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**For Immediate Release**

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**The HNBA Responds to President's  
Refusal to Name Hispanic Supreme Court Justice**

(Washington, DC-October 31, 2005) - The Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) expresses its profound disappointment that for the third time in the last six months President George W. Bush has ignored the estimated 41.3 million Americans of Hispanic descent in his choice to fill a Supreme Court vacancy.

Today, in nominating Judge Samuel Alito, the President has missed an opportunity to create a historic legacy by nominating the first Hispanic to the Supreme Court. On June 6, 2005, the HNBA presented the President with a list of eight candidates who are highly qualified to serve on the High Court and among the brightest minds in the legal profession. The President's decision to overlook them is inexplicable.

"This nomination was critical for the Hispanic community, which now represents the largest minority group in our Nation. In this land of immigrants, it is crucial that America's Highest Court reflect the rich diversity of its citizens. The HNBA furnished a list of highly qualified Hispanic candidates to the President, as we have done with his predecessors. Once again, the President has ignored our recommendations and our community," stated HNBA President Nelson A. Castillo.

"The HNBA does not participate in partisan politics. Not being partisan, however, does not mean we take issues affecting our communities lightly. We intend to hold our political leaders accountable for the positions they take," concluded Castillo.

The Hispanic population represents the fastest growing and most dynamic demographic in the Nation. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that, with more than 41 million Hispanics in the U.S., one of every seven people in the U.S. is Hispanic. Hispanics are the country's largest minority group, accounting for one-half of the Nation's overall

population growth in the last year. Nearly two million more Hispanics voted in the 2004 election than in 2000, representing an increase of 27% from the 2000 election, according to an analysis by the National Council of La Raza.

Although the rising influence of Hispanics in the U.S. is difficult to ignore, with today's nomination the President does just that. In 2004, 7.6 million Hispanics voted nationwide in the presidential election. In that close election, the Hispanic vote made the difference.

Unfortunately, as our country moves forward with an ever-changing America, the Supreme Court will not be representative and instead, will be devoid of the unique perspective and the invaluable contributions a Hispanic jurist could make. Without a Hispanic Justice, the Supreme Court's "robust exchange of ideas" during important deliberations and decisions simply cannot reflect the America we live in today.

The HNBA calls on its membership, on the members of all Hispanic organizations, and on all citizens to contact the White House and Members of Congress regarding the President's decision to overlook so many highly qualified Hispanic candidates for the Supreme Court seat vacated by Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

The HNBA is a non-profit, non-partisan national association that represents the interests of over 27,000 Hispanic American attorneys, judges, law professors, law students and legal professionals. Its continuing mission is to improve the study, practice and administration of justice for all Americans by ensuring the meaningful participation of Hispanic American legal professionals.

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