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**Contact:** Phoebe Plagens  
(212) 965-2235 / [pplagens@naacpldf.org](mailto:pplagens@naacpldf.org)

Sandra Hernandez:  
(213) 629-2512 x.129 / [shernandez@maldef.org](mailto:shernandez@maldef.org)

Tony Marcano:  
(213) 629-2512 x.128 / [amarcano@maldef.org](mailto:amarcano@maldef.org)

Christiaan Perez  
(212) 739-7581 / [cperez@latinojustice.org](mailto:cperez@latinojustice.org)

### **LatinoJustice and MALDEF Join LDF and The Ordinary People Society in Lawsuit Challenging the President's Election Integrity Commission**

Yesterday, LatinoJustice PRLDEF and MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) joined the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) in challenging the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity. The [amended complaint](#) adds seven plaintiffs who seek to enjoin the Commission, which we contend was created to discriminate against voters of color.

These plaintiffs are: #HealSTL, NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference, NAACP Florida State Conference, Hispanic Federation, Mi Familia Vota, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, and Labor Council for Latin American Advancement.

"We are thrilled to be joined by our long standing civil rights allies LatinoJustice PRLDEF and MALDEF in this important and historic challenge," said Janai Nelson, LDF's Associate Director-Counsel.

"The seven new plaintiffs that we represent collectively protect the rights of Black and Latino voters across the country and particularly voters from areas targeted by Mr. Trump's divisive and discriminatory voter fraud rhetoric."

Since the 2016 election, President Trump has repeatedly made false allegations of widespread voter fraud. Often using racially coded language—by linking voter fraud to communities with significant minority populations and to "illegals" who he claims vote fraudulently—the President has made clear the Commission's primary objective is to suppress the voting rights of Black and Latino voters.

On May 11, 2017, President Trump moved this baseless crusade forward, signing an executive order establishing the Commission, and appointing Vice President Michael Pence and controversial Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach as chair and vice chair.

"Donald Trump has stacked this commission with enough delusion and bias to 'verify' the non-existent voter fraud conspiracies he so often publicly imagines," said Thomas A. Saenz, MALDEF President and

General Counsel. "It would be pathetic were it not so dangerous, because these fraud fantasies will morph into real deterrence of minority voter participation."

On July 18, 2017, LDF joined forces with The Ordinary People Society, an Alabama-based community organization, in filing a [federal lawsuit](#) challenging the election commission. Our complaint alleges that the commission was formed with the intent to discriminate against voters of color, thus violating the U.S. Constitution.

The complaint also contends that both the commission's establishment and the commission's actions to date have gone far beyond the scope of the President's executive authority under the Constitution.

In a letter to state officials dated June 28, and in a follow-up letter on July 26, Secretary Kobach, the commission's vice chair, requested that all 50 states and the District of Columbia hand over sensitive, personal voter data. Kobach's request included the release of voters' names, party affiliations, birth dates, felony conviction records, voting histories, and the last four digits of voters' social security numbers.

"We are concerned that the voter registration information requested by the Commission would likely be used to unconstitutionally target and purge Latino voters by using error-prone databases with outdated information to discriminatorily suppress and harm communities of color," Juan Cartagena, President and General Counsel of LatinoJustice PRLDEF, said. "The ultimate irony here is the creation of a Presidential Commission on 'Election Integrity,' which actually seeks to undermine the very integrity of the elections that it purports to protect."

Since the lawsuit's original July 18 filing, several racially-charged events have followed. The violent events of Charlottesville, the President's abysmal reaction to it in his refusal to denounce white supremacy, and the pardoning of Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who terrorized the Latino community of Arizona, underscore the President's intention to deprive people of color of their rights enshrined under the law.

"This commission is not only problematic, but it is unlawfully intended to suppress minority voter turnout," said LDF attorney Natasha Merle. "We are already seeing its impact with people hesitating to vote and others cancelling their registration. We don't have to wait for this Commission's recommendations to go into effect. We have already begun to see its chilling impact on voter registration."

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. For more information, please visit [www.naacpldf.org](http://www.naacpldf.org).*

*Founded in 1968, MALDEF is the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization. Often described as the "law firm of the Latino community," MALDEF promotes social change through advocacy, communications, community education, and litigation in the areas of education, employment, immigrant rights, and political access. For more information on MALDEF, please visit <http://www.maldef.org/>.*

*LatinoJustice PRLDEF ("LJP"), originally established as the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) in 1972, is one of the foremost national nonprofit civil rights legal defense and education funds working to advance, promote, and protect the legal rights of Latina/os throughout the nation. LJP's work is focused on addressing systemic discrimination and ensuring equal access to justice in the advancement of voting rights, housing rights, educational equity, immigrant rights, language access rights, employment rights, and workplace justice, seeking to address all forms of discriminatory bias that adversely impact Latina/os. For more information on LatinoJustice, please visit: [www.latinojustice.org](http://www.latinojustice.org).*