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U.S. Latinos Urge Congress to Act Responsibly and Pass the Back to School Tax Relief Act for Low-Income Families

Washington, DC – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition (TLC) today called on congressional leaders to pass H.R. 5193, the Back to School Tax Relief Act of 2002, in order to offer much needed help to low-income parents with the education expenses of their children.

“This legislation would extend the current \$3,000 deduction for higher education expenses to families of children in elementary and secondary school,” said TLC President Robert Deposada. “By making it an above-the-line deduction, parents earning less than \$40,000 who do not itemize, will receive much needed resources and assistance to offer their children better educational opportunities.”

Parents will be able to use these funds for academic tutoring (including bilingual education services), supplies, computers, uniforms, books or even tuition. The bill limits the deduction to low-income families making under \$40,000. H.R. 5193, sponsored by Congressman Bob Schaffer (R-CO), would not affect federal spending on education, but will allow low-income parents the opportunity to keep more of their own money so they can spend it on better educational opportunities for their children.

“Our most recent survey of Hispanic adults shows that language and education are the two main barriers to improving the quality of life for U.S. Hispanics,” Deposada added. “This bill will offer Hispanic parents the resources to be able to hire private tutors to make sure their children have a better grasp of the English language and eliminate one of the most common barriers for our community.”

“While we would prefer making this a credit instead of a deduction, we believe this is an important first step in helping our most vulnerable children,” Deposada said. “We call on congressional leaders to put aside partisan rhetoric and pass this legislation immediately. Delaying tactics and poison pills should be avoided at all costs in order to get this tax relief to our working poor and their children.”

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. For more information on the organization or on this issue, please visit our website at www.TheLatinoCoalition.com.

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