

For Immediate Release
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USHCC Leadership Releases Statement Concerning Senate Agreement on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation Congress and Administration Must Change Outdated System to Prevent Further Burdens to U.S. Economy and Unfair Attacks on Immigrant Community

Washington (May 17, 2007) - The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the largest and most influential advocate for the two million Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States, released the following statement on the tentative immigration agreement in the U.S. Senate: The USHCC is highly encouraged that Administration and Congressional leaders from both sides of the aisle are exercising great leadership and demonstrating that Washington can reach common ground on immigration reform. While we continue to review the details of the tentative agreement and other compromise proposals in the Senate, we encourage Congress and the Administration to move the process forward. "We can no longer afford to live under an intolerable system of outdated and dysfunctional immigration laws that only further divide our nation and separate families and communities," said USHCC Board of Directors Chairman David C. Lizárraga. "Indeed, continued inaction on immigration reform will only fuel the desperation of businesses for a stable workforce, increase insecurity in immigrant communities, and-as reported by recent studies-fan anti-immigrant sentiments into hate crimes." The USHCC believes that any initiative must be comprehensive. Any proposal must fairly and humanely protect our borders, protect our economy and provide for a strong and accountable guest-worker program. Additionally, comprehensive reform must recognize the significant contributions of all immigrants, establish a process for earned legalization with an eventual pathway to citizenship, reunite families, and ensure that every student is able to gain access to a quality post-secondary education. "We need reform that is consistent with the requirements of our economy and responds to business and humanitarian considerations while securing all of our borders. While this agreement is not perfect and will need additional improvements, it will get the ball rolling towards an eventual and final compromise," said USHCC President and CEO Michael L. Barrera. "The question now is whether our elected leaders will be able to push past the rhetoric from anti-immigrant voices and single issue interests that aim to stymie yet another opportunity to bring about comprehensive immigration reform." Failure to come to an agreement will only encourage the dangerous expansion of state and local enforcement of civil immigration laws. Any final proposal should not shift the onerous burden of enforcing immigration laws from the federal government onto employers, who should not be required to rely on ineffective verification systems.□Lastly, the USHCC supports existing Small

Disadvantaged Business contracting requirements in any final reform. We are encouraged that the tentative agreement in the Senate contains many of these provisions, such as a solution to the status of millions of hard working immigrants that currently reside in our country. □As a business organization, we will be scrutinizing the employer verification provisions and are wary of creating more illegal immigration woes in the future by not allowing guest workers an avenue to adjust their status and by limiting the ability of families to reunite. USHCC membership demands reform and many in the Hispanic community including the USHCC - will judge members of Congress for years to come on the basis of whether they genuinely helped this reform succeed or fail.

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The USHCC actively promotes the economic growth and development of Hispanic entrepreneurs and represents the interests of more than two million Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States, which earn more than \$350 billion annually. It also serves as the umbrella organization for 200 local Hispanic chambers in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and Mexico.