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January 22, 2009

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Alex Nogales

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The Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
Chairman  
House Energy and Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman:

Thank you for your leadership in introducing the Digital Television Extension Act of 2009. The National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC) fully supports the bill.

We have learned that there are two million people on a waiting list to receive their Digital Television (DTV) Transition converter box coupons from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The public has experienced many problems with the coupon program. Those that requested coupons early faced limited choices of converter boxes and were forced to choose between expensive boxes or letting their coupons expire. Consumers have waited anywhere from four to eight weeks to receive the coupons they have requested. We believe Congress must fix these flaws and restore appropriate funding to the program, before the nation is ready to transition.

Your legislation addresses many of the concerns around delaying the transition; extends the deadline in a reasonable manner; expedites delivery of the coupons and allows consumers with expired coupons to reapply. We do understand the frustration of some key stakeholders that oppose the extension of this longtime deadline and considerations should be given to their concerns and the negative impact they may encounter with a three-month delay. However, our primary concern should be the public interest. This modest extension will surely offset some of the harmful effects of what we believe has been a flawed transition.

Disenfranchised communities, senior citizens, low-income and minority populations will be most affected by the DTV transition. This is not the time to add more stress on this vulnerable population. If the coupons are not being distributed in a timely manner then the deadline must be extended.

NHMC urges members of Congress to approve this important legislation.

Best Regards,

Alex Nogales  
President & CEO

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