



*13<sup>th</sup> Annual Latina Action Day  
Sacramento  
April 17, 2007*

## **EDUCATION TOWNHALL**

**“Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice to Go To College.”**

### **Testimonials**

HOPE, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to ensuring political and economic parity for Latinas through leadership, advocacy, and education to benefit all communities and the status of women.

**\*Testimonials are reflective of the thoughts and opinions of the individual testifying and the organization they represent. While the organizations participating share in HOPE’s mission and vision, their testimony does not necessarily represent the opinion of the HOPE Board of Directors or the HOPE Organization.**

---

HOPE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, tax ID# 95-4718409.  
HOPE, the “H” logo, Latina Action Day, HOPE Leadership Institute are registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

## ***EDUCATION TOWNHALL: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College***

---

For over 17 years, HOPE has been committed to ensuring political and economic parity for Latinas through leadership, advocacy, and education. Staying true to that Vision, HOPE is proud to present an Education Townhall that includes testimonials from HOPE's key organizational partners who are committed to improving access to higher education for Latinas and all communities. Our united voices urging access to higher education and the benefits that higher education yields will continue to move California forward.

**Sacramento Convention Center**  
**Tuesday, April 17, 2007**  
**2:30 pm – 3:30 pm**

**Moderator:** Nora Vargas  
HOPE Board Member and Latina Action Day Sacramento Co-Chair

### **Townhall Panelists:**

Senator Gloria Romero  
Assemblyman Joe Coto  
Lupita Alcala, Director of Legislative Affairs, Office of State Superintendent Jack O'Connell  
Darrine Distefano, Government Relations, CA Student Aid Commission  
Diana Fuentes-Michel, Executive Director, CA Student Aid Commission  
Lorena Hernandez, Commissioner, CA Student Aid Commission  
Anthony Monreal, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction, Office of the State Superintendent  
Jeannie Oropeza, CA Department of Finance, Education Finance Unit

### **Townhall Testifiers:**

Helen Iris Torres, Executive Director, HOPE  
Dr. Jim Blackburn, Associate Director, Enrollment Management Services, California State University, Office of the Chancellor  
Frank Garcia, Executive Director, Puente Project  
Jose Hernandez, Senior Associate of Policy and External Affairs, ConnectEd  
Virginia Morales, Student, Norte Vista High School  
Olgalilia Ramirez, Director of Government Relations, CA State Student Association  
Jarad Sanchez, Research Associate, Applied Research Center  
Michele Siqueiros, Associate Director, Campaign for College Opportunity  
David Valladolid, Executive Director, Parent Institute for Quality Education

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

## **TESTIMONIALS**

---

### **I. Helen I. Torres**

*Executive Director, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality*

Good Afternoon. My name is Helen Iris Torres and I am the Executive Director of HOPE, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality. Thank you for being with us today.

Over 6 million Latinas live and work in California today, representing 17% of California's total population. By 2010, just 4 years away,, the total Latina population is expected to reach 7.4 million. Latinas are a visible demographic in California, and more specifically, in California's public schools, representing nearly 23% (1.4 million) of total K-12 enrollment.

Unfortunately, the large number of Latinas enrolled in California's K-12 educational system does not translate into Latinas entering California's four year universities. In 2005, Latinas represented only 7% of total enrollment at the UC and 13% of CSU enrollment. These low enrollment numbers can be attributed in large part to a lack of college preparedness in our high schools.

When you consider that in 2005, only 27% of Latinas graduating from California's public high schools completed the A-G sequence thereby making them eligible to apply to the CSU or UC, you can clearly see that we've essentially barred the other 73% from the opportunities that higher education affords us.

For three years now, HOPE has been working at the state level to promote opportunities for more Latinas to access to the promise of higher education in California. More specifically, HOPE has been working toward public policy that allows for more Latinas to access the A-G curriculum that allows them to be eligible applicants to the UC and CSU systems.

To that end, HOPE is supporting a package of bills that we believe expand access to higher education for Latinas. We also have some concerns we would like to share with you regarding the Governor's proposed budget for education.

