



NEWS RELEASE

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

Concerns over Census 2020 and immigration loom large for nation's Latino leadership

Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) today released a statement from CEO Arturo Vargas regarding President Donald Trump's 2019 State of the Union address to Congress:

"Tonight, President Donald Trump presented his vision for our country in the coming year. Putting forth a plan aimed at unlocking 'the extraordinary promise of America's future', the President outlined the need for bipartisan cooperation to move issues like immigration, infrastructure and job creation forward for the good of the American people.

"We applaud the sentiment of the political rhetoric and the positive tone taken tonight given the extreme political divisiveness we are witnessing across the country, yet the nation still needs to see the President and our congressional leadership translate these words into action for the good of the American people.

"Concerns loom large for our organization and the nation's Latino leadership regarding Census 2020. While not addressed in the President's speech tonight, a number of troubling developments are poised to leave millions of Latinos and immigrants uncounted. The addition of an untested citizenship question to the Census 2020 questionnaire and a lack of adequate funding for the Census Bureau to carry out a robust outreach campaign to hard-to-count population groups have placed the upcoming decennial count in serious jeopardy.

"Given the implications of an inaccurate census for local governments and the business community, this would be a recipe for disaster for not only the nation's second largest population group, but all Americans. The stakes are too high to fail. We cannot let politics interfere with the U.S. Census Bureau's ability to fulfill its constitutional mandate of counting every person living in the United States. Now is the time for leadership from both sides of the aisle to act and provide the Bureau with the clarity it needs to execute the 2020 Census by removing the citizenship question once and for all.

"Immigration offers another opportunity for the President and Congress to rise above political posturing and work together on behalf of the country. As leaders on the front lines of communities from coast to coast, the nation's more than 6,700 Latino elected officials know firsthand how dire the consequences of inaction on issues like immigration reform can be.

While we await a legislative proposal that balances the need for a permanent pathway to citizenship for DREAMers with the implementation of sound and humane measures that bolster our national security, millions of innocent men, women and children continue to suffer in silence in the shadows as a result of the political wars that are being waged in our nation's capital.

"Of most concern to our Latino leadership are the thousands of children and babies who have been ripped apart from their parents and loved ones in detention centers set up along the border. Legislators can demonstrate a good faith bipartisan effort that will set the tone for what will be needed to tackle a comprehensive overhaul of our flawed and antiquated immigration system by reuniting these families now.

"While 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 NALEO'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 6,700 Latino elected and appointed officials.