not hellbent on deporting illegal aliens, but the imagery is politically useful, which is why La Raza and its allies promote it.

Murguía herself was long active in Democratic politics before becoming head of La Raza in 2005. She worked in Bill Clinton’s White House, eventually serving as deputy assistant to the president. Murguía went on to be the deputy campaign manager and director of constituency outreach for the Al Gore presidential campaign in 2000.

From there, she became vice chancellor for university relations at the University of Kansas in 2001. She was an activist in 2004 against the voter-approved Proposition 200 in Arizona, which required residents to prove citizenship before registering to vote or legal immigration status before applying for public benefits.

Murguía does well for herself at La Raza. Her salary alone was \$330,513 for the year ended Sept. 30, 2013, and she also received an additional \$81,112 in other compensation from La Raza and its related entities. That lands Murguía well into the ranks of the much-maligned 1 percent.

Under her tenure at La Raza, the organization has advocated for speech restrictions. The organization led a campaign in 2008 against advocates of immigration law enforcement, urging that they be taken off of cable TV news networks. A “We Can Stop the Hate” campaign was initiated by La Raza, Center for American Progress, Media Matters, and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). It targeted amnesty opponents, who were described as “hate groups, nativists, and vigilantes” (Discover the Networks).

Borrowing a page from Marxist theoretician Herbert Marcuse, Murguía has also “argued that hate speech should not be tolerated, even if such censorship were a violation of First Amendment rights,” according to a *New York Times* report of a speech she gave at the National Press Club (Feb. 1, 2008).

Murguía hopes to continue to have the same sway with the next president, and expects Obama’s executive actions to continue in force. “I believe that the next president of the United States will have to come right through the Latino community to get to the White House, and they have to be very thoughtful of how they position themselves on immigration, and I think they have to stay away from this executive order and not try to undo it if they want to be president,” Murguía said during the December C-SPAN interview.

The historic Republican victory in 2014 congressional elections came without the GOP taking any clearly discernible position on comprehensive immigration reform. Still, Murguía said the party wouldn’t win the presidency without supporting amnesty, claiming that in 2016, “the demographics of the Electoral College will come home to roost for Republicans.”

“If they continue on this trajectory, Republicans will have elected their last president for the foreseeable future. Latino voter priorities must be reflected in Republican policy priorities,” Murguía said (Breitbart, Nov. 6, 2014).

Murguía cited the questionable Latino Decisions poll after the 2014 election that said immigration was the top issue with 45 percent of Hispanic voters, ahead of the economy, which registered just 34 percent.

“This is a call to action for both parties,” Murguía said after the Republican tsunami. “We fully expect the president to act boldly, but that action should spur Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform at long last. It’s not an either/or situation. For the good of the nation, we need both the president and Congress to act now. Latinos will expect the GOP to use its majority position to not only make inroads with our community

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but, most importantly, do what's in the best interest of our country." (TheBlaze, Nov. 11, 2014)

La Raza takes part in sophisticated get-out-the-vote operations. Part of that voter-mobilization has come through the "ya es hora ¡VE Y VOTA!" ("It's Time, Go Vote!") project, which describes itself as "an historic non-partisan Latino civic participation campaign launched as the Latino community's action-oriented follow-up to the immigrant mobilizations of 2006. The campaign represents the largest and most comprehensive effort to incorporate Latinos as full participants in the American political process. Unlike past approaches which focused on one component of civic engagement, this multi-layered campaign takes a comprehensive approach that links naturalization to voter participation and Census enumeration under a single message: 'it's time.'"

This project is the child of multiple "national Latino organizations including Mi Familia Vota, the NALEO [National Association of Latino Elected and appointed Officials] Educational Fund, the National Council of La Raza and Spanish language media companies Entravision Communications, ImpreMedia and Univision Communications."

In January 2014, La Raza teamed with the Mi Familia Vota Education Fund for the "Mobilize to Vote 2014" campaign. The goal was to register more than 250,000 new Hispanic voters by mail for that year's midterm elections. The effort involved three targets: 18-year-olds, registered voters who moved, and the broader Hispanic voting-age public in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Florida, and California (Discover the Networks).

As it turned out, this didn't help Democrats stay in power. In many cases, Republicans did well with Latino voters. But La Raza's

influence lies in bending policymakers on Capitol Hill and—especially—the White House.

Capital Research Center reached out to National Council of La Raza providing the group opportunities to respond to this article. At press time no response had been received.

