



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NALEO Educational Fund Comments on U.S. Census Bureau Request for Citizenship Data from the Department of Homeland Security**

**Washington, D.C.** – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released a statement from CEO Arturo Vargas regarding reports of the U.S. Census Bureau’s request for citizenship data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:

“The Census Bureau’s 2020 Census operational plan envisions using administrative records from other federal agencies to obtain information about households under certain circumstances, before deploying enumerators to acquire the information. This includes situations where households return incomplete census forms, or do not respond at all. The use of administrative records to obtain information in these situations – or ‘administrative enumeration’ – is a cost-saving measure the Bureau plans to use more extensively than in previous Censuses.

“With the possibility of a citizenship question on the 2020 Census questionnaire, the Census Bureau must acquire citizenship data from other federal agencies in advance of 2020, such as from the USCIS, so it can administratively enumerate some households. However, federal law also makes it illegal for the Bureau to pass along any data it may collect through the decennial count or from USCIS or any other agency.

“In March 2018, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross ordered the Census Bureau to add the citizenship question to the Census 2020 questionnaire, a decision that has been challenged by seven lawsuits. In deciding four of the lawsuits filed in New York and California, federal judges in those cases ordered the removal of the citizenship question. They also ruled that Secretary Ross’ order violated federal law; the California judge further stipulated that including the question violates the U.S. Constitution. The New York decision is now before the U.S. Supreme Court which is expected to make the final determination about the citizenship question’s future in June.

“We understand the need for the Bureau to secure administrative records from other federal and state agencies, and we understand that the agreements used by the Bureau require confidentiality be maintained. However, we are deeply concerned by the underlying intentions behind Secretary Ross’ decision to add the citizenship question. Two federal judges have made clear that political motivations were the driving force behind this decision. There already is deep fear within the Latino community of contact with Census surveyors in the current political environment; the citizenship question only exacerbates this situation.

“It is time for Congress to act and provide Latinos and all Americans with the clarity and safety they need to participate in the 2020 Census by removing the citizenship question once and for all.”

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**About NALEO Educational Fund**

*NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit, non-partisan organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.*