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## **HISPANIC LEADERS ENDORSE RICHARDSON FOR SECRETARY OF STATE**

Washington, DC – In a letter to President-elect Obama, the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) today recommended New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson to be the next Secretary of State. 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.

“No one is more qualified to serve as our country’s chief diplomat than Governor Bill Richardson. He has helped free hostages in North Korea, Iraq, Sudan, and Cuba, secured an agreement protecting refugees in Afghanistan, negotiated a peaceful transfer of power in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and brokered a cease-fire in the troubled region of Darfur. He is not just a Democratic Party leader or an Hispanic community leader, he is an American leader,” stated John Trasviña, Chair of the NHLA and President and General Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

“Governor Richardson will be ready on day one to represent our country abroad. He has had an unusually diverse and distinguished career, having worked in the State Department and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, served seven terms in the House of Representatives, as Ambassador to the United Nations, Secretary of Energy, and as chief executive of a border state. His appointment would send a powerful message to both Latinos throughout our country, as well as to our neighbors in this hemisphere,” added NHLA Executive Committee member Janet Murguía, President and CEO of the National Council of La Raza.

“By all accounts, Latinos were a key part of President-elect Obama’s historic victory. Now, Latinos have the talent and expertise to have a major role in governing, at the Cabinet level and throughout the federal agencies,” concluded Trasviña explained. “NHLA will focus upon encouraging and preparing Latinos to serve in the new Administration.”

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