



November 10, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama
President-elect
Transition offices
Washington DC

Dear President-elect Obama:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), we would like to congratulate you on your historic and decisive victory in last week's presidential election. NHLA was established in 1991 as a nonpartisan association composed of 26 leading national and regional Hispanic civil rights and public policy organizations, elected officials, and distinguished Latino leaders from all over the nation. We look forward to working with you and your Administration on mutual issues of interest and concern in the years to come.

Last week, the members of NHLA endorsed the nomination of New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson as Secretary of State. Governor Richardson has a long and distinguished history of public service at all levels of government. He has worked in the State Department, for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives for fourteen years where he was elected to the House leadership, and served in two Cabinet-level positions in the Clinton Administration, first as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and then as Secretary of Energy. Governor Richardson is now in his second term as one of the most successful chief executives in New Mexico's history.

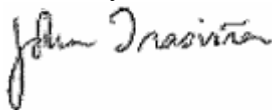
Throughout his career, Richardson has been a tireless and peerless advocate for many of the priorities outlined for your Administration – providing health care to all, creating jobs, improving schools, cleaning up the environment, stemming nuclear proliferation, fighting global warming, and providing tax relief to middle class families. His record of accomplishment on all these issues both in Congress and in New Mexico is notable.

Richardson is not only a leader in the Latino community and in this country but he has also become a well-respected international figure widely known for his strong commitment to international diplomacy, promoting democracy, and protecting civil and human rights. He has forged a well-earned reputation as a tough and deft diplomatic troubleshooter who has negotiated with leaders and heads of state in every corner of the globe.

At the request of Presidents Clinton and Bush, he has helped free American servicemen, aid workers, journalists, and other hostages being held captive in North Korea, Iraq, Sudan, and Cuba. He brokered an agreement for peace talks between the Taliban regime and opposing factions in Afghanistan and secured safe passage for 7000 Tajikistan refugees trapped in the northern part of the country. He negotiated a peaceful transfer of power in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2007, he brokered a cease-fire in the troubled region of Darfur in the Sudan. It is no wonder that Richardson has been nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize for his remarkable diplomatic achievements.

Governor Richardson will bring his extensive experience on virtually every continent, his profound knowledge of the diverse populations in the U.S. and abroad, his deep commitment to international diplomacy, justice, and peace, and his formidable work ethic to the critically important post of Secretary of State. We strongly urge his nomination.

Sincerely,



John Trasviña

Chair

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA)

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda Member Organizations:

Alianza Dominicana

American GI Forum

ASPIRA Association, Inc.

Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans

Cuban American National Council

Dominican American National Roundtable

Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities

Hispanic Federation

Hispanic National Bar Association

Interamerican College of Physicians & Surgeons

Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

MANA, A National Latina Organization

Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF)

National Association for Bilingual Education

National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives

National Association of Hispanic Publications

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
National Council of La Raza
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Hispanic Corporate Council
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Environmental Council
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc.
National Puerto Rican Forum
Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI)