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## **Latinos Still Without Full Protections of Voting Rights Act Less Than One Year Away From Election Day**

*More than 28 million Latinos will be eligible to cast ballots in Election 2016*

**Washington, D.C.** – Less than one year away from Election 2016, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund renewed its call for Congress to restore crucial protections of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) that were gutted as a result of the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*. If Congress fails to act, Election 2016 will mark the first presidential election held in more than 50 years without the full protections of the VRA.

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. More than 28 million Latinos will be eligible to cast ballots next November, making it vital for Congress to act swiftly to ensure the voting rights of Latinos and all eligible voters are protected.

“As a nation that aims to serve as the model for participatory democracy around the world, we need to be actively promoting policies that make voting more accessible, and not less accessible, to the nation's second largest population group and all qualified citizens,” said Arturo Vargas, NALEO Educational Fund executive director. “With Election Day less than a year away, it is unconscionable that we still do not have a legislative fix in place that will prevent our nation from holding its first presidential election in more than 50 years without crucial protections in federal law to combat the racial discrimination in voting which continues to plague our democracy.”

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 protect the ability of Latinos and all voters to exercise their right to vote.

As the Latino population becomes a larger segment of the electorate, it is increasingly important for Latinos to be able to make their voices heard at the ballot box without confronting

discriminatory barriers or obstacles. The Latino electorate made history in 2012, with more than 11 million voters making their voices heard at the ballot box.

Vargas went on to say, “In the lead up to Election 2016, NALEO Educational Fund will be hard at work ensuring that Latino voters have the information and access necessary to cast ballots. The bilingual operators of our toll-free voter information hotline, 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA, will provide voters with information on any aspect of the electoral process, from registering to vote, to finding their polling place, to reporting discrimination or problems on Election Day.”

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**About NALEO Educational Fund**

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