Conservatives may not be enthusiastic about La Raza's political activities, but supporters say it does perform some good works. In a July 23, 2013 speech at La Raza's annual conference, First Lady Michelle Obama called La Raza a "great American organization" that for more than four decades "has served as a powerful voice on the most important issues of our time -- from voting rights to health care, from education to immigration. Because of all of you, your steadfast work, we have seen such great progress for the Latino community and for our country."

NCLR boasts that it "conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas -- assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its Affiliates who work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families."

Finances and Organizational Structure

The National Council of La Raza, which has about 165 employees, is extremely well off, according to data provided in its 2013 annual report. The group, a 501(c)(3) "public charity," disclosed net assets of \$109,269,832 as of Sept. 30, 2013. It reported total expenses of \$44,589,483.

NCLR also maintains at least one separate related nonprofit entity, the Strategic Investment Fund for La Raza Inc. It is also a

501(c)(3) and serves essentially as La Raza's piggybank, reporting \$31,944,200 of "funds held in trust" for its parent group at Sept. 30, 2013. Its purpose, according to its IRS filings, is "to support the charitable and educational activities of National Council of La Raza, to engage in any and all activities necessary or appropriate to raise funds for the purposes of the organization...."

National Council of La Raza receives tremendous support from the usual suspects in left-wing philanthropy. Major donors include Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (\$29,367,869 since 2003); Ford Foundation (\$18,745,600 since 1999); Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp. (\$9,098,857 since 2008); W.K. Kellogg Foundation (\$7,838,113 since 2002); Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (\$6,076,000 since 1999); John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (\$4,920,000 since 1999); George Soros's Foundation to Promote Open Society (\$2,562,500 since 2009) and Open Society Institute (\$2,487,331 since 1999); and Carnegie Corp. of New York (\$1,425,081 since 2002). It has also enjoyed \$5,472,379 in support from the Walton Family Foundation since 2001.

La Raza receives considerable support from corporate philanthropies as well. Among them are Pepsico Foundation (\$12,021,107 since 2001); Bank of America Charitable Foundation (\$8,416,200 since 2004); UPS Foundation (\$6,587,296 since 2004); Walmart Foundation (\$3,700,000 since 2010); Verizon Foundation (\$2,925,000 since 2001); General Motors Foundation (\$2,240,000 since 2004); Comcast Foundation (\$1,845,000 since 2007); Citi Foundation (\$900,000 since 2001); and Wells Fargo Foundation (\$750,000 since 2011). These funds come from corporate foundations that are legally separate from the businesses themselves. No doubt considerable sums are given, without any required disclosure, directly from major corporations.

In fact, La Raza has so much money, it doles out mountains of it to like-minded and affiliated groups. Since 2005, it has given \$3,019,750 to the Raza Development Fund in Phoenix, Ariz. The fund is a CDFI, or Community Development Financial Institution. It describes its mission as creating “financing solutions that increase opportunities for the Latino community and low-income families in the areas of affordable housing, education and health care.”

Since 2003, La Raza has given \$1,650,540 to Instituto del Progreso Latino in Chicago, Ill. The group says its mission is “to contribute to the fullest development of Latino immigrants and their families through education, training and employment that fosters full participation in the changing United States society while preserving cultural identity and dignity.”

The Youth Policy Institute of Los Angeles, Calif., has taken in \$570,064 from La Raza since 2008. The group says it “transforms Los Angeles neighborhoods using a holistic approach to reduce poverty by ensuring families have access to high quality schools, wrap-around education and technology services, enabling a successful transition from cradle to college and career.”

Since 2007, La Raza has given \$1,048,597 to Association House of Chicago. The organization runs a community center in the Windy City.

La Raza leadership includes a board of directors with 21 members. None are particularly well known; they are a mixture of businessmen, nonprofit executives, and activists. The group says the directors are “representative of all geographic regions of the United States and all Hispanic subgroups.” The chair is Jorge A. Plasencia, chairman and CEO of República, a public relations agency based in Miami.

La Raza also has a Corporate Board of Advisors made up of senior executives from some of the nation’s largest corporations. “This passionate group of leaders meets twice per year to review NCLR’s accomplishments and initiatives, discuss issues affecting both the Latino and corporate communities, and establish areas for mutual collaboration,” according to La Raza’s 2013 annual report.

Executives on this board hail from AT&T, Bank of America, Chevron, Citi, Coca-Cola, Comcast, ConAgra Foods, Ford, General Mills, General Motors, Johnson & Johnson, Kraft Foods, McDonald’s, MillerCoors, PepsiCo, Prudential, Shell, State Farm Insurance Companies, Time Warner Inc., Toyota, UPS, Verizon, Walmart, and Wells Fargo.

The Muñoz Factor

No matter who the next president is, it’s unlikely the organization will enjoy the same clout with the White House as it has under the Obama administration. The reason is what the government watchdog group Judicial Watch calls the “Muñoz factor.”

Muñoz refers to Cecilia Muñoz, a former vice president of La Raza who is now Obama’s White House domestic policy director. (Her official title is “Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council.”) The *New York Times* referred to her as a “fiery immigration rights lobbyist” who in 1997 was furious when Clinton White House staff twice asked her if she was an American citizen.

Muñoz, who won a MacArthur Foundation fellowship (also known as the MacArthur “genius” awards) in 2000 for her work on immigration and civil rights, is a longtime community activist. She previously chaired the board of the Center for Community Change, and served on the U.S. Programs Board of George Soros’s Open Society Institute (for more on the Center for Com-

munity Change, see *Organization Trends*, September 2013). She was also on the board of directors of the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Soros-funded National Immigration Forum, according to her biography posted on the White House website.

Now she is one of the most powerful voices in the White House.

As an activist, she said there should be another amnesty just four years after the 1987 amnesty in a report she wrote for La Raza. Her report also called for ending all workplace enforcement aimed at illegal immigrants (*The Hill*, Dec. 11, 2014).

While serving in the Obama White House, she minimized the seriousness of illegal immigration. “If you were running the police department of any urban area in this country, you would spend more resources going after serious criminals than after jaywalkers. DHS (the Department of Homeland Security) is doing the immigration equivalent of the same thing,” Muñoz told the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute conference in September 2011 (*CNSNews.com*, Sept. 14, 2011).

When the Obama White House asked her to come on board, she turned them down, feeling she was an activist not a policymaker. But then Obama made a personal call.

“He said that he wasn’t taking no for an answer, that he intended to make this as family-friendly a place as it could be, and that he wanted me to help change the country,” Muñoz said. After the 2012 election, Muñoz said she is glad she joined the White House staff because “the Latino community has gone from being invisible in this town to being not only visible but clear agents of change driving the country forward.” Muñoz added, “People feel empowered” (*New York Times*, May 3, 2013).

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La Raza also has reason to be happy she took the job. In 2011, a Judicial Watch investigation found federal funding for the National Council of La Raza and its affiliate groups skyrocketed after Muñoz joined the Obama White House staff.

Muñoz joined in 2009 as deputy assistant to the president and director of intergovernmental affairs, after receiving an ethics waiver to be hired in spite of Obama's lobbyist ban. In her first year at the White House, taxpayer funds going to La Raza reached \$11 million, almost three times the \$4.1 million that was doled out to the group the previous year. About 60 percent of that \$11 million came from the Department of Labor.

In 2010, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) doled out \$2.5 million to fund La Raza's housing counseling program. That same year, the Department of Education coughed up \$800,000, while the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gave La Raza \$250,000, according to Judicial Watch. A La Raza affiliate group, Chicanos Por La Causa, received twice as much federal funding under the Obama administration (\$18.3 million) after Muñoz was appointed.

In January 2012, Muñoz was promoted to be the president's domestic policy director. That's the year that Obama moved left to motivate his base and increase turn out in his re-election. One of those moves involved the DACA action, in which the president decided on his own authority not to deport illegal immigrants brought to this country as children. And for what it's worth, Muñoz is married to the influential Amit Pandya, chief of staff at the Bureau for International Labor Affairs at the Labor Department.

With plenty of clout in both the White House and Congress, it might not be much of a surprise that La Raza even reaches into the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Sonia

Sotomayor is a former member of La Raza whose membership lasted at least six years. Interestingly, when her nomination to the high court was announced, La Raza praised her but omitted any mention of her membership. She made her most infamous comment in 2001 when she delivered the Judge Mario G. Olmos Memorial Lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. In the speech, published in the Spring 2002 issue of the *Berkeley La Raza Law Journal*, she explained her belief in the inferiority of men and whites when it comes to their ability to serve as judges: "I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life." (The law journal article is available online at http://abcnews.go.com/images/Politics/Berkeley_La%20Raza_2002.pdf.)

