



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on January 11, 2012

Obama Names Immigration Activist as Chief Domestic Policy Adviser

“Over the past three years, Cecilia has been a trusted advisor who has demonstrated sound judgment day in and day out,” President Obama [professed](#) in a statement. “Cecilia has done an extraordinary job working on behalf of middle class families, and I’m confident she’ll bring the same unwavering dedication to her new position.”



Muñoz is an immigration specialist and worked for the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, until she joined the Obama administration in 2009. The organization works on an array of issues affecting the Hispanic community, including healthcare, housing, education, and workforce development — as well as advocating legislation which would grant a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants.

In terms of “immigration reform,” NCLR has denied that it is an open-borders advocate and an illegal-alien lobby; however, it supports a “comprehensive immigration reform” policy which includes the following principles, according to the organization’s website:

- Restoring order by getting the 12 million undocumented people in our country to come forward, obtain legal status, learn English, and assume the rights and responsibilities of citizenship while creating smart enforcement policies that uphold national security and the Constitution
- Cracking down on unscrupulous employers whose practices undermine conditions for all workers
- Unclogging legal channels to reunite families and allow future workers to come in with the essential rights and protections that safeguard our workforce
- Enacting proactive measures to advance the successful integration of new immigrants into our communities

While NCLR avoids engraving an official stamp of approval for a comprehensive amnesty program, the statements in question indicate that the group does advocate American citizenship for those who have broken the law to enter the United States.

Several media outlets and anti-illegal immigration groups have accused NCLR of harboring a radical ideology that, in some cases, has revealed strong anti-American sentiments. In fact, last April a controversial ethnic studies program in a Tucson school district unveiled these [“radical views”](#) that some critics have cited:



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Yesterday a Tucson Unified School District board meeting was scheduled to discuss making the La Raza Studies, or the Race Studies, an elective in public schools rather than banning the program all together. The “ethnic studies” program was banned earlier this year because of the material being taught in the program. Instructors of the Raza Studies, also known as Mexican-American Studies, teach students that Arizona belongs to Mexico, [and] to throw over the U.S. government to take back that land.

Munoz herself has been a vocal advocate of amnesty, and in 2000, she won one of the prestigious MacArthur “genius grants” for her achievements in dealing with immigration and civil rights issues. During an [interview](#) with PBS in 2001, she was asked why legalizing illegal immigrants who are already residing in the U.S. is good policy. She responded:

Well, because we know there are significant numbers of people living and working and paying taxes in the United States, raising their families here. They’re clearly needed in our economy. It makes sense to bring them out of the shadows and give them full access to their rights. It’s a longstanding community. It’s a sizable community. It’s a community whose employers tell us they want them to be able to stay permanently. It’s really in our best interest to make sure that we bring them out of the shadows.

Because of Munoz’s zealous stance on immigration, critics have branded Obama’s appointment as purely a political maneuver, as the President faces a challenging election year in which the Hispanic vote will play a critical role. Many activist organizations have expressed frustration with the Obama administration’s inability to implement immigration reform, combined with its revamped deportation policy that has led to increased deportations.

Angela Kelley, vice president of the Policy and Advocacy at the Center for American Progress, said Obama’s latest appointment would transmit an encouraging message to young Latinas. “They can take in the sight of a Latina working shoulder to shoulder with the president and other top officials, carrying the responsibility of the nation’s business,” she [averred](#).

Groups like National Immigration Forum, which supports a pathway to citizenship for illegals, also lauded the Muñoz appointment, while emphasizing the need for Obama to take action on the immigration front. “With this move, the pressure is on the president to move forward with an aggressive domestic policy agenda on immigration,” [asserted](#) Ali Noorani, executive director of the National Immigration Forum. He said this domestic agenda should focus more on security concerns and not on immigrant workers and families who are “caught up in a broken system.”

Katie Pavlich, a news editor at Townhall.com, [summed up her argument](#) as to why the President appointed Cecilia Muñoz as a high-ranking domestic policy aide in his administration:

Obama’s appointment of Muñoz isn’t surprising for a few reasons. 1) It’s an election year. This gives Obama yet another way to try and cater to Hispanic voters 2) Munoz is the perfect government bureaucrat for Obama to channel his open-border, pro-amnesty agenda through under the guise of La Raza being a “civil rights” organization.

Photo of Cecilia Muñoz: AP Images



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