



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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California Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Joins Major Latino Organizations in Unprecedented Voter Registrations Efforts

Joint Effort to Make Registering to Vote Easier and More Convenient for Eligible Latinos

LOS ANGELES, CA – Today, California Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, *La Opinión* and Univision KMEX-Ch 34 Los Angeles launched a comprehensive coordinated multimedia “Ve y Vota” (Go Vote) Voter Engagement Campaign. This unprecedented campaign is targeting more than one million eligible Latinos to register to vote for the upcoming November 7, 2006 General Election.

This joint venture seeks to increase registered voters through the insertion of 250,000 voter registration cards in the Thursday, September 21st edition of *La Opinión*, the nation’s largest Spanish-language newspaper. This effort is targeting Latinos eligible to vote, promoting naturalization, voter registration, and participation efforts for the upcoming fall elections.

“Diversity is what helps make California a great state,” said Secretary of State Bruce McPherson. “I am working hard to increase access and voter participation so all eligible Californians can fully take part in the democratic process.”

“We are on the path to building a strong culture of participation among U.S. Latinos,” said Marcelo Gaete, Senior Director of Programs for the NALEO Educational Fund. “This partnership will ensure that the electoral process is accessible to all Californians this November because the future of this community and our country will depend on the full participation of all citizens in the American political process,” continued Gaete.

“One of the principle responsibilities that citizens have is to participate in the electoral process and for *La Opinión* it is a great priority that our community becomes involved in this process and allows their voices to be heard; but for that to happen we first need to register to vote,” said Monica Lozano, Publisher *La Opinión*.

“Civic education has always been a cornerstone of Univision KMEX Channel 34 and this effort with California Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, *La Opinión* and the NALEO Educational Fund is a testament to our commitment to civic engagement and to building a strong culture of civic participation in the Latino community,” said Jorge H. Delgado, President and General Manager for Univision Los Angeles.

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According to a recent Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) report, California's electorate does not reflect its population. Eight in 10 adults are eligible to vote but just 56 percent are registered, less than half (43%) belong to one of the major parties, and only 35 percent of adults can be expected to vote in the November election. Voter registration has grown at a slower rate than the population.

In addition, research conducted by NALEO shows that Latinos comprise nearly one third of the state's population, but only 18 percent of the states electorate. It is estimated that more than two million Latinos are eligible to register and vote throughout the state. The task of increasing the presence of Latinos at the polls this November will begin with reducing the number of eligible Latinos who have not registered to vote.

Eligible voters can register to vote until Monday, October 23rd – 15 days prior to the November 7, 2006 General Election. Voter registration cards are also available at local elections offices, libraries, DMV and post offices throughout the state. For more information, visit the Secretary of State's website at www.ss.ca.gov or by calling 1-800-345-VOTE, or for assistance in Spanish call 1-800-232-VOTA.

The NALEO Educational Fund will also be providing voters with information through its national toll-free bilingual hotline to answer questions regarding naturalization, voter registration and voting. Individuals needing any type of information may call 1-888-Ve-Y-Vota.