

AGPA01

From: Astrid Garcia [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 14, 2010 2:22 PM
To: Voters First Act
Cc: Margarita Fernandez
Subject: NALEO Educational Fund Letter for Commission



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My apologies. Please accept this updated letter for public comment to the commissioners. The last letter omitted signature.

Thanks

Astrid

Astrid Garcia
Redistricting and State Policy Manager

NALEO Educational Fund
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The NALEO Educational Fund is the leading nonprofit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.

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12/10

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The Walt Disney Company

December 14, 2010

California Citizens Redistricting Commission
Bureau of the State Audits
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Selection of the final six Commissioners for California's Citizens Redistricting Commission

Dear Commissioners:

On December 15, the first eight commissioners will determine the 14-member body that will define the future of California. You are the fortunate few who were selected at random to represent the people of California. As the first ever Citizens Redistricting Commission you are setting precedent for the work of this commission and future commissions. It is with this in mind that we request your careful consideration of the public processes that you establish. This letter provides the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund's comments to the review you are conducting. The NALEO Educational Fund is the leading nonprofit nonpartisan organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. Our Board and constituency are comprised of Democrats, Republicans, and individuals not affiliated with either of those parties.

Public comment period needs to earn public trust of the process

The process that the first eight Commissioners adopted last Friday, December 10, 2010, does not set good precedent for public trust. Recognizing that the decisions you make will touch the lives of Californians for the next decade, we ask that you consider providing advance notice of decision making dates as well as meaningful periods for public comment. It is not reassuring that the Commissioners used a two-tiered public comment process, allowing people in the room to comment on the 10 applicants that were being considered and limiting those that were out of the meeting room to comment only on the final slate of six.

While Californians have had the opportunity to comment on individual applicants to date, the public had not had the opportunity to consider the slate you were presenting. A slate offers a different dynamic and evokes a different type of public comment. The Commissioners should remember that the voice of all Californians is equal regardless of whether they are inside our outside of the meeting room. The average Californian works eight hours or more per day and may not have the opportunity to attend each public meeting or follow the live webcast. While we appreciate the financial prudence of the Commission, we request that the Commission consider the public process it establishes for future public meetings.

Maria Blanco brings the skills and expertise that will make the Commission stronger

We applaud your decision to include Maria Blanco as part of your final slate of six. Applicant Maria Blanco has demonstrated that she has the ability to be impartial as outlined in Regulation 60800 which states that "although an applicant may have strong views, and may have participated in social or political causes, the applicant has the capacity and willingness, while serving as a member of the commission, to set aside his or her personal views and all of the following considerations in order to evaluate information with an open mind and make decisions that are fair to everyone affected..." Ms. Blanco has clearly demonstrated that she meets the criteria as outlined in the regulation through her professional life as an attorney and a professor. Furthermore, Ms. Blanco's knowledge of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) is important to the success of the Commission. The fact that the Commission will have staff experts on the VRA is not sufficient. Each of the first eight commissioners brings a specific skill set to the table and the Commission as a whole needs to reflect the skills necessary for redistricting. Ms. Blanco's VRA expertise is an asset to the Commission. Finally, Ms. Blanco represents the geographic diversity needed on the Commission. While her current location states Los Angeles County, she has lived for long periods of her adult life in the Bay Area and has traveled through Central California, in addition to being raised in San Diego. Ms. Blanco's skills and expertise will undoubtedly make California's first Citizens Redistricting Commission stronger.

The final 14-member Commission needs significant Latino representation

Latinos are California's second largest and fastest growing population group. They comprise nearly 40% of the state's population. It is critical that there be significant Latino representation in all three groups that comprise the Commission, including Republicans, Democrats, and persons not affiliated with either major party in order to truly reflect full Latino diversity. Under the provisions of Proposition 11, the selection process must produce a Commission that reasonably reflects the state's diversity. The first eight Commissioners must fulfill their

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responsibilities by selecting the final six members in a manner that increases Latino representation and ensures that the Commission sufficiently represents this important population. We appreciate your efforts in providing the public an opportunity for input at this stage of the Redistricting Commissioner selection process. We wish you great success as you select the final Commission and draw the maps that will define the future of California's democracy. If you have any additional questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Astrid Garcia, Redistricting and State Policy Manager at agarcia@naleo.org (213) 747-7606, ext. 4434. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arturo Vargas", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Arturo Vargas
Executive Director