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Texas Business Coalition Unveils Ad Campaign for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

AUSTIN, Texas (March 29, 2007) – A new television ad urging Congress to fix the nation's broken immigration system will hit Texas airwaves in the coming weeks in a campaign that has united a diverse coalition of Texas business owners and trade associations.

The new ad, "We All Need Workers." will begin running April 2 on network affiliate stations across Texas. The spot will also air on cable stations statewide and can be viewed online at www.txeir.org.

The paid campaign was organized by Texas Employers for Immigration Reform (TEIR), a broad-based coalition of trade associations and business owners from across the Lone Star State.

"This campaign is about educating the public " said Bill Hammond, president of the Texas Association of Business and TEIR Board Member, during a statewide media tour to kickoff the campaign and grassroots mobilization effort in advance of the expected U.S. House and Senate debate on immigration reform legislation. "We are thrilled that such a wide range of business leaders and organizations are involved. Our goal is to broaden and deepen the level of debate about comprehensive reform."

Over the next few weeks, coalition members will fax and e-mail Texas lawmakers in key congressional districts whose support is considered important to passage of a comprehensive solution that addresses security concerns, and includes a temporary guest worker program combined with clear, sensible workplace enforcement.

Flanked by representatives of agriculture, homebuilding, landscape, restaurant,

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hotel and other industries, Hammond said the free market should dictate the flow of people into and out of the United States.

“A growing, prosperous Texas economy needs a growing population. Immigrants fill an enormous gap, to the tune of \$17.7 billion in state gross product according to the State Comptroller, by serving in jobs that many citizens simply don’t want to take or perform. Any immigration solution that ignores the needs of our economy will only delay reform and promote further illegal immigration, not end it,” Hammond said.

In this decade, America has created nearly 7 million new jobs. Immigrants filled over half of them. Without those workers, new businesses would not have been able to start and existing businesses would not have been able to grow; economic growth would have ground to a halt. But with the help of hard-working immigrants, Texas has added over 1.7 million jobs in the last decade and our unemployment rate is below 5 percent.

But now that economic prosperity is at risk due to a growing labor shortage both nationally and statewide. Many business owners say they are unwilling to make investments in Texas unless they can find the workers needed to do the jobs.

The problem is not unique to the Lone Star State. Across the United States, 12 million undocumented workers fill critical jobs that would go empty or disappear because of the shortage of domestic workers.

“Long-term growth in the U.S. labor force is not expected to keep pace with the number of new jobs. Comprehensive immigration reform can help meet the demands of our industries, providing jobs that are critical to the state and national economy,” Hammond said.

“We can’t just build walls around a broken system, we need to fix it,” he added.

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About TEIR

TEIR is a broad-based coalition of trade associations and business owners from across the Lone Star State. TEIR is calling for comprehensive immigration reform that addresses border security while ensuring employers have access to the labor force it needs. For information on TEIR, visit the coalition’s Web site at www.txeir.org.