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**The Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia
Calls For a Just Response to the Child Refugee Humanitarian Crisis**

(Washington, DC – October 2, 2014) – The Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia (HBA-DC) calls for our national leaders to take a measured and just approach to the humanitarian crisis that is the thousands of unaccompanied children crossing the southern border into the United States.

The HBA-DC appeals to the President, Congress, and policymakers at the state and local levels to acknowledge that these children are in significant part fleeing violence and exploitation in their home countries. Accordingly, HBA-DC calls upon our leaders to change the tone of the national conversation from one of “immigration reform,” fraught as it is with political considerations, to one of “humanitarian aid,” so as to see justice done for these child refugees.

HBA-DC therefore opposes any legislation that diminishes the due process rights afforded to these children in our American legal system. Proposals such as curtailing child trafficking standards or fast-tracking mass deportations of children back to dangerous conditions are unjust responses and counter to our national history of welcoming and aiding the vulnerable.

To that end, the HBA-DC urges that the following guide national and local policymakers:

- Preserve the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 to protect children fleeing exploitation, violence, and possible death in their home countries.
- All unaccompanied children must be treated with dignity, fairness, compassion, and in full accordance with their due process rights. Expedited processing of these children jeopardizes their due process.
- Funding should be allocated to permanently expand Immigration Courts so they can provide prompt hearings for refugees without compromising standards of due process and fairness.

America has repeatedly embraced child refugees escaping violence, persecution, or natural disasters around the world. Our nation welcomed children fleeing Cuba in the 1960s, accepted children escaping Vietnam in the mid-1970s, and received children from Haiti after that country’s 2010 earthquake. We should remain true to our humanitarian tradition of helping the most vulnerable of refugees.

About the HBA-DC

The Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, voluntary legal association representing the interests of Hispanic attorneys, judges, law professors, law students, and legal professionals within the greater Washington, D.C. area. Its mission is promoting the professional development of Hispanic lawyers and law students; promoting equal justice and opportunities for all Hispanics; and promoting the appointment of Hispanics to leadership positions in Federal, state, and local governments, in the judiciary, and in other leadership positions. For more information visit <http://www.hbadc.org>.

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