



NEWS RELEASE



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NALEO Celebrates 40 Years of Service to Nation's Latino Community

Anniversary comes as Latino voters prepare to make history in Election 2016 and the number of Latinos in elected office reaches all-time high nationwide

Washington, D.C. – Coinciding with the Latino electorate's expected decisive influence on the outcome of Election 2016, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) will celebrate more than 40 years of service to the Latino community and its political leadership this year.

In 1976, NALEO founder and late Congressman Edward R. Roybal held the first meeting to create a national network of Latino public servants and their supporters to increase the participation of Latinos in the U.S. political process.

To mark [NALEO's ruby anniversary](#), the organization will host three events that honor the past, present and future of the nation's second largest population group. The first anniversary event will pay tribute to the progress that has been made by the Latino community over the last 40 years during the 2016 NALEO Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala in Washington, D.C. on March 15, 2016.

“Since our organization's founding in 1976, Latinos have become a formidable force in shaping the nation's political landscape as both voters and elected leaders at the highest levels of office,” said Arturo Vargas, NALEO executive director. “We are excited to celebrate 40 years of service to the nation's second largest population group at a time when the Latino community is preparing to play a decisive role in the outcome of races across the country in Election 2016.”

During the Gala former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry R. Cisneros will be presented with *The Edward R. Roybal Award for Outstanding Public Service* for his numerous contributions to the Latino community as a political trailblazer. One of the first Latino mayors of a major U.S. city in his hometown of San Antonio and an original member of NALEO, Cisneros has paved the way for future Latino leaders and demonstrated extraordinary leadership in his efforts to increase opportunities for Latinos in Texas and nationwide.

In June, NALEO will celebrate the Latino community's contributions to the country and the political power Latino voters are expected to wield in Election 2016 during the NALEO 33rd Annual Conference in Washington D.C. from June 23-25, 2016. The NALEO Annual Conference is the preeminent forum for our nation's leadership to engage Latino officials and the millions of constituents NALEO members represent. Past conference speakers have included President Barack Obama, Republican Presidential Candidate Dr. Ben Carson, U.S. Senator and Democratic Presidential Candidate Bernie Sanders, Former U.S. Secretary and Democratic Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton, Former Governor and Republican Presidential Candidate Jeb Bush, U.S. Senator and Republican Presidential Candidate Marco Rubio and Former Governor Mitt Romney.

"NALEO and the Latino community have come a long way since 1976," stated Michele Martinez, NALEO President and City of Santa Ana Councilmember. "With more Latino elected officials in office than ever before and Latino turnout poised to reach historic heights this year, 2016 is the perfect time to honor our past, engage our present and celebrate our future."

NALEO's 40th anniversary events will conclude with an emphasis on the nation's future Latino political leadership at the organization's 11th Biennial Institute for Newly Elected Officials in Washington D.C from November 17-20, 2016. Less than three weeks after Election 2016, NALEO will bring together more than 60 newly elected officials for an intensive three day training that will provide leaders with the skills and information needed to be effective advocates for their constituents.

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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 6,100 Latino elected and appointed officials.