



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 17, 2007

Contact:

Marie Watteau
(202) 785-1670

NCLR APPLAUDS LAUNCH OF SENATE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

Washington, DC –The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the U.S., today acknowledged the hard work of a bipartisan team of senators for their role in crafting a compromise immigration bill which will proceed to the Senate floor this week.

“Successful immigration reform cannot happen unless it includes a path to citizenship for immigrants who are living, working, and contributing to their communities in the United States. This proposal contains this crucial element, and this debate is the first step,” said Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO. “The debate on this vital issue will finally begin in the United States Senate. Latinos, and all Americans, are eager for Congress to act on immigration reform, and we are glad to be at the starting gate.”

However, NCLR expressed concern with some of the provisions included in the Senate bill. These include dramatically changing the legal immigration system by eliminating visa categories which allow U.S. citizens to petition for their families; a point system which would for the first time in nearly a century make visas available to anyone in the world based on educational attainment and English-language ability; and a proposed new temporary worker program.

“For a temporary worker program to function and to serve the interests of this country, workers must have an avenue for putting down roots and earning their way to U.S. citizenship over time,” said Murguía.

“While we have serious reservations about some elements of this bill, we will engage in vigorous efforts to improve it,” added Murguía. “We are deeply committed to moving legislation forward and seeing this process through to the House and ultimately to the President’s desk. We salute the senators who have taken the first step and look forward to engaging in the debate to its conclusion.”

###