



For Immediate Release:
November 8, 2007

Media Contact: Noemi Perez (202) 842-1212 x485
nperez@ushcc.com; or
Erica Baca (202) 485-1212 x483
ebaca@ushcc.com

The USHCC Applauds Today's Passage of the Peru Trade Agreement

The trade agreement sets a fair trade framework and will open doors for small businesses.

Washington, DC - The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC), the largest advocate for over two million Hispanic business owners nationwide, commends today's passage of H.R. 3688, the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement Implementation Act. The Act passed by a vote of 285-132. The USHCC supports the Peru Trade Agreement for the positive impact it will have on hemispheric relations and how it will open doors of trade for small businesses.

"This trade agreement, which was formulated under a historic and precedent setting fair trade framework, is of vital interest to securing our nation's long term economic and diplomatic strength in the Western Hemisphere," said David C. Lizárraga, USHCC Chairman of the Board. "The Peru Trade Agreement will promote the long sought and elusive concept of "fair trade" and propose a win-win scenario for businesses and workers on both sides of the border."

The USHCC champions the Peru Trade Agreement for the positive impact it will have on the U.S. economy as a global competitor. The agreement will lower tariffs and boost U.S. exports, including exports from those industries where the United States has lost jobs to overseas production like textiles and manufacturing. Ultimately, American workers and businesses alike will benefit from lower tariffs and increased capital investments while making our country more competitive in the global market.

"On behalf of the Hispanic business community, I am encouraged by the bi-partisan cooperation of House and Senate leaders in advancing a historic framework for this and future trade agreements," said Michael L. Barrera, USHCC President and CEO. "This is primarily a victory, not for huge multi-nationals, but for small companies, which make up 80 percent of U.S. firms with business in Peru."

Of the 5,519 U.S. companies doing business with Peru, 4,403 are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with exports totaling \$808 million and representing 43.3 percent of total U.S. exports to

this country. The Peru Trade Agreement will fix licensing fees and other non-tariff barriers that currently impede many more small businesses from exporting their products or services.

"This trade agreement will also provide small businesses with expanded access to government procurement contracts," added Mr. Barrera. "Those contracts for roads, schools, clinics, and the like are often too small for major American companies to perform profitably. But they are just the kinds of contracts our smaller construction companies, distance learning and medical equipment companies - just to mention a few - can successfully fulfill."

This trade agreement is also crucial to reclaiming American diplomatic influence in Latin America. Three years after passage of an FTA with Chile, per capita income rose by 83% over the same period, and unemployment fell from 8.1% in 2003 to 6% at the end of 2006 in that country.

"It is through trade and economic development that Latin American countries will generate employment, ameliorate poverty, control migration, increase wealth, and strengthen the democratic institutions through which our countries can be better allies," concluded Mr. Lizárraga. "The USHCC is pleased with the approval of this trade agreement and we encourage the Congressional leadership to schedule and pass the upcoming Panama and Colombia agreements as well."

About the United States Chamber of Commerce

Founded in 1979, the USHCC actively promotes the economic growth and development of Hispanic entrepreneurs and represents the interests of more than two million Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States, which earn more than \$350 billion annually. It also serves as the umbrella organization for 200 local Hispanic chambers in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

#####

Note to editors: If you are interested in viewing additional information about the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, please visit the USHCC Web page at <http://www.usbcc.com/about> on USHCC's information pages. Web links, telephone numbers and titles were correct at time of release, but may since have changed. For additional assistance, journalists and analysts may contact USHCC's Communications Team or other appropriate contacts listed at <http://www.usbcc.com/contact.html>.