



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Condemns Anti-Immigrant Legislation in Texas

*"Texas' pernicious effort to make undocumented presence in the United States a state crime and allowing local law enforcement to order the deportation of undocumented immigrants would be unconstitutional."
— NALEO CEO Arturo Vargas*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) today released a statement from CEO Arturo Vargas in response to HB 4, passed by the Texas House of Representatives:

"The recent anti-immigrant legislation passed by the Texas House of Representatives is an unconstitutional measure that would have a detrimental effect on Latino communities across the state of Texas. Previous Supreme Court rulings have established that the enforcement of immigration laws lies solely with the federal government. Texas' pernicious effort to make undocumented presence in the United States a state crime and allow local law enforcement to order the deportation of undocumented immigrants would be unconstitutional.

"HB 4 would create a significant risk of law enforcement separating children from their families while deterring immigrants from reporting crimes or cooperating with local law enforcement out of fear of arrest or criminal penalties. This dangerous move would impair the ability of authorities to investigate and take action against illegal activity in local communities across the state.

"Moreover, the bill could impose exorbitant costs on local law enforcement and localities by having them attempt to determine the immigration status of individuals, detaining them, and transporting them to a port of entry. Local law enforcement could better use these resources and funding to protect Texas residents' public safety by enforcing existing state and local laws.

"Immigration laws are complex, and state law enforcement officers may not have the expertise to determine someone's immigration status. This could lead to individuals being arrested based on an officer's subjective assessment of immigration status and, subsequently, an increase in arbitrary, inhumane, and unfair discrimination against Latinos in Texas.

"Immigrants and their families have made invaluable contributions to Texas and the nation. These hardworking immigrants have helped build the country's communities and enrich cultural and civic life. HB 4 is unconstitutional, costly, and unsound legislation. We urge the Texas Senate to consider the widespread potential negative effects HB 4 would have on Texans — and

we call on lawmakers in the upper chamber to reject the legislation should it come to the floor before the special session ends tomorrow or again in the future.”

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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.