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Latino Vote Iowa, DMPS unite to educate students about caucuses

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DES MOINES, IA – The League of United Latin American Citizen's Latino Vote Iowa caucus campaign will join with Des Moines Public Schools to educate high school seniors about the Iowa Caucuses.

"The most rapidly growing sector of our Latino population is our youth," said Joe Enriquez Henry, National LULAC Vice President of the Midwest and coordinator of the Latino Vote Iowa campaign. "We want to empower our youth and all youth to become involved in the political process to ensure their voices are heard by those who will represent them."

LULAC's Political Director Christian Ucles, who himself first participated in the caucuses at age 17, will meet with high school government classes beginning Thursday. Ucles will explain the importance of participating in the Feb. 1 caucuses. Students will learn how to caucus, the differences between the Democratic and Republican caucuses, and the role the caucuses play in selecting the nation's president.

"It taught me to engage in advanced citizenship in the political process, and to be part of a tradition in Iowa," Ucles said. "I was proud to be part of something that has a direct impact on what happens in the rest of the country. The caucuses show that Iowa has an impact on who becomes our next president, and only in Iowa do candidates listen to the people and take into account what they say."

Ucles said participation in the caucuses by youth and people of different backgrounds and ethnicities, helps to break the stereotype that Iowa voters are only older, white people.

Des Moines Public Schools is a majority-minority school district, with minority students making up more than half of the student population. Twenty-five percent of the student body is Hispanic, the fastest-growing population in the district.

"Students who are 18 years old by Nov. 8, 2016, are eligible to participate in the caucuses next month," said Amber Graeber, director of social studies curriculum for DMPS. "We encourage them all to do so."

LULAC of Iowa launched the Latino Vote Iowa campaign in October to mobilize at least 10,000 Latinos to participate in the caucus. The campaign includes caucus trainings, mailings, phone calling and door-to-door canvassing. Campaign staff has already reached out to more than 43,000 registered Latino voters statewide.

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Visit www.lulaciowa.org

2463 E Highview Drive, Des Moines, Iowa 50320 • 515-208-7312

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The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the nation's largest and oldest civil rights volunteer-based organization that empowers Hispanic Americans and builds strong Latino communities. Headquartered in Washington, D.C. with 1,000 councils around the United States and Puerto Rico, LULAC's programs, services and advocacy address the most important issues for Latinos, meeting critical needs of today and the future.

For information about the Latino Vote Iowa project or to request a caucus training in your area, contact Joe Enriquez Henry at 515.208.7312; or Melissa Walker at 515.681.7731 or mwmediaconsultants@yahoo.com, or visit www.lulaciowa.org.

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