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## **The Latino Coalition Strongly Supports the Martinez-Hagel Compromise Amendment**

**Washington, D.C.** – The Board of Directors of The Latino Coalition today praised Senators Frist, Martinez and Hagel for their commitment to find a compromise on the debate over immigration reform.

“For the past few days these leaders having been pro-actively and aggressively trying to find a workable compromise, while key Senators became obstructionists on all important efforts and amendments to reach a compromise that would the floor,” said TLC President Robert Deposada. “Senators Frist, Martinez, Hagel, Salazar, McCain and Kennedy should be praised for their commitment to reach a workable deal. All others who have been obstructionists and are now trying to take credit for this compromise should be ashamed of themselves.”

“The Martinez-Hagel language is a serious and common-sense amendment that should be adopted, and opposing it, as well as other key amendments, is tantamount to voting against comprehensive immigration reform,” said TLC Board Member and Chairman of the TLC Immigration Project Juan Carlos Benitez. “It is time for key Senate leaders to stop playing partisan politics and seek a responsible and common-sense compromise to make sure that the Senate passes a comprehensive immigration reform legislation that President Bush can sign into law.”

“It is clear that the legislation that came out of the Judiciary does not have the votes to pass on the Senate floor,” Deposada said. “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](http://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.

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