



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 24, 2021

Contact: Marcus Silva, msilva@naleo.org
(510) 456-5444

Daniel Ramirez, dramirez@naleo.org
(805) 223-0225

NALEO Educational Fund Statement on the New Deal for New Americans Act

Legislation recognizes the value of new Americans

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released the following statement from CEO Arturo Vargas on the introduction of the New Deal for New Americans Act:

“NALEO Educational Fund welcomes the reintroduction of the New Deal for New Americans Act as a promising step toward making naturalization more accessible for the more than four million Latino lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who are eligible for U.S. citizenship, as well as the other five million LPRs from diverse backgrounds who are in the same circumstances.

“It is paramount that naturalization policy includes solutions addressing the level of the naturalization fee and fee waivers being offered to low- and moderate-income lawful permanent residents. The bill highlights the importance of ensuring naturalization is accessible and affordable to those who wish to become U.S. citizens. To help achieve this goal, there must be greater transparency and accountability in the process of setting the fees, including prohibitions against diverting fee revenue for immigration enforcement purposes.

“The bill underscores the importance of investing in the civic and economic integration of new Americans, including funding for immigration application assistance, English-language learning, digital literacy, and U.S. citizenship education. Such investments yield positive returns to our nation through the increased economic contributions of new Americans and a more civically engaged population. Additionally, the bill promotes a dialogue around expanding the waiver from the naturalization exam English-fluency requirements for elderly lawful permanent residents to include older adults who have not lived in the United States long enough to qualify but who otherwise have the life experience and civic engagement skills to fully participate in our citizenry as full, engaged members.

“We commend U.S. Representatives Grace Meng (D-NY), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), and Jesús ‘Chuy’ García (D-IL), as well as U.S. Senators Ed Markey (D-MA) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) for reintroducing the New Deal for New Americans Act. We look forward to working with them as the legislation proceeds through Congress.”

###

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.