National Council of State Directors of Adult Education

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IN SEARCH OF LEADERSHIP

WASHINGTON, D.C. (JUNE 27, 2008) Business has sent up another cry for help. It is not a sexy issue, but it is a critical pervasive one. Their representatives are committed to doing their part. But they cannot do it alone. They need the federal government to provide some leadership. **Will Congress or the Administration break its pattern and respond?** Congressmen Kennedy (D-RI) and Hinojosa (D-TX) have made a commitment. But they cannot do it alone.

The National Commission on Adult Literacy (http://www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/), comprised primarily of national business leaders, released their report "Reach Higher, America: Overcoming the Crisis in the US Workforce." The report details the critical need for some leadership from Congress and the Administration to address the reading, math, and English skill needs of the workforce.

The numbers are becoming old news, and government leaders have turned a deaf ear even to their own studies: ninety three million adults (43% of the adult population) have reading, math, and/or English skill levels that limit their ability to fulfill their roles as workers, family members, and citizens; one out of three young adults. More than 1.2 million people drop out of high school every year. Well educated baby boomers are retiring to be replaced with workers with lower skill levels. The U.S. young adults are less educated than the previous generation. **Why are Congress and the Administration not competing to embrace these resounding statistics and setting their best minds to proclaiming solutions?**

The Commission's report acknowledges that business is anxious to do its part. Israel Mendoza, Chair, NCSDAE, representing the adult education state directors who are responsible for adult education and literacy in the states, acknowledges that adult educators are anxious to do their part, also. "OMB has cited adult education an "Effective" program—OMBs highest rating. Adult education is one of only four of the Department of Education's ninety three programs to attain that rating.

"Those 'effective' adult education programs have seats for fewer than three million adult students—out of the 93 million that could benefit," Mendoza added.

"We need some leadership from Washington to bring the players together and expand access to effective adult learning services," Mendoza added. "Our county, our states, our communities, our families, our neighbors, and our students deserve nothing less."

"The state directors have prepared and sent to the Commission a 'Commendation and Response' document (http://www.ncsdae.org/ncsdae_response_to_caal.htm) that not only applauds the Commission's work but also offers suggestions for policy development and implementation strategies," Mendoza added.

The National Council of State Directors represents the vast majority of adult education and literacy services in the country. They see first hand the gap between the need for services and the limited opportunities. Their latest survey reported waiting lists in forty of the forty three states reporting.

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If you would like more information about this topic or to schedule an interview with Mr. Mendoza, contact Lennox L. McLendon at 202 624 5250 or email Lennox at dc2@ncsdae.org