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## **Latino Leaders Endorse George Allen**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition (TLC) today announced they will support the re-election of U.S. Senator George Allen (R-VA). The National Coalition of Latino Clergy and Christian Leaders (CONLAMIC), the Inter-American Coalition of Physicians and Surgeons, the Hispanic Business Roundtable, the Colombian American Chamber of Commerce and the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, among others, also endorsed Senator Allen. The Chairmen of the Hispanic War Veterans of America, the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce also announced their support for the Senator.

“The reason so many Latino organizations and leaders from all walks of life are endorsing George Allen is because he has a proven record of being a good friend of the Latino community,” said **TLC Chairman Hector Barreto, resident of McLean, Virginia**. “When politicians ignored us in Virginia, George Allen appointed the first and only Latino to a cabinet post and many others to boards and commissions. He was an early and aggressive supporter of trade with Latin America, reduced taxes for small businesses and families, and made college education more affordable in Virginia. He has been a strong friend and ally of our community and deserves our support.”

Senator Allen accepted the endorsements of these organizations during a press conference at a Hispanic small business in Falls Church, Virginia, My Bakery & Café, with The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez and local Hispanic community leaders from Virginia.

“George Allen has a proud record of accomplishments and a long history in the Latino community,” said **HBR Board member Juan Carlos Benitez of Arlington, Virginia**. “During his tenure as Governor, we experienced the fastest growth of Latino-owned businesses in Virginia. We witnessed the inclusion of Americans of Hispanic descent in every level of the decision-making process, and he promoted increased trade between Virginia and Latin American countries. He knows the Latino community, and the Latino community knows him. We know his heart and we respect his principled stand on the issues. He has earned our support.”

“Jim Webb, the democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate in Virginia has ignored Latinos throughout his career,” said **TLC President Robert Deposada**. “He has called affirmative actions, ‘state sponsored racism’, but now has shift his position to support this program only for blacks. This is the kind of opportunistic and unprincipled leadership that has made so many voters disenchanted with our political process. We need principled leaders who understand Virginia and have a proven record of promoting inclusion, tolerance and opportunity for all. Jim Webb falls short of this need.”

According to the Richmond Times Dispatch, in an article titled "Webb shifts position on affirmative action. Democratic Senate hopeful says program should help blacks only", Webb said that affirmative-action programs should deal exclusively with blacks. Also according to The Washington Post on June 6, Webb said that "the original intent of affirmative action expanded, and a lot of different ethnic groups who never suffered state-sponsored discrimination at all came under the rubric of affirmative action."

"This shows that Jim Webb is simply an opportunistic and self-serving candidate who will say anything voters want to hear in order to get elected," said TLC President Robert Deposada. "It also shows how little Jim Webb knows about the diversity of Virginia. I guess he doesn't realize that there are quite a few Americans of Hispanic heritage in Virginia, and he obviously doesn't understand our history, our needs and our concerns."

"His rhetoric against affirmative action as 'state sponsored racism', goes as far as to threaten the existence of key programs like the Small Business Administration's 8-A program, which is of critical importance to many Latino-owned small businesses in Virginia," Deposada added. "Add his attacks on the 8-A program to his opposition to free trade with Central American countries, and you have a serious assault on the economic stability and prosperity of the Northern Virginia Latino community."

"When you look in the Webb for Senate website, on the issues section, Webb calls for Congress to focus only on border enforcement. But now he tells Latino audiences that he is for comprehensive immigration reform," Deposada added. "We don't need any more politicians that will shift with the wind, depending on the audience he is addressing, whenever a difficult issue arises. His opportunistic stands on the issues, on both affirmative action and immigration are a slap in the face of the intelligence of Latino voters in Virginia."

"Senator Allen has been an aggressive and courageous leader on education reform and promoting higher education opportunities for Latino students," said **CONLAMIC President Reverend Miguel Rivera**. "As Governor he fought to keep college tuition costs down and as Senator he has pushed through legislation to provide additional funding to Latino students to pursue careers in science, math, engineering and health. His strong stance for the defense of marriage, and to promote parental notification before minors get an abortion mirror the views of our community, and we appreciate his leadership in these areas as well."

Senator Allen introduced the "Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act" to provide \$250 million a year in federal grants for Hispanic and other minority-serving institutions to upgrade their telecommunications infrastructure. Senator Allen is also an original sponsor of "The National Innovation Act" to provide tangible action items to increase America's science and technology talent through grants, scholarships, and training and to encourage minorities to enter these fields.

Senator Allen is the lead Republican sponsor, with Sen. Menendez, of the "Partnership for Access to Laboratory Science (PALS) Act" to establish a federal grant program to upgrade science laboratories and to better train science teachers in urban and underserved areas.

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“Senator Allen has been a strong leader in promoting legislation to help make health insurance more affordable,” said **Dr. Rene Rodriguez, President of the Inter-American College of Physicians and Surgeons, the largest organization of Latino doctors in the U.S.** “Whether it’s his strong support of Association Health Plans to help small business join together to negotiate cheaper insurance rates for their workers, or his leadership to reform medical malpractice, Senator Allen has been our strong ally. He has also been an advocate for allowing uninsured workers to get a refundable tax credit up to \$3,000 to purchase health insurance, particularly Health Savings Accounts (HAS), which would be a great assistance to reduce the high number of Hispanic uninsured workers that are currently ignored by our Federal Tax Code.”

Along with Senator Warner, Senator Allen secured \$850,000 to conduct low-cost or free counseling and educational workshops through the Women's Health Center in Vienna. These programs will be targeted specifically for Hispanic women who face financial, language, cultural and other barriers. “This is the record of a leader who understands our community and is fighting in Congress to address our needs,” Dr. Rodriguez added.

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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