

2016 NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

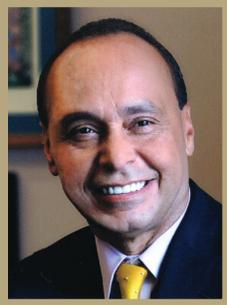
Human and Civil Rights Award Winner



He Stands Up For Those Who Have Been Knocked Down

◆ **Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (Illinois)** ◆

César Chávez Acción y Compromiso Human and Civil Rights Award



Now in his twelfth term, Illinois Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez, has been an iconic champion in the fight for comprehensive immigration reform and a staunch advocate for workers' rights.

His leadership and commitment have given the nation's undocumented Dreamers hope. He has been at the center of every major legislative debate on immigration reform and immigration issues for more than a dozen years.

"My party and the vast majority of my country understands that getting immigrants on the books and into the system and integrating today's immigrants into American society is the goal, just as we have done with every group of migrants throughout our history."

Congressman Gutierrez has played an instrumental role in advocating for executive action by President Obama to provide deportation relief to certain long-term undocumented immigrants and their families. DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and a series of executive orders announced in 2014 are partly the result of Congressman Gutierrez's powerful advocacy in Washington. He also introduced new legislation known as the Exchange Inclusion for a Healthy America act of 2015 on the House Floor. This bill would lift restrictions in the Affordable Care Act that denies health insurance to thousands of undocumented immigrants.

Throughout his political career, Congressman Gutierrez has also been a close ally of organized labor, and he has voted repeatedly to protect and expand workers' rights. In 2008, Gutierrez was one of the principal elected officials that assisted workers of the Chicago-based Republic Windows and Doors Company during their successful sit-in. The workers had been fired without advanced notice, but they refused to leave the factory. He brokered a deal that saved the workers' jobs.

It was concern for worker rights that led Gutierrez to break with his party in the 1990's and vocally opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) because it failed to protect workers' collective bargaining rights both in Mexico and the United States. His objection to NAFTA proved prophetic. Instead of improving the economic well-being of Mexican and American workers, as promised, it actually depressed workers' wages in both countries. The Congressman likes to quote César Chávez: "History will judge us not on how well we serve the rich, but how effectively we respond to the needs of the poor and powerless."