



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 7, 2024

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

Luis Acosta, lacosta@naleo.org
(956) 460-3598

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

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

"With another national election year underway, we applaud the president for stating his commitment to strengthening our democracy and recognizing the importance of preserving the integrity of our democratic institutions. As [one in every 10 voters](#) is expected to be Latino this year, it is essential to ensure that Latinos have full access to the ballot box and fair opportunities to elect representatives accountable to their communities.

"We commend President Biden for reminding Americans, regardless of political party, of the importance of ensuring a strong democracy. With many states continuing to enact restrictive voting and registration laws that produce unfair barriers to Latino participation, we urge the administration and Congress to work together to enact the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which is crucial for protecting voting rights for all Americans.

"In addition, although it may seem we have a long way to go to Census 2030, steps to ensure a fair and accurate census should already be taken into consideration since it is a core pillar of our representative democracy. We urge Congress and the administration to reject any efforts to undermine the constitutional mandate to count every person in the census for congressional apportionment. It is also critical that our nation refrain from adopting policies that would jeopardize the quality of any census data collected about America's population.

"As the president outlined his vision for his fourth year in office and a potential second term, it is clear that bipartisanship is as vital as ever. Achieving these initiatives will also require Congress and the administration to listen to the diverse ideas and voices affected by our country's challenges, including those from Latino policymakers who are at the forefront of addressing the challenges facing their communities around issues like economic disparity, healthcare, and education. NALEO believes that no matter the issues we disagree on, there is more that can unite us behind common goals, which is why we commend President Biden's call for our leaders to put their differences aside and work together to solve our nation's most challenging issues for the good of all Americans.

"With Latinos being the nation's second-largest population group, it is no secret that a thriving Latino community means a prosperous country. [For the past few years](#), inflation and economic concerns have been a particular priority for Latinos. State and local officials continue to face

challenging fiscal environments as they work to provide critical services and respond to community needs. For these reasons, the president's policies must include initiatives to promote mobility and opportunity for Latino workers, businesses, and their families while also working toward a stronger federal government that acts as a collaborative partner with state and local Latino officials so they can better address these challenges and help their communities thrive.

"We also urge the president to continue improving the naturalization process. The administration should continue to streamline the application process, reduce backlogs, and make the naturalization test more fair. We know that naturalization confers great benefits to our nation's social, civic, and economic life — equitable access to it is another step to continue strengthening our economy and democracy.

"As we have for more than four decades, NALEO stands ready to work alongside the Biden administration, Congress, and all elected officials nationwide to continue delivering on our mission to increase Latino political and civic participation in the United States."

###

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.