



**Latino Policy &
Politics Initiative**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2020

MEDIA CONTACT

Eliza Moreno

E: lppipress@luskin.ucla.edu

P: 310-487-9815

**UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE UNVEILS A LATINO POLICY AGENDA
THAT URGES IMMEDIATE ACTION TO SPUR THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF
COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**

The policy document was built in collaboration with 80 Latinx leaders from across California and serves as a national call to action amid the devastating impacts Latinos face amid COVID-19.

The [UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative](#) today unveiled an ambitious policy agenda with an urgent call to action for local, state and federal leaders on reforms that are needed to improve outcomes for U.S. Latinos amid the economic devastation caused by COVID-19.

The document, titled "[Shaping a 21st Century Latino Agenda](#)," is a blueprint for policy reforms on criminal justice, public health, economic opportunity, education, voting rights, housing, climate change and immigrant rights, that can address systemic racial injustices and chart a path forward for the nation's largest minority group and all Americans. The policy proposals offer a national vision from leading Latinx leaders that will be shared with governors, the two presidential campaigns, the national political committees and leaders in sectors such as philanthropy, education and the economy.

"Latinos are serving as frontline, essential workers. They pick our harvest, cook our meals, staff our grocery stores, all while suffering high rates of coronavirus infections and economic degradation for keeping this country safe," said Sonja Diaz, founding director of UCLA LPPI. "Reopening the economy must be paired with a fair opportunity to survive and thrive for people of color and anything less will stifle progress and put America further behind."

The Latino agenda was developed as part of a convening of multigenerational Latinx leaders on July 15. The convening's chairs include California State Senator Maria Elena Durazo, Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez, AltaMed President and CEO Castulo de la Rocha, California Primary Care Association President and CEO Carmela Castellano-Garcia and

MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) President Thomas A. Saenz.

“This pandemic and recent protests around police brutality have exposed a number of our nation’s weaknesses, including how easily communities of color are disproportionately devastated,” said de la Rocha. “They have highlighted the intersection among our justice, education, economic, environmental, and immigration systems, as well as their collective impact on health. We must include and prioritize Latinos in the discussion around health policy in order to ensure a diverse health care workforce and reduce disparities in access to affordable, high-quality care for both rural and urban underserved areas.”

“Latinos have been disproportionately devastated in this crisis, and systematically left out of relief efforts. The state and federal government cannot continue to leave behind the essential workers and taxpayers that serve as the backbone of our economy,” said Assemblymember Gonzalez. “California cannot recover from the effects of this pandemic if we fail to address the challenges that Latinos are facing. We must move forward an agenda for recovery that centers racial and economic justice for our community.”

Policy recommendations include:

- Institutionalize voter mobilization and voter education as a government function.
- Increase access to capital to unleash Latinos’ entrepreneurial potential for business and job creation.
- Establish universal health coverage and access for all.
- Equitably respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through testing, contact tracing, and treatment.
- Create a pipeline for Latinos and other underserved workers for the jobs of the future in clean energy and the green economy.
- Make safe and clean water a priority for communities of color across the nation.
- End state-sanctioned police violence and systematically reduce funding of police forces at every level of government
- Guarantee universal access to quality preschool for every child.
- Pass a just and humane immigration reform policy that provides a pathway to citizenship and safeguards family unity as a cornerstone of the immigration system.
- Enact an immediate and indefinite moratorium on all deportations.

“Latinos have a lot at stake this critical election cycle and will be looking toward leaders to address their top concerns regarding equity, jobs, healthcare access and fair immigration reform,” said Senator Durazo. “In 2020, we can no longer have a conversation about the future of this country that does not include all Latinos in a meaningful way. California must lead the way by fighting for an agenda that addresses our diverse needs.”

“Latinos comprise over a quarter of California registered voters and 55 percent of public school students in California, so this Latino policy agenda is very much a California policy prescription for today and the future,” said Saenz. “It is also very much an agenda that promotes equal opportunity and the chance to thrive for all Californians, Latino and non-Latino alike. Our state’s ongoing success can be found in these pages.”

A full copy of the report and recommendations is [available here](#).

About the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative

The [UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative](#) addresses the most critical domestic policy challenges facing communities of color in states and localities across the United States by fostering innovative research, leveraging policy-relevant expertise, driving civic engagement and nurturing a leadership pipeline that propels viable policy reforms to expand opportunity for all Americans.

###