

Samuel Rodriguez Urges Intercession for Immigration Reform

The Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC), attended on Tuesday a consultation with President Barack Obama and approximately 100 clergy, businesspersons and immigration reform advocates in the Roosevelt Room of the White House.

“It was a great meeting, during which **President Obama** affirmed his commitment to immigration reform and pushed back on some of the noise surrounding border security and other ancillary issues,” Rodriguez confirmed. “This session represented a final push from our commander-in-chief to inform a bipartisan group of individuals—who don’t agree on many issues—on how to make this happen.”

According to Rodriguez, the gathering captured the urgency of “now” during the week when the **immigration reform bill** is being debated in the United States Congress. He warned that naysayers are using a spirit of fear as a divisive political tool regarding one of the few issues on which most Democrats and Republicans agree.

Rodriguez said the NHCLC supports the basic components and tenants of the bill that is currently on the Senate floor. The association is also arduously working with the House on this issue and would like to see Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, reconsider his position and rejoin the Gang of Eight.

“It is the bottom of the ninth inning, and we are just a few outs away from closing this historic legislation,” Rodriguez added. “But it will take the faith community to help drive in the winning runs.”

Rodriguez further explained that the NHCLC is spearheading a call to action within the Christian community to help make a difference.

“First, we are calling on Christian leaders and people of faith to pray,” he said. “Second, we are asking them to support a biblical solution to **immigration reform** and engage in activism to encourage their corresponding members of Congress to vote affirmatively. Third, we are encouraging believers to embrace their primary identity as Christ followers and work across ethnic lines to reconcile their communities with prophetic courage.”

As part of its leadership commitment to this vital issue, on Wednesday the NHCLC is co-sponsoring with the Latino Partnership for Conservative Principles a town hall meeting in Washington, D.C., featuring a keynote address by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., to discuss topics of immigration reform and to call pastors and faith leaders to action to speak out and engage in advocacy for immigration reform.

The program began at 9 a.m. with Paul’s address, followed by a roundtable panel discussion on the status of immigration reform. The gathering will conclude with a prayer rally at the Capitol from 1 to 3 p.m.

“Fifty years ago this summer, **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** led a historic and catalytic march on Washington, D.C., amplifying the call for freedom not just for African-Americans but for all Americans,” said Rodriguez. “This summer, 50 years after that historic march, our nation can once again heed to this clarion call or turn the proverbial deaf ear to the cries of millions calling for a just solution to the immigration crisis.

“Accordingly, history will record this summer as one where Republicans and Democrats in Congress exhibit prophetic courage or one where immigration reform dies on the altar of

pathetic expediency," he continued. "For today we stand closer than ever before to passing legislation that will secure our borders, strengthen our communities, affirm our values and provide a reconciliatory prescription for a nation divided by political partisanship. Quoting Dr. King, as it pertains to immigration reform, this summer and this hour can best be captured in 'the fierce urgency of now!' Now is the time for reform. It's time to reconcile the message with the march."