

February 10, 2021

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: NHLA Support for Dr. Miguel Cardona for Secretary of Education

Dear Senator:

The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) urges you to confirm the nomination of Dr. Miguel Cardona, Connecticut Commissioner of Education, as the next U.S. Secretary of Education. NHLA is composed of over 40 leading national Hispanic civil rights and public policy organizations.

The student population in the United States is increasingly Latino. Latinos make up over 25 percent of the nation’s K-12 public school student population. Furthermore, from the 2009-10 to 2014-15 school year, the number of English learners increased in more than half the states in the U.S. The Latino population in the U.S. continues to grow, and projections estimate that Latinos will make up nearly 29 percent of the total U.S. population by 2060. In higher education, the U.S. is home to over 500 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) and on average those numbers increase by 30 institutions each year. This number includes six HSIs in Dr. Cardona’s home state. The confirmation of a Latino to serve as the next Secretary of Education would show that this Congress recognizes and understands the changing demographics in our public schools and the more diverse needs of the U.S. student population. During Dr. Cardona’s Senate confirmation hearing on February 3rd, he demonstrated his commitment to uplifting and celebrating diversity in our schools and to defending the civil rights of all students.

Dr. Cardona brings his experience as an elementary school teacher, principal, and administrator to the Secretary position. His personal life experiences make him well-suited to understand the varied and unique challenges that U.S. students face, particularly Latino and English learner students. In 2017, over 10 states had a student population that was more than 10 percent English learner students, including states like California, Nevada, Florida, and Texas. Dr. Cardona’s experience as an English learner in kindergarten gives him a valuable perspective about how our education system can best meet the needs of all students. Especially in light of the harmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and its disparate impact on students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners, it is more critical than ever to confirm a Secretary of Education who will intimately understand and commit to serving the needs of communities facing some of the greatest challenges.

He also brings experience that will help him work to keep states accountable for ensuring that each and every student, no matter their personal background or specific challenges,

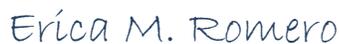
- Alianza Americas
- American G.I. Forum
- ASPIRA Association
- AVANCE Inc.
- Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
- Farmworker Justice
- Green Latinos
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
- Hispanic Federation
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Hispanics in Philanthropy
- Inter-University Program for Latino Research
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- LatinoJustice PRLDEF
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- MANA, A National Latina Organization
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- Mi Familia Vota
- NALEO Education Fund
- National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
- National Association of Latino Arts and Culture
- National Association of Latino Independent Producers
- National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network
- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
- National Hispanic Council on Aging
- National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
- National Hispanic Media Coalition
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
- National Latinx Psychological Association
- Presente.org
- SER Jobs for Progress National
- Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
- U.S.- Mexico Foundation
- UnidosUS
- United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
- United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
- Voto Latino

is able to learn and achieve academically. During his confirmation hearing, Dr. Cardona exhibited his understanding of the challenges faced by students with disabilities, rural students, first-generation students, and students of color in receiving equitable and high-quality education services in primary, secondary, and higher education. He has a long track record of bringing to light the education disparities that exist for students based on race and class. His experience and leadership working in Connecticut has also shown that he is acutely aware of the need for states and education officials to close the education gap for all students, a problem which has only been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the detrimental learning loss that students have suffered as a result.

The confirmation of Dr. Cardona to lead a new Department of Education – one that is prepared to tackle racial and economic inequities in the school system, the education gap, and ensure that we have an education system that is safe for every student to learn – should be one of this nation’s top priorities. We believe that Dr. Cardona has the credentials, experience, and passion to revitalize the Department of Education and lead our public school system in a new direction that delivers all students a quality education.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us to discuss this letter of support. Your staff may contact the Co-Chairs of the NHLA Education Committee, Alysa Williams, MALDEF, at awilliams@maldef.org and Erica Romero, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, at erica.romero@hacu.net, if you have any questions about NHLA’s position regarding this or any other appointments. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Legislative Staff Attorney
Mexican American Legal Defense and
Educational Fund (MALDEF)

Erica Romero
NHLA Education Committee Co-Chair
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