



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Amanda Bosquez, abosquez@naleo.org
(202) 546-2536, (361) 548-6989 (cell)

Daniel Ramirez, dramirez@naleo.org
(213) 765-9422, (805) 223-0225 (cell)

NALEO Responds to President Donald Trump's State of the Union Address to Congress

Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) today released a statement from Executive Director Arturo Vargas regarding President Donald Trump's 2018 State of the Union address to congress:

"Tonight, President Donald Trump presented his vision for the direction of our country in the coming year. Putting forth a plan for a 'safe, strong and proud America', the President outlined the need for congressional leaders to work across the aisle to move issues like immigration, infrastructure and job creation forward for the good of the American people.

"While not easy to forge common ground at a time of heightened partisan bickering and political antics, it is important that we remember as Americans that there is more that unites us than divides us. Only through a renewed spirit of bipartisan cooperation and meaningful commitment to compromise will our nation's leadership make headway on key issues affecting the day-to-day lives of Latinos and all Americans.

"Working toward a legislative solution that provides a pathway to citizenship for the DREAMers who are contributing to our communities and economy each and every day, while also balancing our national security interests through effective and humane measures provides congress and the administration with an opportunity to show the American people that they can work across the aisle for the benefit of the nation. Demonstrating a good faith effort on this issue now will set the tone for what will be needed for legislators to tackle a bipartisan comprehensive overhaul of our flawed and antiquated immigration system in the future.

"To move forward as a nation and effectively turn political rhetoric into reality on pressing issues like immigration reform and more, it will be vital for congress and the administration to consult with stakeholders across the political spectrum, including the nation's more than 6,600 Latino elected officials who are serving in city, county and statewide positions from coast to coast.

"While not addressed in the President's speech tonight, concerns regarding Census 2020 loom large for our organization and the nation's Latino leadership. Due to a number of troubling developments including a lack of adequate funding for the Census Bureau, a failure to revise the Hispanic race and ethnicity question format despite support from census experts, and a request to add a untested citizenship question to the Census 2020 questionnaire, the nation's decennial count is poised to leave a sizeable portion of the Latino community in the shadows.

“On the frontlines of their communities, our nation’s Latino leaders know firsthand how critical full and accurate data about the Latino community are for our country’s economic, social and civic well-being. Used to ensure the effective allocation of billions of dollars in federal, state and local funding, local and state officials rely on Census data to show them where new schools, roads, and other public facilities should be built, just as businesses look to the Census to help them determine where the necessary workforce or consumer base exists to support production and sales facilities.

“Given the implications of census data for local governments and the business community, a failed census would be a disaster for not only the nation’s second largest population group, but all Americans. As we near 2020, we will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to help mitigate the effects of recent developments by calming fears, and educating the Latino community on the importance of a full count.

“As we work toward action on these timely issues, we will continue to further the mission of our founder Congressman Edward R. Roybal by equipping our nation’s Latino elected officials with the tools and information they need to support their constituents, immigrants and Latinos nationwide.”

To view the NALEO Educational Fund's principles on comprehensive immigration reform, click [here](#).

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About NALEO

The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials is the non-partisan leadership organization of the nation's more than 6,600 Latino elected and appointed officials.