



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Responds to President Joseph R. Biden's Inaugural State of the Union Address

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) just released a statement from Chief Executive Officer Arturo Vargas on President Joseph R. Biden's inaugural State of the Union address:

"Over the past few years, the world has lived through a series of unprecedented historic events that have affected us globally, as a nation, as *comunidades*, and as individuals. Understandably, these events have brought us together in some ways but further divided us in others.

"Just when we were beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel on COVID-19, Russia started an unprovoked war in Ukraine. Tonight, as the president said, our hearts are with the Ukrainian people. While this war is being waged overseas, its fundamental implications for human rights and access to a fair and representative democracy ring close to home.

"During President Biden's first year in office, NALEO was thrilled to see the instances where Republicans and Democrats came together to make life better for all Americans.

"We encourage the White House to continue its people-before-politics work, particularly in the areas of immigration reform and naturalization, voting rights, and continued COVID-19 health and safety precautions. Our leaders must put American values, the common good, and humanity before hubris, crafting legislation that extends beyond party lines.

"We commend the president for reiterating the critical importance of the right to vote and the invaluable contributions that immigrants make to our society — from our economy to our global status as a nation that advances liberty and justice for all. We urge President Biden and Congress to work together to enact legislation that modernizes and supports voting rights, makes immigration reform a reality, and makes naturalization more affordable and accessible to our nation's lawful permanent residents through passing the [Reduce Financial Barriers to Immigration and Citizenship Act](#).

"The Latino community has consistently put everything on the line to serve this great nation. Even before the start of the pandemic, Latinos have always been on the frontlines of serving their communities — from filling essential worker roles to making critical decisions in elected offices across the nation, tackling some of the most pressing issues facing our country.

"As we have said before, Latinos have been America's backbone — and now America must have our back. Members of Congress must put aside their political differences and find a way to better serve the people who elected them to office, including the [11.6 million Latino voters](#) who will be casting ballots this November for the 2022 midterm elections.

“People are what matter. NALEO remains ready to work with Congress and the White House on advancing voting rights and a humane immigration system — and seeing an America that works for the people, including the Latino community, the second-largest population in the nation.”

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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 7,000 Latino elected and appointed officials.