



LEAGUE of UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS COUNCIL 307

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Iowa LULAC calls on state to pass new voter registration law similar to California's

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DES MOINES – Members of Iowa's League of United Latin American Citizens' councils have called on state officials to enact new voter laws that would automatically register eligible voters when they either apply for or renew their driver's license.

Earlier this week, California became the second state in the country to implement such legislation.

"If this same type of law were enacted here in Iowa, it would not only increase the number of Latinos who are registered to vote, but all Iowans," said Joe Enriquez Henry of Des Moines, National LULAC Vice President of the Midwest. "It would be helpful to get our Latino youth automatically registered to vote when they come of age."

An Iowa LULAC analysis of registered voters in the state found that 68 percent of Latinos, age 18 and older, are registered to vote. Enriquez Henry said that number could increase with automatic voter registration with driver's license applications and renewals. It could increase substantially in the next few years as more Latino youth become eligible to vote, he said.

According to the State Data Center of Iowa, almost 53,000 Latinos were under the age of 18 during the 2014-15 school year.

LULAC National President Roger Rocha Jr. praised the California legislature's actions.

"California has shown a state can and should help its citizenry exercise their civic duty," he said. "This law will have a tremendous impact on individuals who want to vote but find the process confusing to navigate."

Founded in 1929, the League of United Latin American Citizens is the oldest U.S. Latino civil rights organization. There are more than 1,000 local LULAC councils, which hold voter registration drives, provide awareness to residents about language and immigration issues, sponsor programs and advocate for Latinos.

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