



April 6, 2006

The Honorable William Frist
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Leader Frist:

On behalf of The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition, we urge you to support the compromise language on a viable Temporary Worker Program as part of comprehensive immigration reform legislation, as proposed by Senators Martinez and Hagel. In our view, this is a serious and common-sense amendment that should be adopted, and opposing it, is tantamount to voting against comprehensive immigration reform

It is clear that the legislation that came out of the Judiciary does not have the votes to pass on the Senate floor. The amendment proposed by Senators Martinez and Hagel will give new life to this important issue. This amendment has built on the consensus of strong border security, puts clear pressure on employers who hire illegal immigrants and seeks compromise language on the Temporary Worker Program that is acceptable to a majority of Latinos in this country. These provisions would focus on not rewarding illegal behavior, and not sending the wrong message to future immigrants, but at the same time making sure that reform includes a solid foundation for continued economic growth.

The 2005 National Latino Survey showed that a majority of Hispanic registered voters support comprehensive initiatives, including those that require legal entry in order to find a job in the U.S., do not reward illegal entry, provide increased border patrol agents on the southern border, does not allow a path to citizenship for individuals who crossed the border illegally unless they reapply from their country of origin, and establish employer laws that focus on the hiring of legal workers. An overwhelming majority support the creation of a Temporary Worker program. More survey details at www.thelatinocoalition.com/surveysandpolls.htm.

In order to reduce the demand for illegal labor, we must create legal means for individuals to work in this country temporarily and return to their country of origin, after it has been proven that workers in the U.S. are not available for those jobs. The Martinez-Hagel amendment does that and holds businesses accountable. However, we need to make sure that the "insta-check" computer system is in place and that it is accurate, consistent, functional and enforceable so that business owners know they are hiring individuals who are here legally in a quick manner. This way the demand for illegal immigration will be seriously reduced and our border patrol can focus their attention on preventing drug smugglers and terrorists from entering this country."

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. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 202-546-0008. We look forward to working with you on passage of this amendment and of comprehensive immigration reform this week.

Best regards

Robert G. de Posada
President

Juan Carlos Benitez
TLC Board Member & Immigration Project Chairman