



NEWS RELEASE

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

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NALEO EDUCATIONAL FUND URGES HOUSTON CITY OFFICIALS ADOPT COMMUNITY CONSENSUS MAP

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund issued the following statement regarding the city of Houston's redistricting plans:

Recent Census data show unprecedented growth of the Latino community in Houston, Texas, which saw that population jump by 26% in last ten years. Latinos now comprise nearly half of the city's residents.

While that growth is responsible for the addition of two district seats on the City Council as required by the city charter, Houston officials prepared a redistricting proposal that does not go far enough. Local Latino community leaders participated in the city's redistricting hearings and met collectively to develop a consensus which resulted in a "Community Consensus Map." We urge city officials to adopt this alternative map.

"The redistricting plan originally proposed does not adequately take into account the growth of the Latino population and does not create enough districts that provide Latinos with a fair opportunity to choose their elected leaders. The "Community Consensus Map" which was presented to the City Council last week better reflects the growth in our city and provides for opportunity to reflect that growth in city government," said NALEO President Sylvia R. Garcia, former Harris County Commissioner. "We urge city officials to adopt that alternative plan."

The hard work and input made by several community groups deserve careful consideration to ensure that the new City Council district lines comply strictly with the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 that protects Latinos and other underrepresented groups from discrimination in the electoral process.

"Those who draw the maps in this year's redistricting process must make sure they achieve the important goal of a more responsive and robust democracy where all Houston residents have an opportunity for full and fair representation," said NALEO Educational Fund Executive Director Arturo Vargas.

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ABOUT NALEO Educational Fund

The 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.