



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Urges Swift Confirmation of Latino Cabinet Nominees

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) today released the following statement from President Ricardo Lara following efforts in United States Senate to filibuster the confirmation of Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) nominee Alejandro Mayorkas:

“NALEO is deeply concerned about efforts in the United States Senate to delay or inhibit the confirmation of qualified Latino leaders who have been deservedly nominated to cabinet-level positions in the Biden Administration. Alejandro Mayorkas, Xavier Becerra, Dr. Miguel Cardona, and Isabel Guzman are dedicated public servants and subject matter experts in their fields who have garnered bipartisan support for their respective nominations to the cabinet.

“The DHS Secretary is a key member of the President’s national security team and is a critical piece of our nation’s national security apparatus – keeping our country safe from terrorism and other threats. Alejandro Mayorkas is one of the most knowledgeable homeland security experts in America who has earned bipartisan support in his three previous Senate confirmation hearings. 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

“As America continues to battle the Coronavirus pandemic, the Secretary of Health and Human Services will undertake the daunting task of leading vaccine distribution efforts nationwide, a crucial component to the future prosperity of our country. A veteran of Congress, Becerra has been consistently at the forefront of efforts to protect and preserve the integrity of the American healthcare system, first as an influential member of the Ways and Means Committee and then as Attorney General for the state of California. He voted numerous times to prioritize Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, working to ensure continued financial solvency for these widely used systems and successfully led a cohort of 20 states plus the District of Columbia in a legal effort to protect healthcare coverage for over 20 million Americans. Becerra possesses the leadership, knowledge, and demonstrated experience necessary to help guide our healthcare system through the most dangerous period in modern history.

“Millions of Latino students have had their learning process disrupted by COVID-19. Many Latino households do not have the resources necessary to ensure a successful remote learning environment for their children, further exacerbating existing gaps in achievement between low-income students and their wealthier classmates. Education Secretary nominee Dr. Miguel Cardona has dedicated his career to educating and inspiring future generations, serving as a

teacher, a school principal, and assistant superintendent before becoming the first Latino to be appointed Connecticut Education Commissioner. He has spent the bulk of his career working to raise achievement levels of students of color, as well as address the challenges that English-Language Learners (ELL) face in American classrooms, the majority of whom are Latino. Dr. Cardona will continue his public service with the same level of excellence he put forward while serving Connecticut. He will work tirelessly on behalf of students and will bring his ideas and commitment to the national level.

"Now more than ever, Latinos drive the American economic engine. More than 4.7 million Latino-owned businesses combine to contribute over \$700 billion to the American economy annually. The nomination of former Deputy Chief of Staff at the Small Business Administration Isabel Guzman to now lead the agency is especially important as Latino-owned small businesses remain some of the hardest hit by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Director of California's Office of the Small Business Advocate and leader of the state's response to the pandemic, Guzman oversaw a pair of initiatives to help businesses adopt new technology and to help them reopen safely. In December 2020, she launched a \$500 million grant program. Guzman's focus on helping small businesses recover and thrive will provide a boost to the American economy and to current and aspiring Latino entrepreneurs.

"The Biden Administration faces the tall task of rebuilding a fractured country beset by a multitude of crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic which continues to disproportionately affect Latinos. Delaying the confirmation of these four highly qualified Latino cabinet nominees is delaying recovery efforts for Americans. The immediate confirmation of these four Latino leaders to important positions in the Biden Cabinet remains critical to our national security, our fight against COVID-19, the health and safety of our children, and our economic recovery efforts. We urge the U.S. Senate to rapidly confirm Alejandro Mayorkas, Xavier Becerra, Dr. Miguel Cardona, and Isabel Guzman to their respective nominated positions and expedite the recovery for Latinos and all Americans."

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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.