



NEWS RELEASE

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

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NALEO Educational Fund Applauds Introduction of Bipartisan Legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives to Support Immigrant Integration

New Americans Success Act would help immigrants better integrate by utilizing current funding to provide increased access to English language and civics classes, and naturalization support

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 legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives to establish a national immigrant integration strategy:*

“NALEO Educational Fund applauds the work of U.S. Representatives Tony Cardenas and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen who took an important step in providing immigrants with increased integration support by introducing groundbreaking bipartisan legislation today. We commend the U.S. Representatives for acting and recognizing that it is time for our nation to have a national strategy in place for improving the opportunities available for all immigrants to become full participants in our society.

“The New Americans Success Act would utilize current funding to establish a national immigrant integration strategy that would coordinate multi-agency initiatives at the federal and state levels to help immigrants become successful, contributing members of their communities. The bill would aim to increase the number of eligible immigrants who become naturalized American citizens by providing better access to English and U.S. civics classes, and additional assistance for those navigating the naturalization process. The benefits for the immigrant community, especially for those older legal permanent residents pursuing the dream of citizenship who are not yet fully proficient in English, and the nation as a whole would be great. Immigrants who improve their English almost quadruple their income, from an average of \$10,807 for those who do not speak English to an average of \$40,969 per year for those who speak English.

“The establishment of a National Office of New Americans will enhance immigrant integration efforts by coordinating the existing work of multiple federal agencies to make them more efficient. A Task Force on New Americans, operating in consultation with stakeholder groups and state and local officials, would help guide the work of this office by recommending measurable goals to set integration policy. The legislation also creates an Integration Success program that would allow states (and select partnerships between municipalities and non-

profits) to compete for grant funding by coming up with comprehensive plans for linguistic, civic, and economic integration. If the legislation is passed, these provisions would help ensure our nation's immigrants are able to fully integrate into American society and attain the skills needed to effectively fulfill their responsibilities as community members and workers.

“Immigrants’ energy, creativity, and entrepreneurship help us succeed as a nation in an increasingly complex and globalized world. To take advantage of newcomers’ full potential, though, it is imperative that we make investments to strengthen the systems through which immigrants acquire the tools and knowledge to thrive in America. In order to ensure that our nation’s democracy remains robust and responsive, it is more critical than ever that we successfully and fully integrate new Americans into our communities. We urge the U.S. House of Representatives to acknowledge the contributions that immigrants continue to play in the future growth and success of the nation by acting swiftly to pass this important legislation.”

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About NALEO Educational Fund

The 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.