



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Applauds President-Elect Biden's Nomination of Alejandro Mayorkas to Serve as Next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security

Mayorkas would be the first Latino and first immigrant to head the Department

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) today released the following statement from CEO Arturo Vargas following President-elect Joe Biden's nomination of former Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Deputy Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to serve as the next Secretary of Homeland Security:

"NALEO congratulates the former Deputy Secretary for his historic nomination as the first Latino, first Cuban-American, and first immigrant to head DHS. As a Cuban-Jewish American and son of a Holocaust survivor, Mayorkas brings a real-life understanding of the immigrant experience that, together with his breadth of knowledge and experience, make him an exceptional choice to head DHS.

"Mayorkas carries with him the temperament, influence, and expertise required to head the Department. From his service as Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Central District of California to Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, Mayorkas has acquired extensive proficiency in the administration of justice and enhancing our nation's security.

"His work at United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) demonstrated a dedication to a fair immigration system that also valued the tenets of America as a beacon of opportunity for those who wish to obtain U.S. citizenship. In addition to his tireless work to make naturalization accessible and affordable, Mayorkas oversaw the building and implementation of the DACA program. His work at USCIS also included promoting the importance of working with stakeholders and community organizations, where he created the Office of Public Engagement, helping promote and strengthen those relationships.

"As Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, Mayorkas continued to acquire extensive experience with critical issues facing Latinos and the nation, like strategies to combat the outbreak of diseases such as Ebola and Zika. Given the current public health crisis and the urgent need to make critical policy changes in our treatment of immigrants, his nomination to head DHS could not have come at a more vital time.

"The new Administration and incoming Congress must make modernizing our immigration system a top priority. We must also reverse policy changes that have put naturalization beyond

the reach of millions of eligible lawful permanent residents. Mayorkas's keen knowledge of our immigration policies and procedures, as well as his commitment to a fair immigration system, makes him exceptionally qualified to help lead our nation in achieving these crucial goals.

"The President-elect's dedication to seeing his Cabinet and Administration look like America is a critical step toward inclusion and representation. As we applaud the nomination of Alejandro Mayorkas, we continue to urge the President-elect to see that at least five Cabinet-level positions and at least 20 percent of the Administration posts are held by Latinos. We also urge the U.S. Senate to swiftly confirm his nomination. NALEO stands ready to work alongside the next administration and Congress to promote an inclusive Cabinet and to ensure the fair treatment of our nation's newcomers."

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About NALEO

The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials is the non-partisan leadership organization of the nation's more than 6,800 Latino elected and appointed officials.