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Immigration

Alejandro Mayorkas Nominated to Direct Department of Homeland Security

Legal Update

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This article was prepared with the assistance of ABIL, the Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers, of which Loan Huynh, Fredrikson Immigration Department Chair, is a member.

President-elect Joe Biden announced on November 23, 2020, his nomination of Alejandro Mayorkas to lead the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). During the Obama administration, Mr. Mayorkas directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and then became deputy secretary of DHS. During his more than 30-year career, Mr. Mayorkas also served as a U.S. attorney in California. He is a partner at WilmerHale, leading its COVID-19 Coronavirus Task Force.

Mr. Mayorkas' accomplishments in the Obama administration included developing and implementing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which benefited more than 700,000 youth. President-elect Biden said that Mr. Mayorkas "will play a critical role in fixing our broken immigration system and understands that living up to our values and protecting our nation's security aren't mutually exclusive — and under his leadership, they'll go hand-in-hand."

Mr. Mayorkas, who was born in Havana and is the son of Jewish refugees who fled Cuba during the Castro revolution, would make history as the first Latino and first immigrant in that position, if confirmed by the Senate. His Romanian mother escaped the Holocaust and met his father, of Sephardic heritage, in Cuba.

On the day of the nomination announcement, Mr. Mayorkas tweeted, "When I was very young, the United States provided my family and me a place of refuge. Now, I have been nominated to be the DHS Secretary and oversee the protection of all Americans and those who flee persecution in search of a better life for themselves and their loved ones."

Details:

- Biography, Alejandro Mayorkas, Biden-Harris Nominees and Appointees, <https://buildbackbetter.gov/the-administration/nominees-and-appointees/alejandro-mayorkas/>

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- Mayorkas' Twitter page, <https://twitter.com/AliMayorkas/status/1330937834908250115>
- "Alejandro Mayorkas, Biden's Pick for DHS Head, Would Be 1st Latino in Post," *NPR*, <https://n.pr/2VqjRvD>
- "Biden Picks Alejandro Mayorkas, a Son of Sephardic Jewish Cuban Refugees, to Lead the Department of Homeland Security," *eSefarad*, <https://esefarad.com/?p=100825>