



**The Honorable Pedro R. Pierluisi**  
**Remarks as Prepared for Delivery**  
**National Hispanic Construction Association**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Annual National Legislative Symposium and Breakfast**  
*Wednesday, June 12, 2013*

Good morning. And welcome.

I want to begin by thanking all of you for your hard work in organizing this conference, and for inviting me to give some brief remarks. I would like to thank Frank López, the CEO of the National Hispanic Construction Association, for his leadership of this fine organization.

Construction is a vital engine driving our economy forward. Not only does the industry generate a large number of jobs, but it creates other social benefits as well, like new or improved homes, businesses and public works, which in turn enhance quality of life for our families and our communities.

The lifeblood of the industry is, of course, its talented and industrious workforce, including the builders and entrepreneurs. These hard-working men and women put in long hours day-in and day-out to turn dreams—whether they be a first home or a towering skyscraper—into reality.

The construction sector is among the nation's largest industries, measured in both dollar value and employment, and Hispanic-American entrepreneurs are making powerful contributions to this field, becoming a true force to be reckoned with. According to the Census Bureau, there are nearly 340,000 Hispanic-owned construction firms in the U.S., and these firms generated \$57 billion dollars in revenue in 2007—the last year for which data is available. This is a testament to the important contributions that Hispanics are making to our nation and to our economy.

As all of you know, the financial crisis that began in 2008 created significant challenges for our country. The construction sector was particularly impacted, although recently we have seen the promising signs of your recovery. In April, the annual rate of construction in the United States was valued at over \$860 billion dollars. That is up 4.3 percent from one year ago, when it stood at \$825 billion dollars. Although the industry has yet to return its pre-crisis value, these gains are an encouraging sign.

A robust construction sector is a powerful agent of growth. When we invest in construction projects, there is a strong multiplier effect. The effects ripple across markets and benefit many sectors. We need construction to thrive so that the economy as a whole can thrive.

The construction sector is of particular importance to Hispanics. It is a major source of employment, with 11 percent of the Hispanic workforce employed in construction. These workers constitute roughly a quarter of the construction workforce, and this proportion is projected to grow further in the coming years.

I want to close by commending the work your organization does to promote a strong construction sector, economic development, and opportunities for Hispanics all across the United States, including in Puerto Rico. The discussions at this symposium will ultimately help those of us in Congress make policy decisions that more effectively serve the needs of our country.

Please know that I support your organization and will continue to fight for policies that protect the interests and well-being of Hispanics working in our nation's construction sector, which is vital to our national prosperity.

Thank you for all that you do to keep America strong.