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U.S. Latinos Strongly Praise President Bush for Appointing Ambassador Reich

Washington, D.C. - The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition (TLC) and the Hispanic Business Roundtable (HBR) strongly support President Bush's decision to give a recess appointment to Ambassador Otto Reich to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere.

"At a time of international crisis, it is essential for our President to have his entire team in place particularly in areas dealing with foreign policy and diplomacy," said HBR President Mario Rodriguez. "With the current crisis in Argentina, and the troubles brewing in Venezuela and Colombia, we cannot understand why the Senate has failed to act. Petty partisan politics can not stand above the interest of this country."

Earlier this year, the Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition and the Hispanic Business Roundtable endorsed the nomination of Ambassador Otto Reich to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere. "No one questions the qualifications and the experience of Ambassador Reich. He has been a close advisor to us, particularly in the area of expanding free and fair trade, economic development, and human rights in our hemisphere," Rodriguez added.

The Board of Directors of both organizations strongly praised the President's decision. "We salute the President for standing up to partisan bickering and to irresponsible legislative inaction," said TLC President Robert Deposada. "We respect the rights of different people to have different opinions. However, we are deeply disappointed that the Senate has not even held a hearing on Ambassador Reich. All of us who publicly criticized Chairman Helms for using every trick in the book to keep people he opposed from receiving a fair process, must be extremely disappointed that the Democratic leadership have remained silent while some in Committee decide to do the same thing they criticized Helms for doing."

"Either the new Senate leadership apologizes for criticizing Senator Helms' tactics, or hold a hearing and allow a vote on the nomination of Ambassador Reich," Deposada added. "We cannot believe that you will allow partisan bickering from keeping a qualified Latino from receiving a fair treatment in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, particularly at a time of international crisis in some Latin American countries."

The Latino Coalition and the Hispanic Business Roundtable are non-profit, nonpartisan national organizations based in Washington, DC. For more information on these organizations please visit our websites at www.hbrt.org and www.TheLatinoCoalition.com.

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