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MANA Implores President Obama and Congress to move forward for a Speedy and Comprehensive Resolution on Immigration Reform

Washington, D.C. -- MANA, A National Latina Organization, with headquarters in Washington, DC, twenty-six chapters and six affiliates across the nation, commends President Barack Obama for opening the discussion and making efforts to move immigration reform forward. As President Obama aptly stated, we currently have an “immigration system that is broken and needs fixing.” We are pleased with President Obama’s plan to streamline the immigration processing system, making administrative adjustments for efficiency. Still, when immigration reform was one of the key issues that won President Obama Latino support, and as it continues to gain momentum and public concern, we implore President Obama to advocate for a speedy resolution to this urgent issue. Pushing back the timeline for immigration reform creates deep concern within the Latino and in fact the entire American community.

Respectfully we join President Obama in recognizing that there are an estimated twelve million individuals’ lives on hold, awaiting comprehensive reform, but request that in this reform he account for the tremendous role immigrants play in the United States, and how they are an integral part of American heritage. President Obama has stated that immigrants “are not paying taxes in ways we’d like them to be paying taxes,” but we remind the President and others that billions of dollars a year are collected from immigrant’s income taxes through tax payer ID numbers, and from those who file under inaccurate or their minor children’s social security numbers, without being eligible for tax returns or earned income tax credit. While estimates vary by state, in Texas, for example, “in 2006, the state collected \$424 million more in revenue from unauthorized immigrants than it spent to provide education, health care, and law enforcement activities for that population.ⁱ” Even those “who are living in the shadows” pay at least sales tax, bearing a significant burden on their already low income.

The most efficient way to ensure immigrants the opportunity to be fully contributing members of society is through immigration reform that will allow them to come out of the shadows. Immigration reform has consistently fallen between the cracks, and our nation has waited long enough for solutions. We urge President Obama and Congress to consider this issue one of the most pressing facing our nation, and to move forward with comprehensive reform as quickly as possible. We have faith that the President and Congress will act quickly to resolve what could become an unprecedented class system in our great nation.

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About MANA: MANA, A National Latina Organization, is a nonprofit advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. With chapters across the country, it is the oldest national Latina membership organization in the United States. MANA, whose mission is to empower Latinas through leadership development, community service, and advocacy, envisions a national community of informed Latina activists working to improve the quality of life for all Hispanics. MANA also has the only national Latina mentoring program for girls 11 to 18, known as "HERMANITAS®".

ⁱ “The Impact of Unauthorized Immigrants on the Budgets of State and Local Governments” Congressional Budget Office. Dec 2007.