This year, HOPE is co-sponsoring AB 178 (Coto) with the Applied Research Center. AB 178 offers a limited number of California public high schools which indicate willingness and readiness to enroll all students in a college preparatory curriculum (A-G), including career technical education classes, \$100 per student per year for three years to assist in the school's transition and to support students in achieving success in rigorous curriculum and preparing for college entrance.

HOPE is also supporting AB 428 (Carter) which provides notification of college preparatory courses and progression in those courses to students and families annually, SB 309 (Scott) which sets up an advisory group to develop a sequence of core career and technical education courses that are intended to meet the A-G sequence, and SB 890 (Scott) which ensures early

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

notification and early commitment of college opportunities for students in middle and high school and their families.

HOPE believes this package of bills can move California forward toward expanding access to higher education. Educational attainment plays a significant role on a Latina's ability to be economically self-sufficient. Latinas and all students are entitled to a public education that affords them the opportunity to have real postsecondary and career choices and that means making the A-G sequence of courses available to more students, providing accessible and timely information to families regarding college-prep curriculum and financial aid, and ensuring our state's CTE course offerings are rigorous and allow students the flexibility to still be eligible applicants to the CSU and UC.

In regards to the Governor's budget, HOPE is very concerned about the proposed elimination of Student Academic Preparation and Education programs. In many instances, these are the programs that help our Latina students bridge their paths to higher education. Furthermore, HOPE is concerned about the impact the proposed fee increases at the CSU and UC will have on Latina enrollment in those institutions. We are hopeful that will take into consideration our concerns as you weigh in on the budget process through your respective positions.

Thank you for your attention.

## **II. Dr. Jim Blackburn**

*Associate Director, Enrollment Management Services, California State University, Office of the Chancellor*

As indicated in the California Master Plan for Higher Education (Education Code 66000 ff, 1960), The California State University is charged to provide access to the upper third of our state's secondary school graduates. In more recent years, the CSU has emphasized what our chancellor has called "authentic access". Implied by the term, "authentic access" is the notion that the students who enroll at the university's twenty-three campuses have both the ability and the opportunity to succeed.

It is a well known and generally concluded that the most important determinants of success in college are the rigor and relevance of the courses completed in high school. In recognition of that conclusion, the CSU began in the late 1980s to raise its course requirements for freshman admissions. In the early part of the last decade, the "a-g" course pattern was implemented as the minimum curricular requirement for CSU admission. The fifteen year-long courses that comprise the "a-g" pattern are now the "threshold" for admission to both the CSU as they long have been for admission to the University of California.

There are many factors or variables, which influence success in college. Environment, culture, personal values and finances are among the things that influence the likelihood of success in college. But, the rigor and appropriateness of high school courses are the variables that are probably the easiest to change and improve. Changing environments, personal values and cultures can be very difficult, and we are not likely to be able to make everyone wealthy. But, almost anyone almost anywhere can improve the quality and appropriate- ness of the courses

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

they complete in high school.

So, the CSU wants very much to encourage the adoption of the a-g pattern for as many CA high school graduates as possible- whether those women and men plan to attend the CSU or not and whether they have immediate plan for the pursuit of higher education at all.

There are several reasons why the university supports “a-g’s” becoming the graduation requirement for CA high school graduates.

- By doing so, all of the post secondary options remain open for the largest possible portion of CA youth;
- The 15 units within the a-g are a good foundations for a life time of learning;
- The “skill sets” included in the “a-g” are applicable to most careers;
- Completion of the “a-g” can be combined with the completion of other valuable high school courses, e.g. career technical courses, service learning, English language acquisition, etc, and
- There is no evidence that completing 4 units of English, three units of mathematics, one unit from among the arts, two units each of an additional language, social science, and lab sciences has ever actually hurt anyone.

Increasingly, it has become necessary for citizens to continue their education after high school graduation and to periodically learn new material and skills throughout their life. The “a-g’ course pattern provides a way to support “authentic access” to continued learning regardless of a high school graduate’s immediate plans. Most importantly, not completing the “a-g” can limit a high school graduates long term options.

