



**For Immediate Release**

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## **NALEO Educational Fund Releases Latino Electorate Projections and New Report on the Potential Impact of Voting Laws in 2014 and Beyond**

*New report finds VRAA legislation would restore protections to 4.5 million Latinos who lost proactive protections under the VRA post-Shelby Co.;*

*More than 7.8 million Latino voters are expected to head to the polls this November*

**Washington, DC** – Six months before Election Day, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund released turnout projections for Latino voters this November and the findings of a new policy paper assessing the potential impact of voting law changes on the Latino electorate in 2014 and beyond. The event, which also included the release of a national poll focused on voting rights support, took place this morning at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

“Our democracy thrives when all its citizens are able to participate fully in the nation’s political system,” said Arturo Vargas, NALEO Educational Fund Executive Director. “We need to be promoting policies that make voting and registering to vote more accessible, and not less accessible, to the nation’s second largest population group and all qualified U.S. citizens.”

The report entitled “Latinos and the Voting Rights Act (VRA): Protecting Our Nation’s Democracy Then and Now” focuses on the potential impact of the bipartisan Voting Rights Amendment Act (VRAA) legislation on restoring protections for Latino voters and the strength of the VRA following the blow dealt by the Supreme Court in its 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

The new analysis from NALEO Educational Fund’s report found the following:

- Nearly seven million Latinos eligible to vote residing in jurisdictions that were previously subject to preclearance pre-*Shelby Co.* are currently without proactive protections under the VRA.
- **VRAA legislation would restore preclearance protections to more than 4.5 million Latinos eligible to vote - nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of those covered before *Shelby Co.***
- Under the VRAA, there are four states that would be required to submit changes to voting procedures for preclearance review prior to implementation.

- These states, which include Ga., La., Miss. and Texas, would be required to submit changes to voting procedures for preclearance for at least 10 years.
- An additional 24 jurisdictions in 12 states could also become subject to preclearance upon passage of the VRAA; approximately 140,000 Latinos eligible to vote reside in these 24 jurisdictions.

In addition, the report found that the VRAA would provide new narrowly-tailored voting rights protections including:

- More than 14 million Latinos eligible to vote who live in jurisdictions that provide Spanish-language assistance under Section 203 of the VRA would benefit from eligibility for assignment of federal observers.
- The more than 25 million Latinos eligible to vote throughout the country would gain additional opportunities to request that courts impose preclearance for a limited period of time on jurisdictions, that commit voting rights violations.

Experts have found there is widespread support among Americans for protecting the right to vote and modernizing the VRA. A NALEO survey of more than 1000 individuals in 10 states (Ariz., Fla., Ga., Miss., N.C., Ohio, Pa., S.C., Texas, and Va.) found that 83 percent of likely voters agree that having a fully functioning VRA is critical to making sure every American's voting rights are protected. A majority of likely voters polled, including 63 percent of Republicans, also rejected the notion that there is no longer a need for a law protecting the rights of voters in this country. Full poll results can be found [here](#).

As the Latino population becomes a larger segment of the electorate, it is increasingly important for Latinos to be able to make their voices heard at the ballot box without confronting discriminatory barriers or obstacles. In the 2010 mid-term Congressional elections, the Latino electorate played a critical role, helping determine the outcome of U.S. Senate races in Colo. and Nev. This November, Latinos are once again posed to play a decisive role. **NALEO Educational Fund projects that 7.8 million Latinos will cast ballots in Election 2014, accounting for nearly 8 percent of the nation's voters.**

Vargas went on to say, "In the lead up to the election, NALEO Educational Fund will be hard at work ensuring that Latino voters have the information they need to cast ballots on November 4<sup>th</sup>. The bilingual operators of our toll-free voter information hotline, 888-VE-Y-VOTA, will continue to serve as a resource to any voter with questions or concerns about any aspect of the electoral process, 12 hours per day, 7 days per week."

*\*For access to the projections, report and video from today's briefing at the National Press Club, visit NALEO Educational Fund's website at [www.naleo.org/vrabriefing](http://www.naleo.org/vrabriefing).\**

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### **About NALEO Educational Fund**

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