



Press Release

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National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC) Responds To Executive Orders Targeting Immigrant Communities and Religious Freedoms

Washington, D.C. — While for years, The National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC) has called for common-sense bipartisan immigration reform that both respects the rule of law and treats immigrants with God-given human dignity. We are deeply concerned about many of the recent immigration-related Executive Orders. Some of these orders correctly address border concerns and violent criminal immigrants' actions. However, the policies that target birthright citizenship, that fail to renew Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for vulnerable populations including Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans, and permit immigration raids in "sensitive locations" such as churches, schools, and hospitals are not in keeping with the principles NaLEC has long held when it comes to immigration policies. "The National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC) has always believed we need bipartisan immigration reform, safe borders, and the prosecution of violent criminals. However, targeting churches, schools, and hospitals, attempting to repeal birthright citizenship, removing TPS for people who want to contribute to our nation, halting the refuge of those who desperately need safety, and causing unnecessary suffering for those who are fleeing violence and persecution not only undermines our values but also puts innocent individuals at risk. For those faith leaders and pundits, who argued that the Administration's aim was only to target violent criminals, these recent Executive Orders clearly show that this indeed was not the sole aim of immigration actions. For months, NaLEC warned that "in an attempt to address the immigration crisis, there would be indiscriminate actions that would put at risk immigrants, legal residents, and mixed-status families," said Rev. Dr. Gabriel Salguero, President of NaLEC.

NaLEC, representing thousands of Latino evangelical churches and faith leaders across the United States, is deeply concerned about the devastating impact that some of these Executive Orders will have on immigrant families and our congregations. Birthright citizenship is a fundamental right enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and dismantling it would strike at the core of our nation's values of justice and equality. Further, ending TPS for these vulnerable groups will force families back into dangerous situations where they face persecution and violence. Finally, the allowance of immigration raids in sensitive locations threatens the ability of our churches to provide pastoral care, spiritual support and guidance, and compassionate care to all who are in need. Moreover, the deleterious impact on our worship and community services and the fear and anxiety it will create among mixed-status families and immigrant children require us to respond both pastorally and prophetically. Latino evangelicals are pro-family, and we believe our nation can and must do better. Rev. Enid Almanzar, Chair of NaLEC added, "The Executive Orders which target vulnerable populations who are working hard, raising families, and attending our places of worship undermine both the human dignity of immigrants and infringe on the pastoral call and religious freedoms of our evangelical communities."



The following statements express NaLEC's position:

Rev. Jeanette Salguero, Vice-President of NaLEC, (Florida): "As a coalition that represents tens of thousands of Latino evangelicals across the country, we stand in unequivocal opposition to actions that threaten the dignity, security, and faith of immigrant communities. Serving and protecting vulnerable immigrant families and children are essential to our Gospel-imperative as Christians to love and serve our neighbors. We will not stand by while essential protections like birthright citizenship are stripped away, and we will continue to fight for the rights and freedoms of immigrant families in our churches and communities."

Rev. Luis Alba, Executive of NaLEC, (Texas): "The proposed raids in sensitive locations are a direct assault on religious freedom. Churches have long been places of spiritual solace for those in need, and the idea that ICE agents could invade our places of worship contradicts everything we believe as Christians. We believe our calling is to provide a spiritual haven for the weary. No vulnerable person, regardless of their immigration status, should fear worshiping in their time of need."

Rev. Michael Carrión, Executive of NaLEC, (New York): "The failure to renew Temporary Protected Status for families from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela exposes them to unimaginable suffering. These are individuals who fled their home countries due to violence and instability. Sending them back to danger is deeply concerning for the Latino evangelical community. The Church's calling is to protect the vulnerable, and we will continue to advocate for policies that reflect the love and compassion we are called to show. In addition, as a leader in the church-planting movement, I am also concerned about how it will impact the ministry and mission with immigrants."

NaLEC calls on the Administration to reconsider these harmful policies while continuing to work with Congress toward comprehensive immigration reform that is grounded in justice, compassion, and respect for the dignity of all people, regardless of their immigration status. We urge Congress to take immediate action to support bipartisan common-sense and humane immigration policies.

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