



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

July 11, 2019

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)

President Donald J. Trump Backing Away From Citizenship Question Effort Marks Win for Latino Community, Democracy and Nation

The damage has already been done, however, making it vital for the Administration to act swiftly to restore the credibility of the U.S. Census Bureau with Latinos and the American public

NALEO Educational Fund is prepared to do its part to ensure a full and accurate count in Census 2020—including the operation of our toll-free bilingual census hotline 877-EL-CENSO

Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released a statement from CEO Arturo Vargas following President Trump’s decision to back down from his effort to add a citizenship question to Census 2020:

“Today’s decision from President Donald Trump to back down from his effort to add an citizenship question to Census 2020 is a victory for the Latino community, our democracy and nation.

“While the citizenship question appears to now be halted for good, we know this contentious effort to undermine the progress of the Latino community and suppress the count of Latinos has left an indelible mark on Census 2020. The damage has already been done, and it will be no small feat attempting to heal the catastrophic wounds that have been inflicted on our democracy in recent months.

“Our work mobilizing the nation’s second largest population group remains more important than ever as we attempt to rebuild the trust that has been eroded over the course of this fight. Standing alongside our nation’s Latino leadership and partners, we will work together to educate our community about this important victory and make sure that every Latino and person is counted in the 2020 Census.

“We cannot do it alone, however. We need a strong and unequivocal commitment from the Administration to put in place a plan that will aim to restore the reputation and credibility of the U.S. Census Bureau with Latinos, immigrants and the American public.

“The Bureau understands as well as we do, that an undercount of Latinos, who account for nearly one of every five persons in the United States, would mean a failed Census for the country. It will require a significant investment from this Administration and millions in taxpayer dollars to overcome the lingering and chilling effects of the citizenship question effort if we want a successful Census 2020.

"We have our work cut out for us, but a citizenship question-free Census will at least give us a fighting chance to attempt to tackle the monumental task of counting every person living in the United States.

"Through our nationwide *iHágase Contar!* (Make Yourself Count!) Campaign, we will do our part to save the decennial count by engaging Latinos from coast to coast about the importance of participating in Census 2020. Our toll-free bilingual hotline—877-EL-CENSO (877-352-3676)—will be in full operation to ensure that members of our community have the information they need to count themselves and their family members.

"While we celebrate alongside the litigators, policymakers and community leaders who made today possible, we know that the stakes are too high for the Latino community and our democracy to rest on our laurels.

"In the coming days and weeks, we will be closely examining the President's executive order to better understand exactly how the President will be directing every federal department and agency to provide citizenship data to the Commerce Department and determining whether this course of action would deviate from existing practices in a way that would negatively impact the Latino community.

"We will also be closely monitoring developments around this plan to examine the intentions behind this practice and assess whether the data will be utilized in ways that violate the Voting Rights Act, affect the ability of Latinos to elect the candidates of their choice, or influence the redistricting process in a manner that would be detrimental to the Latino electorate and other protected voters. In addition, we will continue to defend the U.S. Constitution and work to ensure that the apportionment standard set forth by this cornerstone of our democracy based on all our nation's residents is upheld."

###

About NALEO Educational Fund

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