



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NALEO Educational Fund and Partners Applaud Appointment of Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina to New York Independent Redistricting Commission**

*Advocacy conducted by NALEO Educational Fund and allied advocacy groups focused on ensuring Latino representation on IRC*

**Washington, D.C.** – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund and partners along with legislative leaders applaud the appointment of Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina to the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC), in the wake of public pressure from Latino advocacy groups across the state and nationwide. Historically, the redistricting process has been used to disenfranchise minority communities, the optics of which made the potential exclusion of a community with 3.7 million people particularly concerning. Latinos make up the largest minority demographic in New York, including 30 percent of New York City, yet hold only 10 percent of the state’s legislative and congressional seats.

In May, NALEO Educational Fund, along with LatinoJustice PRLDEF and Dominicanos USA, sent [a joint letter](#) to New York State Assemblywoman and Chair of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force Maritza Davila to address concerns over the lack of Latinos chosen in the IRC process. The letter also contained the names of five well-qualified and thoroughly-vetted Latino candidates for the remaining two seats.

“The historic appointment of Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina to the New York Independent Redistricting Commission is an important first step toward the fair and accurate representation of Latinos in the state,” said **Arturo Vargas, NALEO Educational Fund Chief Executive Officer**. “We are impressed with our partners’ commitment and advocacy on behalf of the Latino community across the state. Dr. Cuevas-Molina is extremely well-qualified and will serve as a critical advocate for fairness and inclusion throughout the redistricting process.”

“I congratulate the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission for its selection of Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina as a member of the Commission,” said **New York State Puerto Rican and Hispanic Legislative Task Force Chairwoman Maritza Davila**. “The Commission addressed the lack of Latino representation by appointing Dr. Cuevas-Molina. As a Latina, Dr. Cuevas-Molina understands that Latinos are now the second-largest demographic group in the country and one of the biggest in New York State and that our voices must be included in important decision-making bodies like the IRC. The Commission has a very important job to do, and I look forward to seeing how it creates a fair and independent redistricting proposal in the coming months. I thank NALEO Educational Fund, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Dominicanos USA, and Hispanic Federation for their joint advocacy effort to ensure that the Latino voice was not left out as we undertake this very important process of our democracy.”

“Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina’s appointment to the Independent Redistricting Commission is a historic moment and serves as a turning point for Latino representation as part of New York State’s political, economic, and social landscape,” said **Congressman Adriano Espaillat (NY-13)**. “I applaud the NALEO Educational Fund, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Dominicanos USA, and Hispanic Federation for their joint advocacy and efforts to ensure Dr. Cuevas-Molina’s appointment. I firmly believe Dr. Cuevas-

Molina will play a monumental role in ensuring the Commission's work is inclusive of New York State's minority communities and diverse representation."

"The appointment of Fordham University's Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina to the state's Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) is a significant step in ensuring greater diversity in our redistricting process," said **State Senator Luis Sepúlveda (SD-32)**. "After our joint efforts with NALEO Educational Fund, LatinoJustice PFLDEF, Dominicanos USA, and Hispanic Federation in staunchly advocating for Latinx representation in the IRC, I am grateful to see it come to fruition. To strive for a fair and just redistricting process here in New York State, we must include the voices of one of our largest demographic groups in the state, most notably as the process profoundly affects our communities' political representation at large. An inclusive, participative body in the state's decision-making process is at the forefront of our democracy."

"With over 3 million Latinx calling New York State home, it is necessary to ensure the body responsible for drawing out our districts has balanced representation," said **Assemblyman Robert Rodriguez (AD-68)**, Chairman of the Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment. "I am thrilled to learn that the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission has selected a poderosa like Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina. I look forward to the Commission's work and the positive impact it will have in our communities."

"We congratulate Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina for her appointment as a Commissioner to New York State's Independent Redistricting Commission - making her the first and only Latina to ever hold this position," said **Eddie Cuesta, National Director of Dominicanos USA**. "Dominicanos USA is proud to have joined LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Hispanic Federation, and NALEO Educational Fund in advocating for fair and equitable representation of Latinos on the Independent Redistricting Commission. We thank the Commissioners for ensuring Latino representation in this essential and consequential democratic process."

"We offer our congratulations to Professor Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina on her appointment to New York's Independent Redistricting Commission. This appointment is reflective of the New York Senate and Assembly's commitment to ensuring that the work the Commission will do is representative of the people of New York," said **Frankie Miranda, President of Hispanic Federation**. "The redistricting process will have an enormous impact on the lives of Latinos in New York, and it is critical that it begins and ends with all New Yorkers feeling confident that they are represented and seen."

"It is critical that New York's Independent Redistricting Commission purports to actually reflect New York's rich, multi-ethnic diversity. Inasmuch as one out of every five New Yorker is Latino, principles of equity, fairness, and inclusion mandate Latino representation on the Commission," said **Jose Perez, Deputy General Counsel and Legal Director of LatinoJustice PRLDEF**. "LatinoJustice joins our partner organizations in saluting the Commission's appointment of Fordham University Professor Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina to fill one of the two independent Commissioner slots as a belated first step towards having a seat at the table."

"We are pleased that Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina will join the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission," said **Brette McSweeney, President, Eleanor's Legacy**. "Dr. Cuevas-Molina's considerable experience in the science of political representation and voter participation will be a true benefit to the complex work ahead for the Commission. Further, there are 10 million women and girls who live in New York State, and the Latino community represents 20 percent of the 20 million New Yorkers. With Dr. Cuevas-Molina's participation, the IRC now reflects the rich diversity of our state and is better prepared to protect the voting rights of all New Yorkers."

"We are thrilled that the Commission has heeded the guidance of NALEO Educational Fund and appointed a Latina member to New York's first Independent Redistricting Commission," said **Jennifer**

**Wilson, Deputy Director, League of Women Voters of New York State.** “This appointment will ensure Latinx populations have a seat at the table as our Commission begins to redraw New York’s legislative lines based on the 2020 Census counts. Thank you to NALEO Educational Fund for their tireless work in seeking highly-qualified and diverse appointees to recommend for the final commissioner positions.”

“At a time when the basic tenets of our democracy are under siege, transparency and broad representation in all aspects of government decision-making are more important than ever,” said **Beverly Cooper Neufeld, President, PowHer New York.** “The difficult work ahead for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission in redrawing district maps will shape the political landscape for the next decade, making it imperative that its membership reflects the state’s population. The appointment of Dr. Ivelisse Cuevas-Molina to the Commission expands much-needed gender and minority representation, as well as impressive expertise on voting issues. This wise appointment is a positive development that can help build confidence in the process and the fairness of future elections.”

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**About NALEO Educational Fund**

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