



**For immediate release
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Statement by the President of The Latino Coalition on the Release of the OMB Report on Contract Bundling

Washington, DC – “On behalf of our Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Bush and his team of advisors for having the courage to address the issue of contract bundling in the Federal Government. The release of the study on OMB’s Strategies for Increasing Federal Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses is giant step to level the playing field for small businesses in government contracting.

“So many officials talk about helping small businesses and even more make all kinds of promises to our community. But today, I am very proud to stand with OMB Director Mitch Daniels and SBA’s Administrator Hector Barreto, because finally we see a President and his team taking solid steps to help small businesses across the country, and particularly Latino businesses, which are the fastest growing segment of the small business community.

“While many others have complained about contract bundling and how they are one of the most effective barriers against small business owners when it comes to government contracting, it was President Bush who had the courage and commitment to not only address the issue, but to go as far as to request a study by the Office of Management & Budget, the Small Business Administration and the Department of Defense to find remedies to this cancer within the procurement community.

“And for that Mr. President, the Hispanic business community salutes you and thanks you.

“Clearly, the procurement reform of the 1990s, have had a devastating effect on small business participation in government contracting. For years the pie has been shrinking for small businesses in government contracting. Contracts kept being consolidated and pushed farther and farther away from small businesses.

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“But today we see a light at the end of the tunnel. This report is a giant step forward in opening a door of opportunity for small businesses throughout the country. But above and beyond studies, what is required is leadership. And clearly this President and his team are stepping up to the plate.

“I want to emphasize that what is most impressive of this study is the strong accountability provisions and requirements. By requiring agencies to directly report to the OMB Deputy Director for Management on the status of their efforts to address contract bundling issues, we are making sure that all government agencies at all levels, understand that the President and his top team are not fooling around, they mean business.

“For instance, at HUD, Secretary Martinez and Deputy Secretary Jackson have initiated a program with a goal to not only achieve the 23% as statutorily required, but to more than double it and reach 50%.

“This is the kind of leadership we will need to make sure that the door of opportunity in government contracting is open to small businesses, which produce 75% of the jobs in our economy. So if small businesses are the engine of our economic growth, this effort today is the injection of high quality fuel that will make that engine roar and lead us to a new era of prosperity.

“On behalf of the more than one and a half million Hispanic owned businesses in this country, we want to thank to all of those involved in this effort.

“And special thanks to President Bush, because none of this would have been possible if we did not have a President who understood the importance and the power that small businesses play in the U.S. economy. Thanks you very much.”

The Latino Coalition (TLC) 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, please visit our website at www.TheLatinoCoalition.com.

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