



## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
March 14, 2017

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

Daniel Ramirez, [dramirez@naleo.org](mailto:dramirez@naleo.org)  
(213) 765-9422, (805) 223-0225 (cell)

### **NALEO Mourns Loss of Texas Pioneer and Agricultural Champion U.S. Rep. Eligio “Kika” de la Garza II**

*Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) issued the following statement on the passing of Former U.S. Representative Eligio “Kika” de la Garza II:*

“NALEO joins the nation and the Rio Grande Valley in mourning the passing of former U.S. Representative Eligio “Kika” de la Garza II. U.S. Rep. De la Garza’s unwavering commitment to American agriculture and our nation’s Latino community will continue to affect and inspire generations to come.

“Born Eligio de la Garza II on September 22, 1927 in Mercedes, Texas, U.S. Rep. De La Garza was part of the generations who settled in South Texas in the first part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After high school, U.S. Rep. De la Garza served in the U.S. Navy and Army, fighting in the Korean War as second lieutenant in the 37<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery. He went on to earn a law degree and years later received an honorary Doctor of Law degree from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio.

“U.S. Rep. De la Garza entered public service after winning a seat in the Texas House of Representatives in 1952. During his tenure, U.S. Rep. De la Garza was instrumental in establishing the nation’s first state-run system of English language instruction for pre-school children.

“In 1965, U.S. Rep. De la Garza became the first Mexican-American to represent Texas’ 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and only the second Mexican-American from Texas elected to Congress. With significant experience representing an agricultural district, U.S. Rep. De la Garza rose to the rank of Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, serving from 1981 to 1994.

“NALEO will always be deeply grateful to U.S. Rep. De la Garza for paving the way for Latinos serving in public service today and in the years to come. Our hearts and thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues at this difficult time.”

###

#### **About NALEO**

*The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials is the non-partisan leadership organization of the nation's more than 6,100 Latino elected and appointed officials.*