



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **New Report Finds Restrictive Changes May Make Voting More Difficult For More Than 875,000 Latino Voters in Election 2016**

*More than 8 million Latino voters—or nearly one of every three members of the Latino electorate—reside in states where they will be without the full protections they had in 2012*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Less than six months before Election Day, NALEO Educational Fund released a **new report** that found that more than 875,000 Latino voters may find it more difficult to cast ballots this year than in 2012. The findings were released at a briefing in Washington D.C. that featured Former Puerto Rico Governor Luis Fortuño, California Secretary of State Alex Padilla and NALEO Educational Fund Executive Director Arturo Vargas.

The new report “*Latino Voters at Risk: Assessing the Impact of Restrictive Voting Changes in Election 2016*” found that the nation’s 27.3 million eligible Latino voters will face a very different political and legal landscape in Election 2016 than existed in 2012. Voters lost the protection of a critical piece of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), the preclearance process, in the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013.

“More than 13.1 million Latino voters are expected to cast ballots in 2016. While historic, we know millions more will stay at home on Election Day,” said Arturo Vargas, NALEO Educational Fund Executive Director. “To maximize participation among Latinos, we need to 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.”

Many of the states, counties, and cities that were formerly subject to anti-discrimination review under the VRA have adopted new laws or practices that now make it harder to vote in the years since *Shelby County* was decided, as have many of the places where underrepresented voters’ potential political influence has been growing most rapidly. Major findings from the new report include:

- **Eight million Latino voters—or nearly one in every three members of the Latino electorate—are vulnerable to restrictive lawmaking and changes in election administration in 2016.** These eligible Latino voters live in jurisdictions that have been freed from oversight, in spite of their documented histories of adopting practices that discriminate against minority voters.
- **Nineteen states created new barriers to Latino participation since 2012.** These laws could seriously impede more than 875,000 Latinos who are eligible to vote from

participating in the 2016 presidential election. These states include Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin.

- **States with the greatest Latino population growth were likely to implement restrictive changes.** Of the nine states that saw more than a 100 percent increase in their Latino populations between 2000 and 2010, six—Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee—have implemented new provisions since 2012.
- **Serious obstacles to voter registration are in place in eight states.** These provisions can be carried out in numerous forms, including adding requirements for documentation from potential registrants and moving voter registration deadlines up.
- **States have imposed discriminatory restrictions on voting.** Changes from 2012 may make it more difficult to vote both in-person and by mail. This includes the addition of voter ID requirements, truncated early voting periods and changes to absentee ballot policies.
- **Administrative practices that perpetuate discrimination against Latinos are on the rise.** Election administrators have discretion to set aggressive registration list maintenance policies, close or consolidate polling locations, neglect language assistance needs, and more.

In order to effectively safeguard against laws and policies that discriminatorily make it harder for Latinos to vote, Congress should enact legislation that modernizes the Voting Rights Act to full strength. Two bills in Congress today would accomplish these goals: the Voting Rights Advancement Act ([HR 2867](#) and [S 1659](#)) and the Voting Rights Amendment Act ([HR 885](#)).

In the lead up to Election 2016, NALEO Educational Fund will continue to operate its toll-free bilingual hotline 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682) to ensure Latino voters have information on every aspect of the electoral process, from finding their polling location, to state voter ID requirements, to reporting problems on Election Day.

*Visit the NALEO Educational Fund website at [www.naleo.org/latinovotersatrisk](http://www.naleo.org/latinovotersatrisk) to download the full report.*

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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.*