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CONTACT: MARTHA LOZADA
202-546-0008

RESULTS OF 2006 NATIONAL LATINO SURVEY

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***Republicans Rapidly Losing Ground Among Hispanic Voters,
but Democrats not Capitalizing on Opportunity*** –

Washington, D.C. – The Latino Coalition today released the results of the 2006 National Latino Survey during the 2006 Small Business Economic Summit in Washington, D.C. Survey top-line results and power-point presentation, are available at our website at www.thelatinocoalition.com.

“The 2006 National Latino Survey shows that Latino voters are not excited about the options in this year’s elections. This apathy among Latino voters might indicate a lower turn-out than expected this November,” said TLC President Robert Deposada. “Republicans hit rock bottom last year and they have remained there, while the support for Democrats dropped. Democrats failed to capitalize on the opportunity provided by the immigration debate. It’s not enough to hate your opponent, they need to provide an alternative that excites the voter, and so far they have failed in rallying Latino voters to their side.”

“Both extremes in the immigration debate have polarized the debate so much that it has turned off Latino voters,” Deposada added. “On one side, the Republicans tone has turned intolerant, while on the other hands, Democrats announced that this issue was not a priority in their agenda if they take control of Congress. Therefore, many Latino voters that want commonsense immigration reform feel that both parties are simply playing politics and do not care about them.”

“This survey has become the most reliable and accurate study on Hispanic political and consumer behavior in the U.S.,” said TLC Chairman Hector Barreto. “And the trend from last year continues trends spell that spell trouble for the Republican Party. But instead of taking advantage of this opportunity and take their numbers back to the levels achieved by President Clinton, Democrats failed to energize Latino voters.”

The debate over immigration reform is the hottest issues in the upcoming elections. When asked ‘what is the most important issue facing them’, immigration came first followed by the economy, discrimination and health care. When asked ‘what are the biggest barriers to Latinos in the U.S.’, learning English was first, followed by discrimination, immigration status and education.

“While there has been enormous progress for the Republican Party under President George W. Bush, there is real danger for a repeat of the Pete Wilson era that alienated Hispanics from the GOP for years,” Deposada added. “If the Republican leadership in Congress allows an extremist group to control the debate over immigration reform and put partisan rhetoric over real commonsense legislation, the GOP will eliminate all the progress achieved by President Bush in attracting Hispanics into the GOP.”

When asked what party they identify with most, 46% said Democrats and 16% said Republicans. 38% did not identify with either party.

In a generic ballot, if the election were held today, Democrats would win 59-16%.

“A very interesting fact revealed by this survey is that there is a growing trend among Latino voters to the independent column,” Deposada said. “Republicans have failed in attracting Latinos, and Democrats are losing steam. The biggest growth is in the independent column.”

According to the results of the survey, the one ray of hope for Republicans is that Latino voters continue to support a conservative social agenda and a conservative economic policy. By a margin of 61-8% Latino registered voters prefer lowering taxes to grow the economy; by a margin of 48-40% registered voters prefer to be covered by a private health care plan over a government-run program like Medicaid; by a margin of 54-36% Latino voters consider themselves pro-life; 59% said they would be less likely to support a candidate that supports gay marriage and 67% said they would be more likely to support a candidate that support parental notification before a teenage girl can have an abortion.

“The Republican leadership in Congress has failed miserably in keeping the coattails of President Bush among Hispanic voters,” Deposada said. “But instead of capitalizing on this, the numbers for Democrats in Congress have dropped across the board.”

President Bush’s favorable rating dropped to 36% with an unfavorable rating of 53% among Latino registered voters. Hillary Clinton’s favorable rating was 59% with 21% unfavorable. Republicans in Congress were viewed unfavorable by 43% of Latinos with a favorable rating of 33%. Democrats in Congress on the other hand had a favorable rating of 63%.

55% of registered voters support President Bush’s effort on immigration reform. There is strong support for a Temporary Worker Program (83%), and 56% said they would be less likely to support a candidate that voted to change the criminal status of illegal immigrants from a misdemeanor to a felony. “A potential compromise legislation that would take out the path to citizenship for illegal immigrants, unless they reapplied from their country of origin is supported by 65% of Latino registered voters,” Deposada added. “This number could be instrumental in helping bridge the gap that exists between both Chambers of Congress and pass legislation that would protect our borders, promote economic development and legalize the status of 11 million workers in the U.S.”

When compared to last year's number on the question of who does a better job at handling key issues, Republicans in Congress kept the same low level of support, while the support for Democrats dropped:

“Creating more jobs and improving the economy”

Republicans in Congress (2005): 19% Republicans in Congress (2006): 20%
Democrats in Congress (2005): 50% Democrats in Congress (2006): 44%

“Improving Education”

Republicans in Congress (2005): 20% Republicans in Congress (2006): 19%
Democrats in Congress (2005): 50% Democrats in Congress (2006): 43%

“Providing more affordable health care”

Republicans in Congress (2005): 15% Republicans in Congress (2006): 16%
Democrats in Congress (2005): 55% Democrats in Congress (2006): 48%

“Representing your views on immigration”

Republicans in Congress (2005): 17% Republicans in Congress (2006): 14%
Democrats in Congress (2005): 46% Democrats in Congress (2006): 48%

“Keeping America safe and fighting terrorism”

Republicans in Congress (2005): 30% Republicans in Congress (2006): 25%
Democrats in Congress (2005): 30% Democrats in Congress (2006): 30%

“Being in touch with the Hispanic community”

Republicans in Congress (2005): 16% Republicans in Congress (2006): 16%
Democrats in Congress (2005): 57% Democrats in Congress (2006): 52%

This national Hispanic survey was conducted among 1,000 Hispanic adults by Latino Opinions during the week of September 26-30, 2006. All interviews were conducted by professional English and Spanish speaking interviewers via telephone. Respondents were given the option of conducting the survey in English or Spanish. Interview selection was at random within predetermined population units. These units were structured to statistically correlate with the nation's adult Hispanic population according to the 2004 U.S. Census estimates. The accuracy of this national survey of 1,000 Hispanic adults is within +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence interval. For more detailed information on the survey and to review past surveys, please visit our website at www.thelatinocoalition.com.

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.

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