



**For immediate release
May 18, 2007**

**Contact: Chris Barron
202-546-0008
202-297-9807**

The Latino Coalition Calls on Organized Labor to Stop Blocking Immigration Compromise

Washington, D.C. – The Latino Coalition (TLC) calls on organized labor to stop blocking the critical bi-partisan Senate immigration compromise. “The unions told our community to march – and we did. They told our community to vote – and we did. Now it’s time for the unions to support Latino workers,” said TLC President Robert G. Deposada. “Unfortunately, instead of supporting us, the unions have betrayed us. Organized labor is working hard behind the scenes to block passage of this important bill. The AFL-CIO, the Teamsters and other unions are putting politics over the interest of our community. By choosing to stand in the way of the best interests of our community, these unions are making it clear to millions of Latino workers that they do not represent them.”

Since the bipartisan compromise was reached in the Senate, a growing number of unions have come out in opposition to the comprehensive immigration deal. John Sweeney, the head of the powerful AFL-CIO, denounced the bill for creating a guest worker program. “By forcefully denouncing a component of this bill that is critical to Latino workers, the AFL-CIO is forfeiting its claim to speak on behalf of all workers,” continued Deposada. “Opposition to a guest worker program makes it clear that the AFL-CIO values some workers more than the others.”

The Latino community, which helped bring Democrats to power in both the House and the Senate in 2006, had been optimistic about the prospects for comprehensive immigration reform under new Congressional leadership. “The men and women in our community were told that if we elected a Democratic-controlled Congress then we would see comprehensive immigration reform,” said Deposada. “Now is the time for action. Now is the time to put aside partisan political interests and do what is right for all American families.”

Since taking control in January, Democratic leadership has stalled on moving comprehensive immigration reform forward in either chamber. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) recently stated that she would need the support of 70 Republican House members before she would proceed with immigration reform.

“We urge Speaker Pelosi and Democratic leadership in the House to demonstrate courage and leadership on this issue. They should stop listening to the union bosses and political strategists and do what's right,” continued Deposada. “Speaker Pelosi knows that she can get this bill passed without the level of GOP support she is demanding. Pelosi’s demand is simply a pathetic and irresponsible excuse to keep a partisan issue alive for the next campaign.”

--continues--

While some Democrats believe that keeping the immigration issue alive could benefit them at the polls, others warn that a failure to deliver on comprehensive immigration reform could have a devastating impact on Democrats ability to attract Latino support at the polls in 2008. “Speaker Pelosi should know that playing politics with the immigration issue will cost her dearly next year. Latinos voters will remember those who use our community as little more than a political football,” concluded Deposada.

The Latino Coalition is a non-profit, non-partisan organization based in Washington, D.C. TLC was established to address policy issues that directly affect the well-being of Hispanics in the United States. TLC’s agenda is to develop and promote policies that will foster economic equivalency and enhance overall business, economic, and social development of Hispanics. www.thelatinocoalition.com

###