



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Educational Fund Denounces USCIS Revision to Naturalization Civics Exam

New citizenship test creates unnecessary obstacles to naturalization

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released the following statement from CEO Arturo Vargas in response to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) revised civics exam:

"The changes put forward by the Administration in this new exam will create unfair and unnecessary obstacles for lawful permanent residents (LPRs) pursuing U.S. citizenship. With no sound rationale and no meaningful opportunity for public and stakeholder input or review, the Administration arbitrarily made the unilateral decision to make the exam more challenging for LPRs. In addition to more difficult wording and content, the test will now require applicants to answer twice as many questions correctly.

"The Administration has instituted an unsound solution for a problem that simply did not exist. The agency claims that the revisions are needed to ensure that the test continues to serve as an accurate measure of a naturalization applicant's civics knowledge; however, there is no evidence that the current test does not adequately accomplish this.

"The process leading up to these changes has also been very troubling with the Administration abandoning past practices for such actions. Naturalization service providers and English-language learner experts were not given sufficient opportunity to review and provide input on the format and additional content. Exacerbating this problem, the Administration rushed a timetable to implement the new test, forcing any LPR who applies on or after December 1 to take the new exam. This leaves community groups and educators who help prepare LPRs for the test without sufficient time to educate the public and revise outreach and educational materials.

"These changes are completely unnecessary, capricious, and nonsensical. For more than 35 years, NALEO Educational Fund has guided thousands of hardworking LPRs through their naturalization process. In continuation of that service, we urge LPRs to consult with their naturalization service provider about when to apply. In the meantime, we call on the Administration to halt the implementation of the new test until it has an opportunity to, at a minimum, obtain robust and sound stakeholder input on the exam. Without these efforts, we are once again left with a situation where the Administration, particularly after its efforts to increase [naturalization fees](#), is abandoning the central tenet that naturalization has a special value to our nation, conferring great benefits on America's economy and democracy."

Individuals interested in applying for U.S. citizenship can call NALEO Educational Fund's toll-free bilingual hotline at 888-839-8682 from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. Live operators are available to provide potential new citizens with vital information on every aspect of the naturalization process, including referrals to NALEO Educational Fund staff to assist individuals with their citizenship application remotely.

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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.