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Washington, DC - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today joined in the celebration of Cinco de Mayo, commemorating the historic triumph of the Mexican people over the French Army in The Battle of Puebla in 1862 and honoring the contributions of Hispanic-Americans to the United States.

"Today we celebrate the importance of Hispanic-Americans in this country, specifically the ongoing contributions Mexican-Americans make to strengthen our nation," Rothman said. "Cinco de Mayo reminds us of the significance of freedom and liberty. For Mexico, Cinco de Mayo has become a symbol of unity and patriotism. In the United States, it is also an occasion to celebrate the rich cultural heritage Mexican-Americans have brought to our country."

Hispanic-Americans are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States. They are leading a record number of small businesses: 1.2 million; with annual revenues of nearly \$200 billion. The fastest-growing small business sector is Hispanic-American-owned firms. Today, there are 25 Hispanic Members in the United States Congress, many of them Mexican-Americans, representing constituencies from all around the country.

Rothman noted that he and his fellow House Democrats have taken bold steps to ensure that the Hispanic-American community has every opportunity to achieve the American dream. The Democratic Hispanic Agenda - *Compromiso Democrático con el Pueblo Latino* - was introduced last year, and embodies an historic commitment to the issues that Hispanic-American families care about, such as jobs, education, health care, immigration reform, and meeting our nation's obligations to our veterans.

"For Democrats, diversity is not just a slogan, it is a bedrock principle," Rothman said. "Hispanic-Americans share with all Americans our common goals of freedom, opportunity, and a chance to build a better life. Today, we say "Gracias" to Hispanic-Americans for being such great fellow Americans, and making our country a better place."

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