



## NEWS RELEASE

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

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**Contact:** Amanda Bosquez, [abosquez@naleo.org](mailto:abosquez@naleo.org)  
(202) 546-2536 ext. 112, (361) 548-6989 (cell)

Paula Valle Castanon, [pvalle@naleo.org](mailto:pvalle@naleo.org)  
(213) 747-7606 ext. 4414, (323) 253-6431 (cell)

## **NALEO Educational Fund Statement on Introduction of Bipartisan Voting Rights Act Legislation in U.S. House of Representatives and Senate**

*Lawmakers take important step in moving Voting Rights Act legislation; Organization looks forward to working with Congress to strengthen protections for Latino voters*

WASHINGTON, D.C. - *The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today issued the following statement on the introduction of bipartisan Voting Rights Act legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate:*

“NALEO Educational Fund applauds U.S. Representatives James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), John Conyers (D-MI) and U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) for working together to move a post-*Shelby County* Voting Rights Act forward by introducing bipartisan legislation today.

“By proposing legislation that could reinforce the ability of the Voting Rights Act to serve as a set of protections that guarantee the rights of voters, U.S. Reps. Conyers, Sensenbrenner and U.S. Sen. Leahy are helping ensure that our nation’s democracy remains robust and vital following the weakening of the Voting Rights Act last summer.

“In its ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that discrimination and persistent threats to the fair and equal treatment of the nation’s fastest growing electorate and all voters still exist. According to NALEO Educational Fund analysis, at least 740,000 Latino U.S. citizens would have found it more difficult to cast ballots in Election 2012 had the protections provided by the portion of the Voting Rights Act that was invalidated in the *Shelby County* decision not been in place. With the Voting Rights Act now missing this crucial tool in combatting discriminatory practices across the country, it is more important than ever that Members of Congress work together to act swiftly on a legislation solution that will protect the ability of Latinos and all voters to exercise their right to vote.

“While this bill marks significant progress on this issue, we are concerned by the absence of a preclearance provision that would be responsive to future demographic and geographic changes in this country. Including a preclearance provision in a modernized post-*Shelby County* Voting Rights Act that effectively responds to highly-suspect voting changes by diverse jurisdictions will provide much needed protections for new and increasingly visible communities of Latino voters and other language minority citizens. We look forward to examining this legislative proposal in greater detail and working with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and

Senate to address this concern by including strong and forward looking protections for the Latino electorate and those voters most vulnerable to uneven treatment. Together, we can modernize the Voting Rights Act in a manner that upholds our values as a country and ensures that the nation's second largest population group and all Americans have equal access to our political system.”

To view NALEO Educational Fund's white paper on voting law changes and the Latino electorate, please visit [http://www.naleo.org/downloads/NALEO\\_LatinoVotersatRisk\\_\(Condensed\).pdf](http://www.naleo.org/downloads/NALEO_LatinoVotersatRisk_(Condensed).pdf).

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**About NALEO Educational Fund**

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