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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

**Colorado Hispanic Community Urges Transparency in the
Redistricting Process**
Coalition Calls on Commission to Protect Hispanic Communities of Interest

DENVER- The Colorado Hispanic Redistricting Coalition will release a statement at tonight's Joint Select Committee on Redistricting meeting in Boulder calling on the Committee to conduct their work through an inclusionary and transparent process that respects the voting strength of the Hispanic communities across the state.

“We believe that the advanced publication of maps and the opportunity for meaningful comment are vital to a full and fair process, said Winter Torres of the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association. “We are calling on the Joint Committee and the Governor to publicize all maps currently under consideration and set a deadline before the end of the legislative session that allows for meaningful public comment.”

The Colorado Hispanic community has seen significant growth in the past ten years. Census 2010 released data shows that the total Hispanic population in Colorado is one-fifth (21%) of the total state population (i.e., 1,038,687 Hispanic Coloradans). There are large Hispanic communities across the state, including Denver (190,965 or 32%), the larger Denver metropolitan area (823,021 or 21%), Adams County (167,878 or 38%), Pueblo County (65,811 or 41%), Aurora (93,263 or 29%) and the Colorado Springs metropolitan area (187,247 or 21%).

“We are concerned that proposed district lines may threaten to substantially and improperly dilute or even cancel the voting strength of our compact, geographically large, Hispanic community,” said Olivia Mendoza, Executive Director of the Colorado Latino Forum. “We want to ensure that we are regarded as important communities of interest, not as mere pawns to ‘pack’ or ‘crack’ votes solely for partisan reasons.”

Hispanic communities also make up a significant portion of Morgan County (34%), Weld County (28%), Eagle County (30%), and Garfield County (28%). Hispanics comprise 47% of the six counties of the San Luis Valley. Even when combined with the nearby Las Animas and Pueblo counties, the percentage of Hispanics remains above 40%.

The significant growth of Colorado's Hispanic community contributed to over 41% of Colorado's overall growth in the last ten years, with eight Colorado counties experiencing over 100% increases in their Hispanic population, including Douglas, Garfield, and Grand counties.

“We believe that the sizable and cohesive Hispanic communities throughout Colorado represent unique communities of interest bonded through strong social, familial, cultural, and economic ties that must be considered and respected in the federal redistricting process,” said Amber Tafoya of the Latina Initiative.

The Colorado Hispanic Redistricting Coalition is comprised of Hispanic organizations working together to ensure that the 2011 Congressional Plan incorporates the interests of the numerous Hispanic communities throughout Colorado. The Coalition includes the Colorado Hispanic Bar Association, , the Colorado Latino Forum, LARASA (Latin American Research and Service Agency), the Latina Initiative, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Mi Familia Vota, Rights for all People, Padres Unidos, CIRC (Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition), Hispanic National Bar Association and the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project.

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