



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 2, 2021

Contact: Kevin Perez-Allen, kperezallen@naleo.org
(714) 499-4481

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

NALEO Educational Fund Congratulates Alejandro Mayorkas on Being Confirmed as DHS Secretary

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released the following statement from CEO Arturo Vargas following the confirmation of Alejandro Mayorkas as Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS):

“NALEO congratulates Alejandro “Ali” Mayorkas on officially becoming the first Latino and immigrant to lead the Department of Homeland Security following his successful confirmation vote in the U.S. Senate today. 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.

“The United States is a nation of immigrants and maintaining the promise of opportunity for those who wish to become U.S. citizens remains one of the cornerstones of who we are as a nation. Immigrants are a driving force in the American economy and enrich the cultural beauty of what it means to be an American. Currently, there are nearly nine million lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who are eligible for U.S. citizenship, over half of whom are Latinos. After years of patience, hard work, and loyalty to our country, our nation’s LPRs are eager to become naturalized to as a key milestone on their path to becoming full participants in America’s civic life.

“We urge Secretary Mayorkas to take several actions to promote the opportunities of U.S. citizenship and eliminate obstacles in the naturalization process. The DHS must make naturalization more affordable by preventing exorbitant fee increases and ensuring fee waivers are widely available and accessible to moderate and low-income LPRs. Additionally, we ask that the agency halt the implementation of the unfair and unnecessary new naturalization civics test, as well as other unwarranted practices in the processing of naturalization applications.

“We implore Secretary Mayorkas to address the problem of the large backlog of naturalization applications and significantly reduce delays that applicants are facing. We know how important naturalized citizens are to our country, being responsible for invaluable contributions to our nation’s civic and economic life, and these delays hurt both LPRs and our country as a whole.

Finally, the Administration must nominate leadership for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) who will restore a culture of quality customer service and a welcoming approach for LPRs who seek to become new Americans.

"We are confident in the ability of Secretary Mayorkas to be a thoughtful, compassionate, and effective steward of the Department of Homeland Security. We congratulate him on this historic confirmation, and look forward to working with him on our naturalization policy priorities."

###

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.