



**For immediate release
September 5, 2002**

**Contact: Adriana Alarcón
202-546-0008**

Latino Leaders Urge Congress to Pass H.R. 5073: The Immigration Security & Efficiency Act

Washington, D.C. – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition (TLC) and the Hispanic Business Roundtable (HBR) today called on Congress to pass H.R. 5073, The Immigration Systems Security and Efficiency Act, in order to end the INS bureaucratic nightmare and modernize the immigration application process.

“The unnecessarily long and antiquated INS application process has become a serious security threat,” said TLC President Robert Deposada. “While waiting to hear back from INS bureaucrats on their application status, immigrants can far too easily disappear and become untraceable.”

H.R. 5073, sponsored by Congressman Joe Baca of California, would streamline the INS application process by requiring the agency to switch from an archaic and inefficient paper filing system to an electronic one. The bill would speed and modernize the application process by creating a centralized electronic database, so that immigration records can be quickly accessed. The process would be modeled after the IRS electronic submission process.

After the public embarrassment of having sent visa approvals to two of the terrorists who died on 9/11 -- months after their death was covered by every media outlet in the world -- officials from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) told the **Washington Post** that the problem lies in “antiquated, inaccurate and untimely record-keeping system that still relies to a large extent on paper files.”

“Reforming the INS management structure without asking them to modernize their antiquated and inefficient process, is simply a waste of time,” said HBR President Mario Rodriguez. “The system needs to be more secure, but it also needs to be more consumer-friendly. Let’s face it a 5-million person backlog is simply unacceptable. We need to stop the bureaucratic nightmare that thousands of legal immigrants go through when dealing with the INS.”

“We desperately need a modern and efficient immigration system that will increase American security by speeding up the application process through a centralized electronic database that is easily accessible, and that would expedite family reunification,” Deposada said. “Congressman Baca’s bill accomplishes both. We urge congressional leaders in both parties to make passage of this bill one of their top priorities before they adjourn.”

###