

April 25, 2005

President Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

RE: Latino Leadership Urges You to Have REAL ID Removed from the Troop Relief Bill

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the major national Latino organizations have written to express our strong opposition to the *REAL ID Act*, H.R. 418, introduced by Representative Sensenbrenner, passed by the House of Representatives February 10th, and sent to the Senate on February 14th. Moreover, the House has attached the *REAL ID Act* to the Iraq, Afghanistan and Tsunami relief appropriations bill, the *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations* bill, H.R. 1268. We write to urge you to use your leadership to influence the current House/Senate conference proceedings.

The Latino community cares deeply about national security as well as immigration policy. As such, we believe that the issues at stake must be discussed through the Senatorial debate processes through appropriate committees, primarily the Homeland Security and Judiciary Committees, rather than being routed through the Appropriations Committee. If the *REAL ID Act* remains attached to the Iraq, Afghanistan and Tsunami relief appropriations bill, these goals would not be met. In addition, if passed, the *REAL ID Act* would have a negative impact on existing laws and many American communities. In particular, we believe that this bill will adversely impact hardworking Latino immigrants and their families, and take the debate further away from the real issue that needs to be addressed—comprehensive immigration reform.

Specifically, the *REAL ID Act* would displace provisions of the *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004* (Public Law 108-58)(*Intelligence Reform Act*), which you enacted into law on December 12, 2004. The *REAL ID Act* would repeal §7212 of the *Intelligence Reform Act*, which calls for security experts to improve drivers' licenses, and instead impose strict federal immigrant drivers' license and identification document requirements on states. *REAL ID* would also suspend federal laws to construct additional fencing along the U.S.-Mexican border, which is highly likely to increase the number of border deaths. Moreover, *REAL ID* would make it more difficult for individuals fleeing persecution to seek safe haven in the U.S., and take judicial discretion in immigration proceedings from judges and give it to financially interested bail bondspersons. In sum, *REAL ID* deviates sharply from the real issues that need to be addressed through comprehensive immigration reform.

For all these reasons, we urge you to use your leadership to convince House/Senate conferees to remove *REAL ID* from the *Emergency Appropriations Bill*. This will ensure that important immigration and Latino civil rights matters are provided the full and fair debate they deserve, through established Congressional procedures that are the hallmark of our democracy.

Sincerely,

Cuban American National Foundation (CANF)

League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)

National Council of La Raza (NCLR)