Critics seized on the quotation, accusing Sotomayor of both racism and sexism. Sotomayor denied the accusations and tried to walk back the comment during her confirmation hearings in July 2009, saying it was "a rhetorical flourish that fell flat," which is an odd description of a line she used in multiple speeches. While Republican-affiliated Supreme Court nominees are routinely grilled about membership in the Federalist Society, Sotomayor did not receive tough questions about her membership in La Raza. Given the organization's history, perhaps she should have.

Origins

The organization began in the 1960s as the National Organization for Mexican American Services (NOMAS – curiously, *no mas* is Spanish for "no more"). The Ford Foundation funded a study conducted by three Mexican-American academics: Julian Samora, a community activist who pioneered Latino Studies at universities; Ernesto Galarza, known as the "the dean of Chicano activism"; and Herman Gallegos,

a San Francisco community organizer who had previously worked with the notorious Saul Alinsky to set up a Mexican-American political action group.

The study determined that Mexican Americans faced discrimination and poverty and needed more activism. Thus, the three started the Southwest Council of La Raza (SWCLR) in Arizona in February 1968, with major funding from the Ford Foundation, the National Council of Churches, and the United Auto Workers. At the end of 1972, the Southwest Council of La Raza went national, changing its name to the National Council of La Raza, and relocated from Phoenix to Washington, D.C. The Ford Foundation has dumped more than \$40 million into the organization since its founding, helping to make it the most powerful Latino lobbying group in the United States.

La Raza presented its 1994 "Chicano of the Year" award to Jose Angel Gutierrez, who once said, "We have got to eliminate the Gringo, and what I mean by that is that if the worse comes to the worst, we have got to kill him"; "our devil has pale skin and blue eyes" (Townhall.com, July 31, 2009).

Former La Raza President Raul Yzaguirre, who became the Hispanic outreach advisor for Hillary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign, once said of U.S. English, an organization that advocates preserving English as the language in the United States, "U.S. English is to Hispanics as the Ku Klux Klan is to blacks" (Townhall.com, July 9, 2008).

While conservatives generally view charter schools as a step in the right direction toward greater parental choice in education, La Raza's network of 115 publicly funded charter schools may prompt concern. Two examples are La Academia Similes de Pueblo in Los Angeles, California, which teaches children "Aztec math." Its longtime principal Marcos Aguilar, is an ethnic separatist who

believes that “the White way, the American way, the neo liberal, capitalist way of life will eventually lead to our own destruction.” Another example is the Aztlan Academy in Tuscon, Arizona. Aztlan is the name for the Southwestern United States given by separatists who believe the region rightfully belongs to Mexico. Under this view, Colorado, California, Arizona, Texas, Utah, New Mexico, Oregon and parts of Washington state make up an area known as “Aztlán” (Townhall, July 12, 2006).

The late Rep. Charlie Norwood, a Georgia Republican, could hardly be described as hard right and was known for co-sponsoring legislation with liberals such as the newly retired Rep. John Dingell, a Michigan Democrat. So it’s difficult to dismiss his comments on the organization’s view of the Mexican “Reconquista” of the Southwest.

“The final plan for the La Raza movement includes the ethnic cleansing of Americans of European, African, and Asian descent out of ‘Aztlán.’” Norwood wrote in 2006. He described La Raza as “a radical racist group ... one of the most anti-American groups in the country, which has permeated U.S. campuses since the 1960s, and continues its push to carve a racist nation out of the American West.” (Discover the Networks)

In 2007, La Raza opposed Oklahoma’s law to cut off welfare benefits to illegal immigrants and toughen laws against employers who hired them. In 2010, La Raza led the way against the sweeping Arizona immigration law that allowed police to check the immigration status of people in the state. La Raza launched a boycott against Arizona to discourage other states from enacting similar laws.

Beyond supporting amnesty, the organization opposes voter ID laws, any laws that would restrict public benefits provided to illegal

immigrants, and speaks out against nearly every post-9/11 national security policy, claiming new laws could harm the nation’s immigrant population.

For example, in opposition to the Aviation Transportation and Security Act of 2001, which required that U.S. airport baggage screeners be American citizens, La Raza staffer Michele Waslin said, “Tying together citizenship and security—without any evidence that the two are linked—sets a new and dangerous precedent in the United States.” La Raza eagerly signed the Dec. 18, 2001 “Statement of Solidarity with Migrants” demanding the federal government “end discriminatory policies passed on the basis of legal status in the wake of September 11.”

