



NALEO NEWS

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials

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NALEO Responds to President Barack Obama's 2015 State of the Union Address

Organization calls on Congress and President to work together to advance policies that will help Latino community and nation thrive in a competitive 21st century economy

WASHINGTON, D.C. - *The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) issued the following statement regarding President Barack Obama's 2015 State of the Union address:*

“We welcome President Obama’s plans to move the nation forward and build on the progress made in the past year to grow our economy, spur job creation and make higher education increasingly accessible for Latinos and all Americans. These policies can allow more Latinos to rebound from the economic troubles experienced in recent years and pursue their piece of the American Dream, resulting in a more skilled work force and an expanded middle class that is able to ‘do their fair share’ and fully contribute to our nation’s prosperity.

“With Latinos comprising nearly one of every five Americans, the success of this community is tied to the success of our nation as a whole. We urge Congress and the President to work together on bipartisan measures to help the nation’s second largest population thrive, including education programs aimed at ensuring Latino students are fully prepared to contribute in an increasingly competitive and globalized 21st century work environment.

“As a nation with a rich immigrant history, we know the important role immigrants play in bolstering our economy and democracy. Immigrants like Ana Zamora, a 21 year-old DREAMer from Dallas who sat with the First Lady tonight, are determined to not let their legal status limit their ability to make significant contributions to their communities while they wait for a permanent legislative solution that will fix our nation’s broken immigration system once and for all.

“Passing a commonsense immigration reform bill that includes a pathway to citizenship that helps individuals like Ana and fully integrates immigrants into our nation’s rich civic life will benefit all Americans, growing our economy and shrinking deficits by almost \$1 trillion in the next two decades. Regardless of differences in political ideology, we should as a nation be able to find common ground around immigration reform measures that provide robust integration support for the 8.8 million legal permanent residents eligible to become citizens, including increased access to English and civics classes. Action to bring immigrants who have played by

the rules fully into our economy and democracy is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do. Immigrants who learn English can on average quadruple their annual incomes, resulting in increased revenues at the state and federal level and a more skilled workforce that will reinforce our ability to prosper in the new global economy.

“As the President acknowledged in tonight’s address, ‘we can agree that the right to vote is sacred and that it’s being denied to too many’. We know this to be true and remain deeply concerned by inaction on legislation to restore strength to the Voting Rights Act (VRA), which provides protections for Latinos and those voters most vulnerable to unfair treatment. With the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 on the horizon, it is critical that the President and Congress act to institute a modern fix for modern day discrimination.

“Like all Americans, Latinos have grown all too tired of the partisanship that has become commonplace in our political arena today. We will be looking to the President and Congress to turn words into action on policy priorities that will help Latinos and our nation thrive in the coming year. Our constituency of more than 6,000 Latino elected and appointed officials nationwide stands ready to work side-by-side with the President, the Administration and Congress to move policies and legislation forward that spur job creation, increase college access, protect the rights of all voters and fix the nation’s broken immigration system.”

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About NALEO

The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials is the leadership organization of the nation’s more than 6,000 Latino elected and appointed officials.