



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **The Latino Coalition Strongly Condemns Congresswoman Velazquez's Statement on the Small Business Administration**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition (TLC) today strongly condemned the irresponsible statement by Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez where she called for the resignation of SBA Administrator Hector Barreto.

"Congresswoman Velazquez has resorted to nakedly partisan attacks and offers absolutely nothing at a time when we should be working together to help the citizens of the Gulf Coast rebuild from the terrible devastation caused by this year's hurricanes," said TLC President Robert Deposada. "Unfortunately, Congresswoman Velazquez only knows how to criticize and has not submitted a single idea on how to improve the process to help those affected by Katrina."

"In three-and-half months, the SBA has approved almost \$1.4 billion to over 20,000 homeowners, renters and businesses," added Deposada. "While there is clearly more to do, the SBA is responsibly operating its low-interest disaster loan program as Congress mandates, balancing the needs of victims with those of the American taxpayer, the ultimate backers of program."

"Congresswoman Velazquez has also resorted to shameful distortions of the SBA's clear record of accomplishments over the last four years under Administrator Barreto's leadership for no other purpose than to score political points," Deposada concluded.

SBA has doubled the number of loans to small businesses. The dollar amount of loans to small businesses has doubled from \$10 billion to \$20 billion in four years. And the number of contracts awarded by the Federal government to small businesses has increased under Administrator Barreto from \$50 billion to \$70 billion. In 2001, SBA approved \$1.2 billion in loans even after the 9/11 crisis. So far in less than 90 days, SBA has approved \$1.3 billion and over 20,000 loans in the areas affected by Katrina. The workers at this agency are working seven days a week and approving \$35 million a day in new loans. "Anyone who has any knowledge of the current crisis among the small businesses affected by Katrina would know that they have been asking SBA to transfer more of the decision-making process to the local banks that know the communities and the businesses in the affected areas and will be able to process loans much faster," Deposada said. "And that's exactly what the SBA did with the Go Loan program. Under this program local banks will receive 85% guarantee for working capital loans when they make direct loans themselves and they will use their own forms to guarantee a speedier process."

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“The Small Business Administration has a series of strict requirements issued by Congress before they can approve a loan to a small business,” Deposada added. “Which of these requirements is Congresswoman Velazquez willing to eliminate and why hasn’t she introduced legislation in order to expedite the loan approval process at SBA?”

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. For more information please visit our website at [www.TheLatinoCoalition.com](http://www.TheLatinoCoalition.com).

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