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Obama for America
Att: U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper,
Health Care Policy Advisor to Sen. Barack Obama
P.O. Box 8102
Chicago, IL 60680

October 15, 2008

Dear Senator Obama,

On the eve of one of this country's most important elections, the National Latino AIDS Action Network (NLAAN) would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support for increased HIV prevention and access to care and would like to call your attention to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the Latino Community. It is because of your understanding of the issues that we would like to call your attention to the HIV/AIDS crisis in the Latino Community.

As the largest minority group in the U.S., Hispanics/Latinos are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. The tremendous impact of the epidemic continues to affect the health and well being of Latinos across the U.S. and its dependant territories. **Latinos in the U.S. represent 15.3% (U.S. Census Bureau) of the population but account for 24.3% of the new HIV infections.** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Latinos are three times more likely than Caucasians to be HIV positive or to have an AIDS diagnosis. Studies have shown that Latinos face additional barriers to healthcare access that exacerbate the epidemic, including lack of health insurance, underutilization of preventive health services, and limited availability of linguistically and culturally competent services. Despite these trends, AIDS among Latinos has all but disappeared from national discourse. Latinos are not on the public health agenda in many states and the Federal government response has been slow and inadequate.

At the National Latino AIDS Leadership Summit held in Washington, DC on January 29-30, 2008, more than 300 leaders representing 27 States and U.S dependant territories came together to finalize the **Latino/Hispanic HIV/AIDS Action Agenda** and prioritize action steps. The meeting helped develop the attached [Latino/Hispanic HIV/AIDS Federal Policy Recommendations Addressing the Latino AIDS Crisis](#) which was released June 2008. This document provides an overview of the social and contextual factors that contribute to the disproportionate rates of HIV infection and AIDS diagnoses within Latino communities and offers concrete recommendations for addressing the issues at the Federal level.

This important document urges the Federal government to make necessary and overdue changes that will directly impact the health and wellbeing of Latino communities across the country. Inadequate and mismanaged funding, lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services and apathy towards the

cultural realities of Latino communities have created a health crisis that must be addressed immediately by the next administration.

As you have said in the past, "Every time someone is infected with HIV/AIDS, they are infected with a virus that could have been prevented. Every time that someone dies of AIDS untreated, they die prematurely." We know that as President you will continue to generate concrete actions for all those at risk or infected with HIV/AIDS. NLAAN is at your service and would welcome an opportunity to work with you and your team to meet this challenge head on with the urgency that it demands.

We are asking you to endorse these Federal Policy Recommendations so that we might quickly communicate this fact to our participants across the country.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis DeLeon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dennis" and last name "DeLeon" clearly distinguishable.

Dennis DeLeon
Chair of the NLAAN Coordinating Committee