



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NALEO Educational Fund Statement on U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit's Ruling Striking Down Powerful Tool to Protect Voting Rights**

*"We believe this ruling is deeply flawed and stands in stark contrast with decades of legal precedent and practice. We urge our nation's highest court to reject this dangerous threat to American democracy."*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released a statement on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit's ruling:

"The ruling from the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit that only the U.S. Attorney General, who brings relatively few election-related cases each year, can mount challenges under Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights of 1965 (VRA) in the seven states of that Circuit is a major reversal of decades of precedent allowing private individuals and groups to file such challenges. If allowed to stand, this ruling would further eviscerate the remaining protections of the VRA by denying private individuals and groups the ability to combat insidious discrimination in the voting process that exists today.

"For decades, private individuals and groups have brought the majority of lawsuits under Section 2, a provision which protects underrepresented groups from discrimination in redistricting and voting. As a result, court decisions have helped ensure that Latinos and other people of color can have their voices heard in the electoral process and have a fair opportunity to elect responsive and accountable candidates. Thus, this ruling would prevent citizens harmed by discrimination in the electoral process from using Section 2 to enforce VRA protections.

"We believe this ruling is deeply flawed and stands in stark contrast with decades of legal precedent and practice. It will ultimately hurt citizens and organizations who work tirelessly on their behalf to pursue the full participation and fair representation of people of color in our nation's democracy.

"Ten years ago, the *Shelby County* U.S. Supreme Court decision dealt a severe blow to the voting rights of Latinos and other underrepresented groups by severely weakening a key provision of the VRA. The *Shelby* decision emboldened states and localities throughout the nation to enact discriminatory measures that severely violated Latino voting rights. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling would significantly heighten the risk that jurisdictions would revive or enact new discriminatory measures, with far less fear of court challenges. The plaintiffs in the case will likely appeal this ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court — we further urge our nation's highest court to reject this dangerous threat to American democracy."

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**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.*