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News Release

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Mar 6, 2007

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NCLR URGES CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE “DREAM ACT” AND OPEN THE DOOR TO COLLEGE FOR THOUSANDS OF AMERICA’S STUDENTS

Washington, DC — The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., joined the United We DREAM Coalition in urging Congress to approve the Senate’s “DREAM Act” which was introduced today by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), and Richard Lugar (R-IN) joining the House companion bill, the “American Dream Act,” introduced last week by Representatives Howard Berman (D-CA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), and Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL). This bipartisan legislation will allow immigrant students who were raised in the U.S. and graduate from U.S. high schools to go to college and start on the path to citizenship.

“Since the ‘DREAM Act’ was first introduced in 2001, more than 390,000 of our nation’s best and brightest students have graduated from high school with no prospect of going to college. We cannot continue to waste this talent. Now is the time for Congress to pass the ‘DREAM Act’ and put the tremendous potential that these students have to work for our communities and our country,” said Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO.

Every year, American high schools grant diplomas to 65,000 young people whose parents brought them to the U.S. as babies or toddlers. While these students have the academic credentials to pursue a higher education, their immigration status bars them from opportunities that make a college education affordable – in-state tuition rates, loans and grants, most private scholarships, and the ability to work legally to earn their way through college. The “DREAM Act” and the “American Dream Act” will significantly increase access to college for young people who otherwise would not be able to seek higher education.

“These students are American in every way except one. They simply lack the opportunity that many Americans have – the chance to become educated and get ahead in life. The ‘DREAM Act’ will allow these young people to become the productive, taxpaying citizens this country needs,” said Murguía.

The United We DREAM Coalition is a broad alliance of national and local organizations throughout the U.S. which includes civil rights, education, immigrant rights, and faith-based groups. For more information on NCLR or the United We DREAM Coalition, please contact Melissa Lazarín at (202) 785-1670 or mlazarin@nclr.org.

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