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

### **III. Frank Garcia**

*Executive Director, Puente Project*

Everyone deserves a chance to succeed academically. But not everyone has access to all of the tools that can help make academic success a reality. It's common knowledge that the neediest communities have the least resources, including lack of properly trained teachers, access to technology, and low parental involvement. This translates to poor test scores, low rates of postsecondary participation, and wider achievement gaps overall. This is where academic preparation programs play a key role in reversing the trend, and producing students that are achieving educational success.

For example, in the past 25 years, Puente alone has helped over 50,000 high school and community college students achieve the success they deserve. Without Puente, and other academic preparation programs, thousands of Latinas—and Latinos—would not have access to a higher education.

Academic preparation programs' successes are measurable and significant. For example, Puente high school students enter two and four-year colleges at a rate of 81%, compared with 51% of all California graduating high school seniors. They also pass the California High School Exit Exam at a significantly higher rate than students statewide – 92% versus 63% for the math section, and 95% versus 65% for the English section (2004-05 academic year, as reported by the California Department of Education). University of California academic preparation programs accomplish their stated mission, by preparing students for postsecondary education and for various sectors of the workforce.

California's per capita income as a share of the US average has been declining, and will fall below the US average by 2020 unless gaps in educational attainment across racial/ethnic groups are narrowed. The projected percentage decline in per capita income, if the gaps remain, would be the largest in the nation over this period.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, California needs Puente and other academic preparation programs, such as MESA and EAOP, to produce an educated and skilled workforce that will ensure the state's economic competitiveness and vitality.

Puente and other UC academic preparation programs have been eliminated from the state's proposed budget for next year. We cannot continue this critical educational equity work without full restoration of program funds. The state budget should restore the \$17.3 million necessary for academic preparation programs. Additionally, we request that academic preparation programs become a line-item in the state budget, so that these services can continue to be provided to California's low-income, educationally disadvantaged communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Public Policy and Higher education, *Policy Alert Supplement*, November 2005, as quoted in *Policy Issue Report: State of Decline?* Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy, October 2006.

#### **IV. Jose Hernandez**

*Senior Associate of Policy and External Affairs, ConnectEd*

There is no greater challenge for public policy in California than preparing all our young people for lasting success in further education, career, and civic affairs. Success with virtually every other policy objective affecting the future of our state—be it economic growth, environmental protection, increased health and safety, renewed infrastructure, or a marked increase in the overall quality of life in the state—will depend on effectively delivering the knowledge and skills that young Californians need to live and work here productively.

Career and technical education (CTE) can play a vital role in helping to prepare many more of California's young people for lasting success in the state's economy. But we should be careful not to focus our attention just on CTE or limit our vision of CTE to a relatively narrow set of occupations and future possibilities for young people. For one thing, in high school, CTE accounts for no more than four or five courses in the twenty-four or so that students must take to earn a diploma. No matter how much we improve CTE, unless we find ways to make core academics more relevant and engaging for high school students, we are not likely to reduce drop out rates or raise the proficiency of an equally large number of students who earn a diploma poorly prepared for further education and work.

And, in addition to promoting technical proficiency, we must raise academic achievement. Whether a highly skilled machinist, automotive technician, dental hygienist, production manager, loan officer, electrician, environmental safety technician, or one of many other high skill, high wage occupations in today's economy, it is simply no longer possible to get by with basic levels of proficiency in mathematics, science, English, and social studies. More and more, the academics needed for college are the same as those needed for work. Moreover, while succeeding in a high skill, high wage economy will not require everyone to have a four-year postsecondary degree, the likelihood of succeeding with just a high school diploma is diminishing rapidly. CTE, therefore, like the rest of high school, must be designed to prepare students for *both* postsecondary education *and* career, not just one or the other.

How do we craft a new vision that captures the power of CTE to engage students and motivate them to achieve higher levels of both academic and technical competency? We can begin by using public policy to promote development of comprehensive, multiple pathways that simultaneously prepare students for career and the full range of postsecondary options—two- and four-year college, apprenticeship, the military, and formal employment training. These pathways, combining challenging technical courses with rigorous academics and spanning four years of high school, are organized around the state's major industry sectors—agriculture and natural resources, arts, media, and entertainment, business and finance, biomedical and health science, building and environmental design, information technology, engineering and design, hospitality and tourism, and manufacturing, to name just a few. Each pathway includes not only challenging technical courses but also core academics redesigned to help students understand how mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts are used in the industry that is the organizing theme of the pathway.

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

Let's be concrete. In a pathway organized around building and environmental design, a geometry class teaches the concepts and skills needed to build roofs and frame walls that withstand gale force winds, or a pre-calculus class stresses the role of mathematics in designing and building a seismically sound Bay Bridge. History helps students better understand how the built environment reflects and shapes daily life. An English class not only emphasizes the importance of mastering strong technical reading and writing but also helps students appreciate relevant literature, such as Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Kidder's *House*, a compelling non-fiction account of building the American dream.

Technical courses in this pathway include instruction in carpentry, electricity, masonry, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, but they also introduce students to fundamental principles of engineering and design, project and site planning, construction management, and emerging technologies. Work-based learning is an integral part of the pathway, offering students opportunities for mentoring and job shadowing, as well as intensive internships, apprenticeship, and school-based enterprise.

Finally, there is serious attention to the supplemental services, especially additional instruction in reading and mathematics, that many high school students need to succeed in a program that expects them to master high levels of both academic and technical knowledge. Anything less is simply setting up students to fail—in school, to be certain, but also in an economy that demands ever higher levels of knowledge and skill to earn a decent living.

The great promise of CTE, more broadly conceived, is that it can finally make learning real and exciting for the thousands of students who are bored with the conventional high school curriculum. By joining academics with technical education, students finally begin to understand: "Why do I need to know this?" And this is as true for young people who aspire to be doctors, architects, and engineers as it is for those who want to be nurses, contractors, carpenters, and technicians.

## **V. Virginia Morales**

*Student, Norte Vista High School, Riverside, CA*

Good afternoon, my name is Virginia Morales. I live in Riverside, CA which is better known as the Inland Empire I attend Norte Vista High School and currently I am a junior. As a Latina I believe that we do have a choice in going to college. It is a different story taking it to the next level of ensuring we actually meet all the college entrance requirements and then attend. Through organizations such as HOPE who sponsored the HOPE team at our school, we had the opportunity to assess college opportunity for Latinas in the senior year at Norte Vista High School. We interviewed a total of 79 Latina seniors and 76 of the interviewees said they have the choice to go to college, only three believed that they did not. When I asked them why their response was they did not have the grades because they did not take high school seriously. According to our Norte Vista Team data 97 percent of Latinas want to pursue higher education at the community college. This is not a negative, however to ensure broader choices, we believe that Latinas need to set higher standards for Post-High School plans. Specifically, Latinas need to set higher standards in academics, social and personal areas because if you do not have high standards in all three areas then you settle for less and it will be harder for our local and state governments to grow productively. If our schools instill higher standards for Latinas it will facilitate pursuing higher level degrees.

## **VI. Olgalilia Ramirez**

*Director, Governmental Relations, CA State Student Association*

My name is Olgalilia Ramirez; I am here on behalf of the California State Student Association we represent over 400,000 undergraduate and graduate students in the California State University system. I thank you for granting us the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding the problems facing Chicana/Latina students. Today I will share with you a piece of my personal story as it relates to our organizations stance on college access and affordability.

Tens of thousands of students each year are qualified to attend college but are denied the opportunity because of cost. As college fees continue to rise, so too must the number of students who fail to reach their educational potential.

In large part this is due to a tightening of state budgets resulting in lower appropriations for higher education; eroding of the percentage of tuition covered by the Pell Grant, the basic federal subsidy for low-income students; and the changeover in student funding from state and federal grants, which do not have to be repaid, to loans, which do. The prospect of future loan repayment, which can be as high as tens of thousands of dollars, can scare off low- and moderate-income students.

