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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## H.B. 56 Will Dramatically Impact Health and Safety of Communities

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama (¡HICA!) expresses grave concern over proposed legislation, House Bill 56, to be voted on in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee of the Alabama House of Representatives on Tuesday, March 8. Similar legislation in Arizona has had detrimental effects on the ability of Hispanic immigrants, regardless of immigration status, to integrate into their new communities and the ability of service agencies, law enforcement, and the business community to facilitate integration.

“In recent years, Alabama has attracted international business and moved forward from the legacy of Jim Crow laws and Bull Connor. This proposed legislation would be a huge step backward for our state,” says Isabel Rubio, executive director of ¡HICA!.

As an agency which receives funding from the Federal Office of Violence Against Women to serve immigrant victims of crime and domestic violence, ¡HICA! fears that this bill would affect its capacity to do that. Furthermore, law enforcement officials across the country have communicated their concerns that legislation this H.B. 56 and Arizona’s S.B. 1070 could erode public safety in all communities by shifting the roles and priorities of local law enforcement from protecting communities to functioning as ICE officers.

Rubio says, “As advocates for victims of domestic violence, rape and human trafficking we are concerned with how this bill would impact the services immigrant victims can receive—from being transported to and housed in temporary shelter to filing a police report in our offices. Furthermore, the relationship of trust between local law enforcement, ¡HICA! and the broader

immigrant community is vital to community safety; this bill could put that relationship in jeopardy.”

¡HICA! calls on Alabama’s state legislature to demand comprehensive immigration reform at the Federal level and to reject proposed legislation that would cost Alabama taxpayers millions of dollars in implementation costs and legal fees, create a climate of fear, and destroy community safety by redefining the role of local law enforcement.

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*The Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama (¡HICA!), founded in 1999, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the social, civic and economic integration of Hispanics in Alabama. ¡HICA! is a United Way agency, an affiliate of the National Council of La Raza, and a member of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. and the National Association of Latino Community Asset Builders . [www.hispanicinterest.org](http://www.hispanicinterest.org)*