



# Hispanic Technology & Telecommunications Partnership

Advancing Access to Broadband Technologies for Unserved and Underserved Communities

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## HTTP APPLAUDS THE HOUSE ON PASSAGE OF THE WIRELESS TAX FAIRNESS ACT, CALLS FOR ACTION IN THE SENATE TO PROTECT CONSUMERS FROM REGRESSIVE WIRELESS TAXES

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (Washington, DC) – The HTTP coalition applauds the House for bipartisan action in passage of legislation, which, if enacted into law, will protect consumers from hikes in state and local taxes on wireless services – a growing burden on the mobile services that provide an affordable means of communication and access to information for millions of families.

Latino communities rely on wireless devices more than other Americans. Hispanics are more likely than Whites to access the Internet and e-mail on a mobile device. Hispanics are also more likely than Whites to rely on a mobile Internet connection in lieu of a home broadband connection. Burdensome local taxes raise the cost of these services for families already struggling through tough economic times. "Excessive wireless taxes are regressive. They hurt struggling families by driving up costs, and discourage use of mobile Internet and the mobile platform at a time when we are fighting to get Latinos, and all Americans online and using the Internet to enhance their lives," said Brent Wilkes, **National Executive Director, League of united Latin American Citizens (LULAC)**.

"Latinos have been particularly hard hit by the economic downturn. Barriers like excessive taxes, burdensome bureaucracy or arbitrary charges threaten to make wireless services that could assist in getting a job or starting a business unaffordable or out of reach, " said **Lillian Rodríguez López, President, Hispanic Federation**.

"Raising the cost of wireless services places barriers to those already struggling to catch up. We applaud the House for this pro-consumer and pro-Latino legislation," said **Jose Marquez, President and CEO, Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association (LISTA)**.

HTTP calls on the Senate to take up and pass companion bill, S.543, introduced in the upper chamber by Senator Ron Wyden and Senator Olympia Snowe.

The average wireless consumer today pays over 16% in taxes on wireless services. This is nearly double the taxes on other goods and services, and regressive on minority communities that already have higher rates of unemployment, and lost more household wealth in the recent economic downturn. We encourage Congress to pass this measure to ease an increasing burden on services relied upon by families across the country.

“Mobile devices provide a connection and information access point for poor families and those already struggling economically. Adding multiple, discriminatory local taxes to these services harms the affordability that makes the mobile platform such a lifeline for Latinos and others in hard times,” **said Jason A. Llorenz, HTTP Executive Director.**

## **ABOUT HTTP**

The Hispanic Technology and Telecommunications Partnership (HTTP) is a coalition of national Hispanic organizations working to increase awareness of the impact of technology and telecommunications policy on the U.S. Hispanic community. For additional information, visit <http://www.httponline.org/>.

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