Throughout my high school and college career I have witnessed many young Chicana/Latina women like myself dropout of school. These students feel defeated over the overwhelming cost of student fees, textbooks and housing. I am a first generation college student who was fortunate enough to qualify and be award state and federal grant money to pay for college. Nonetheless, I will complete graduate school next fall with about \$25,000 dollars in debt. I was

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

strongly encouraged to pursue a postsecondary education and coming from a low-income household the cost was the largest barrier standing in my path.

Together, CSSA believes that increasing college affordability is the answer to many of the barriers affecting Chicana/Latinas today. This year our organization is sponsoring Assembly Bill 302 (De La Torre), which will expand college access and affordability to underrepresented students. AB 302 would make both Cal Grant A and B recipients eligible for grants to cover their first year of college, often the toughest hurdle for many students. Fees and tuition can be as much as \$4,245 a year at CSU, and \$8,323 a year at UC. Providing all Cal Grant B students with funds to cover fees and tuition in the first year of college will help alleviate the financial burden that students face.

We are also in strong support of Assembly Bill 175 that would increase the Cal Grant B cost-of-living stipend to help needy college students cover incidental costs of attendance other than fees as living costs in California and Senate Bill 160, by Senator Cedillo, a bill that would make AB 540 students eligible for student financial aid.

Please join us in supporting these reforms to the Cal Grant program and student aid to better serve low-income students attending California's college and universities.

Protect the future of California Invest in higher Education.

## **VII. Jarad Sanchez**

*Research Associate, Applied Research Center*

I would like to speak today on the importance of the A-G curriculum to California students and the roles that Assembly Bills 178 (Coto) and 428 (Carter) play in that discussion.

First, and probably most importantly, parents in California want their children to go to college. Students in California want to go to college. This is especially true for students and parents of color. Contrary to some opinions, independent, scientific polls indicate that anywhere between seventy and eighty percent of parents of color want their children to go to college and the same percentages apply to students of color who want to go to college. The overwhelming majority want to go. Everyone understands that the average college graduate tends to earn more money than those with only a high school diploma. Studies show that college graduates earn approximately one million dollars more during their working lives.

However, you can not attend a four year public university in California, or just about anywhere else in America, if you do not complete the A-G requirements. And in California not every school offers A-G to every student. In most parts of the state, less than a third of all high school ninth graders will graduate four years later having completed A-G. Multiple studies show that low income student and students of color especially are denied access to college preparatory classes in their high schools.

In district after district, high school after high school, the percentage of A-G classes offered as part of the standard curriculum drops as the color of the skin of the student body gets darker

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

and as the income of the parents gets lower. These racial and economic inequities are the byproducts of old myths that claimed some groups of people are meant for white collar jobs where a university education is necessary while others are inherently suited for the labor force.

In an attempt to alleviate racial disparities in opportunity and achievement, San Jose Unified School District initiated an A-G, College Preparatory Curriculum with great success. Drop out rates went down, college going rates went up. The achievement gap between students of color and their white counterparts decreased and test scores went up across the board.

Los Angeles Unified recently instituted a similar curriculum requirement and the early indication is that the number of high school students proficient in algebra has doubled. Bear in mind that the policy has been in effect for less than two years and considering the size of the district this is a monumental achievement. Santa Ana Unified School District is reporting similar success and other districts in other parts of the state are considering similar initiatives.

In order to encourage this type of innovation in underperforming schools, Assembly Member Coto has offered AB 178, a bill that will offer much needed funding as a means to assist schools and school districts with their implementation of a college preparatory curriculum. As the recent Stanford study commissioned by the Governor and the State Legislature recommends, the funding will be given primarily to schools with the greatest need and provides the schools and school districts the flexibility required to decide where the money should best be spent. The bill would create a pilot program and can be expanded as the Legislature and the Governor see fit.

Also, to ensure that every student and parent knows exactly what the A-G requirements are, Assembly Member Carter has offered AB 428. A great many of California's parents and students do not know that university entrance requirements are different than high school graduation requirements. Currently, California's high school counselors are responsible for more students than counselors in most other parts of the country. Some districts report that they have 1 counselor for every 1,000 students. The bill will require schools to inform parents and students exactly what the requirements are, what classes fulfill them and where the student is in the A-G pipeline. It will also require that the notification be done in the languages appropriate to the student body. This will alleviate any confusion as to what is required for students.

