

## Rothman Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

October 13, 2004

Rothman Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month  
Pledges to Continue Working to Create Jobs, Improve  
Health Care and Education Within Hispanic-American Community

Washington, DC - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today issued the following statement in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

"As the most rapidly growing minority group in the United States, Hispanic-Americans contribute profoundly to our American culture and economy. With more than 122,000 Hispanic-Americans living in my congressional district, comprising roughly 19 percent of our total population, I know the important role that Hispanic-Americans play in our communities. That is why I offer my best wishes to the Hispanic-American community during this year's Hispanic Heritage Month. It is essential that the federal government commit to providing the resources and tools to the Hispanic-American community that will allow everyone in this flourishing group to achieve the American Dream. From job creation, to education, to health care, and other issues that directly affect quality of life, the federal government must fulfill its promise to offer the resources and equal opportunities for Hispanic-Americans, and all immigrants, to achieve a better life.

"With 40 million people, the Hispanic-American community is our country's largest minority community. America is grateful for the more than 100,000 Hispanic-Americans who are proudly enlisted in active military duty, fighting to defend our country's freedom and democracy. America mourns the more than 120 Hispanic-Americans who have lost their lives in Iraq, and the many more who were wounded.

"Hispanic-Americans are active participants in our society, which is why it is imperative that the federal government address their needs in a real and meaningful way. It is so important that we work to bring economic opportunity and prosperity to the Hispanic-American community. More than 1 million Hispanic-Americans are currently, actively looking for work. Instead of providing tax cuts for the top 1 percent of Americans, as the Bush Administration has done, we must invest these monies in creating good paying jobs by helping our small businesses, manufacturing, infrastructure and technology sectors, while removing incentives that encourage the outsourcing of U.S. jobs. I also support investments in job training to equip American workers with the skills they need to succeed. I also believe we must extend unemployment benefits for people looking for work.

"We also must fulfill the promise of a better education and college opportunity for Hispanic-Americans. That means providing the funding for public education, instead of, as the Bush Administration has done, denying over 1 million children who were promised after-school services, denying 57,000 limited English proficient children promised bilingual education, and eliminating funding for the dropout prevention program. I am also fighting against Republican efforts to dismantle Head Start for 271,000 Hispanic-American children. And for those who have graduated from high school, we must expand access to college by increasing the maximum Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$5,800 this year, doubling the HOPE Scholarship tax credit from \$1,500 per student to \$3,000 per student, and making the HOPE tax credit refundable. We must also reduce the costs of all student loans by allowing borrowers to consolidate their student loans more than once so that they can take advantage of lowered interest rates, and eliminate student loan taxes.

"On a separate front, it is very clear that we must fight to provide quality, affordable health care to everyone. The availability of quality health care is a measure of the fairness of a society, and yet nearly one in three Hispanic-Americans lacks health insurance and millions more can barely afford to pay their premiums. The Bush budget does nothing to hold down health care costs. In Congress, I am fighting to control these escalating costs through health care tax credits for small businesses and an expansion of Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program to enroll more Americans in health insurance programs that are a proven success.

"America has always been an immigrant nation and we must never forget that. Today, as we strive to ensure equal opportunities in all aspects of society, we must realize that future generations will judge us by how well this country treats its newest immigrants. My grandparents were all immigrants. None of them spoke English. My brother, sister, and I are the first generation in my family to go to college. I know the contributions that immigrants make to enriching and strengthening this country. The new cultures, the new blood, the enthusiasm, and drive to succeed are all vitally important qualities that immigrants have brought to America since our founding. I feel that way about my family of immigrants, and I feel that way about all immigrants to America, including Hispanic-Americans.

"As a member of Congress who is committed to creating new jobs, to improving education, to providing health care for all Americans, and to opening the doors of opportunity for everyone in this country, please know that the Hispanic-American community has my support for policies that will lift up all Americans in this country. If we become a country that picks and chooses which groups of Americans should be favored over other groups of Americans, then we have failed to live up to our nation's guiding principles of equal opportunity and equal justice for all."

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