



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 15, 2009

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**The Reverend Luis Cortés, Jr. Comments on Rep. Luis Gutierrez’
Comprehensive Immigration Legislation**

Philadelphia, PA – The Reverend Luis Cortés Jr., Esperanza’s president, released the following statement in response to Rep. Luis Gutierrez’ (D-IL) introduction of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America’s Safety and Prosperity Act of 2009 (CIR-ASAP):

“We commend Congressman Gutierrez for his continued leadership and urge him to now reach across party lines and craft the bi-partisan bill that is within reach. Our country is hungry for a consensus solution --- and I believe we are closer than ever before.

“In recent months we have had detailed conversations with some of the most liberal and conservative Republicans and Democrats in Congress. Rather than the rhetoric and resistance that characterized previous legislative battles, we find serious legislators willing to accept new solutions to issues that derailed previous legislation.

“Most of all, we find consensus developing on many major issues. We find conservative Republicans willing to address legal status for the 12 million undocumented immigrants. And we find liberal Democrats working to structure a workable temporary worker program.

“We are concerned that Mr. Gutierrez’ legislation does not include a workable temporary-worker program, and we call on him to work with Democrats and Republicans in both chambers to pursue a temporary worker solution that will strengthen our economy.

“Similarly, we urge Republicans to reach across the aisle to discuss reasonable requirements for 12 million undocumented immigrants to earn legal status.

“For 22 years, Esperanza has specialized in addressing the needs of the Hispanic community and bringing a sustained response of hope through faith. We fear that the debate in Congress over immigration reform will become so bitter and partisan that the needs of our country and the issues we address every day will go ignored. As people of faith, we hope to see collaboration and reconciliation between the parties as the debate develops.

“We recently launched *Esperanza for America*, a national grassroots campaign for immigration reform to mobilize and engage our network of Hispanic congregations, faith and community-based agencies in the 2010 immigration reform debate. We look forward to working with Rep. Gutierrez and Members of Congress from both parties to realize the passage of comprehensive immigration reform.”

Esperanza is the largest Hispanic Evangelical network in the United States. With a national network of over 12,000 Hispanic congregations and community non-profits, Esperanza is one of the leading voices for Hispanics in America.

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