We encourage you today to support racial equity in education. We encourage you to support Assembly Bills 178 and 428 and any piece of legislation that will expand college access to all Californians and not just a select few.

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

## **VIII. Michele Siqueiros**

*Associate Director, Campaign for College Opportunity*

In 1960, California leaders made a promise – through the Master Plan for Higher Education – that any qualified student could attend a community college or university.

California is at a crossroads, and we must take this opportunity to renew that commitment. California faces a persistent achievement gap and high dropout rates in its education system. California has been declining in its rate of high school graduates going directly to college. We are now 40<sup>th</sup> among all states on this important measure.

Over the coming two decades, California industry will demand more workers with high levels of education. At the same time, we face the retirement of the highly-educated Baby Boom generation.

If the state doesn't reverse the decline in our college-going rate, California will face an alarming decline in per capita income and a shortage of educated workers to keep our economy competitive.

If educational attainment remains at current levels for each ethnic group, California will see approximately \$2,475 less income per resident between 2000 and 2020 - the greatest decline per capita in the nation.

California has a window of opportunity to prepare the highly-educated workforce needed to maintain its position as an economic leader.

Lack of information about the opportunities the state makes available is a major barrier for students and parents.

We need to send the message to parents that college is accessible and affordable - and that there are steps their children need to take to prepare.

We need to provide students and families a clear roadmap, beginning at a young age, that helps guide them on their path to college.

The Early College Commitment Act of 2007, Senate Bill 890.

First, it is a way for California to renew the historic commitment of the 1960 Master Plan, and for the first time, make that commitment directly to students and families beginning in middle school. In this way, students will learn about these opportunities at the front end, not the tail end, of their middle school and high school careers, so they can prepare.

Second, all the State's major college and financial aid opportunities will be packaged into one program that outlines the student's responsibilities. This will help make the opportunities and responsibilities understandable to students and parents. It will also encourage greater coordination of schools, colleges and financial aid programs.

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*

And third, the legislation creates the “Save Me a Spot in College” Pledge. For students who sign the “Save Me a Spot in College” pledge and fulfill their requirements, we will guarantee them a place in college and financial aid so they can afford to go. Specifically, we will guarantee a spot in community college and guarantee that they can go tuition-free, provided their future income does not exceed a certain threshold. We will also guarantee the CalGrant program, and admission to CSU and UC, provided the student is eligible and applies. These students will also receive Roadmap to College Services from their school district, as well as other benefits.

We have all the building blocks in our education system in California to do this. It’s time to put them together and give our young people an early college commitment. With SB 890, we can empower our students and parents, our schools and colleges, to build California’s future today.

### **IX. David Valladolid**

*President & CEO, Parent Institute for Quality Education*

The meaningful involvement of parents in the education of all children is the most important and critical factor in determining their academic success. Their "meaningful" participation requires that:

- a) They are informed on how the school system works;
- b) What are their rights and responsibilities;
- c) What programs exist in the schools and in the community to enhance a child's education; and,
- d) What is a four year plan that will pave the road to college.

As a representative of the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), a community non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that has served and graduated more than 400,000 parents from sixteen language groups in California, I want to urge all the elected officials, policy makers and their staff to provide funding for educating parents and promoting their meaningful involvement.

In terms of current bills in the California State legislature, I would strongly urge your support to:

1. The California DREAM Act (SB 160) that has been reintroduced by Senator Cedillo to remove barriers for AB 540 Students;
2. The Meaningful Parental Involvement in Education bill (AB 590) carried by Assemblymember Solorio that would ensure interpretation services for non-English speaking parents and the creation of infra-structure at the schools that promotes their involvement; and,
3. The Accelerated English Acquisition and Literacy Pilot Program for English Learner (EL) Students (AB 1177) also carried by Assemblymember Solorio that begins to investigate and improve the education of EL Students.

The education of the next generation will determine their future and the future of our state and nation.

**Education Townhall: Ensuring Latinas Have a Choice To Go To College.**

*Latina Action Day, Sacramento: April 17, 2007*