



## NEWS RELEASE

Educational Fund National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

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## **NALEO Educational Fund Applauds Federal Appeals Court for Striking Down ‘discriminatory’ Texas Voter ID Law**

*Decision on the eve of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act provides protection for more than 600,000 Texas voters that would have been prevented from casting ballots*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - *The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today issued the following statement on the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals’ decision to strike down a Texas voter ID law as a violation of the Voting Rights Act;*

“NALEO Educational Fund applauds the unanimous decision by the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to strike down a Texas voter ID law as a violation of Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA). The ruling on the eve of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the VRA found that the law did not equate to a "poll tax", but did discriminate against minority voters. The historic ruling marks the first time that a voter ID law was found to be in violation of the VRA by a U.S. Court of Appeals since the Supreme Court’s 2013 *Shelby County* decision, which struck down Section 4 of the VRA.

“Yesterday’s ruling is a victory for the more than 600,000 Texas voters that would have been prevented from casting ballots, as well as for all Americans. Our democracy thrives when all its citizens are able to participate fully in the nation’s political system. Legislatures should be promoting policies that make voting and registering to vote more accessible, and not less accessible, to the nation’s second largest population group and all qualified U.S. citizens.

“In the 2013 ruling in *Shelby County*, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that discrimination and persistent threats to the fair and equal treatment of the nation’s fastest growing electorate still exist. According to NALEO Educational Fund analysis, nearly seven million Latinos eligible to vote residing in jurisdictions that were previously subject to preclearance pre-*Shelby County* have lost proactive protections under the VRA. With the VRA now missing this crucial tool in combatting discriminatory practices across the country, it is more important than ever that Members of Congress act swiftly on a legislative solution that will modernize the VRA and protect the ability of Latinos and all voters to exercise their right to vote free of discriminatory practices such as the Texas voter ID law.

“We urge Congress on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the VRA to work together to strengthen and restore the ability of the VRA to once again serve as a set of strong protections that guarantee the rights of voters following the blow dealt by the Supreme Court in its 2013 *Shelby County* decision. Together, we can modernize the VRA in a manner that upholds our values as a country and ensures that the nation’s second largest population group and all Americans have equal access to our political system in Election 2016 and beyond.

“As we look to the future, we must ensure that our nation does not hold its first presidential election in 50 years without crucial protections in federal law to combat racial discrimination in voting which, as the Fifth Circuit determined this week, continues to plague our democracy.”

*To view NALEO Educational Fund’s research paper on the impact of voting law changes on the Latino electorate, please visit <http://latinosunited.org/votingrights/latinovraareport.pdf>.*

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**About NALEO Educational Fund**

*NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.*