La Raza also opposed moving Immigration and Customs Enforcement (formerly Immigration and Naturalization Services) into the new Department of Homeland Security, saying in June 3, 2003 that “Placing the immigration agency within a new mega-national security agency jeopardizes our country’s rich immigration tradition and threatens to make the already poor treatment of immigrants by the federal bureaucracy even worse.” It further worked closely with the American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee and the Arab American Institute in opposing deportation of Arabs illegally living in the United States (Discover the Networks).

Conclusion

All this, despite the organization’s past actions and questionable name. No one should assume anything about either members of La Raza or its leadership, but any organization should be held accountable for its past. It’s notable that “National Council” isn’t in Spanish, but “La Raza” is. That must be in part because virtually no one would pay attention to an organization identifying itself in clear terms as “The Race.”

The group’s power, thanks to its successful playing of the “social justice” card, has led to prominent influence in government and big business. Nothing reveals that power better than the President’s pandering to La Raza through his executive action on amnesty, which is so outrageous that he himself denounced such an effort only a year before. Similarly, the *Wall Street Journal*’s editorial page, which is no enemy of immigration reform and generous rates of immigration, nonetheless deplored the action and the official legal justification provided by the Justice Department, which has caused “damage to democratic order and the rule of law [that] will take a long time to repair.”

And yet, La Raza continues to rake in tens of millions in tax dollars. Maybe a better name would be “National Council of La Rainmakers.”

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Terrence Scanlon, President

Briefly Noted

Radical hedge fund manager **George Soros** gave a whopping \$33 million to troublemaking activist groups that contributed to civil unrest in Ferguson, Mo., and around the nation after a grand jury there failed to indict police officer **Darren Wilson** in the fatal shooting of **Michael Brown**, the *Washington Times* reports.

Through grants issued by his **Open Society Foundations** (OSF), Soros “spurred the Ferguson protest movement through years of funding and mobilizing groups across the U.S., according to interviews with key players and financial records reviewed” by the newspaper. Among the left-wing groups were **So-journers**, **Advancement Project**, **Center for Community Change**, and the **ACORN** successor group **Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment** (MORE). “Helping groups combine policy, research [and] data collection with community organizing feels very much the way our society becomes more accountable,” said unrepentant OSF director **Kenneth Zimmerman**.

Liberal hedge fund manager **Tom Steyer** “is aggressively exploring a run for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by **Barbara Boxer** and is expected to make a decision within days,” the *Los Angeles Times* reports as we go to press. Steyer and his group, **NextGen Climate**, went onto politicians’ radar by becoming the nation’s biggest individual donor in the 2014 election cycle, handing out more than \$74 million in congressional and governors’ races to candidates who espouse Steyer’s environmental views.

Steyer-supported candidates won just two U.S. Senate races, a governorship in Pennsylvania, and some state lawmaker posts. Steyer raised critics’ ire by opposing construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. The critics note that for years Steyer made money from investments in Keystone’s main business competitor. If he runs for Boxer’s Senate seat, he will take on California Attorney General **Kamala Harris**.

Left-wing activists are now trying to bring about social change by harassing people who gather for Sunday brunch. An outgrowth of the protest movement that launched in Ferguson, Mo., these activists have led protesters into upscale eateries in New York City and Oakland, Calif., reading out the names of African-Americans killed by the police. One liberal Big Apple politician, Brooklyn Borough President **Eric L. Adams**, a Democrat, said the restaurant occupations were a bridge too far. “I think it’s unacceptable,” he said. “My private time is my private time. And I want to sit down and enjoy.” Adams said he would have confronted demonstrators had they interfered with his brunch.

Conservative political consultant **John Pudner**, who helped tea party favorite **Dave Brat** unseat then-House Majority Leader **Eric Cantor** (R-Va.) last year, is now running a new group called **Take Back Our Republic**, which is tasked with building conservative support for greater restrictions on campaign finance contributions. “People said, ‘Oh, you’re in politics — isn’t the whole deal now that people give a million dollars to politicians and get millions back?’” Pudner told the *Washington Post*. “I said, wow, this isn’t so inside baseball. People are starting to view the government as transactional.” Conservative law professor and former Federal Election Commission member **Brad Smith** said the prospect of Republicans’ embracing new restrictions on giving is “a reform fantasy.” Many conservatives, “particularly tea party folks and populists, share the general distrust of big money and power,” he said. “But then they begin to see how laws purporting to regulate money in politics work, and they get very wary.”