

**UCLA**

**Latino Policy &  
Politics Initiative**



**SHAPING A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
LATINO AGENDA**

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**PREAMBLE TO 21ST CENTURY LATINO AGENDA  
FROM BLACK-BROWN UNITY TASK FORCE**

# Shaping a 21st Century Latino Agenda

## **PREAMBLE TO 21ST CENTURY LATINO AGENDA FROM BLACK-BROWN UNITY TASK FORCE**

We find ourselves at an historic moment that threatens the success of not only our economy, but our democracy. The intersecting crises of COVID-19, worsening racial/ethnic disparities, and the proliferation of state-sanctioned violence and assault on Black Americans, only reinforce the need for renewed multi-racial, multi-ethnic coalitions. Latinos represent multiple diasporas, intersectional identities, and are not a single-issue community. Identity for Latinos in the U.S. is multifaceted; about one-quarter of all Latinos are Afro-Latino and many others identify as members of indigenous communities from Latin America and the Caribbean. As such, the enforcement and advancement of civil rights must encompass the intersections of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, citizenship, and disability status.

COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting Black and Brown communities across the country; with low-wage workers of color bearing the highest prices to their health and wealth. The coronavirus pandemic will have lasting impacts, negatively affecting the livelihoods and opportunities of Latino, Black, Indigenous, and Asian Pacific Islanders for generations. This crisis, coupled with worsening inequality and the proliferation of anti-blackness, are perpetuated by this country's ongoing racist history and tendencies. In this country, structures, systems, and institutions have worked together to put up and maintain barriers to opportunity, dignity, and the social mobility for Latino, Black, Asian Pacific Islander, and Indigenous communities. To address these intersecting crises and transform racist structures into a just recovery for frontline communities requires a multi-racial, multi-ethnic coalition.

Latinos are serving as frontline workers, picking our harvest and cooking meals to feed the nation, delivering mail and supplies, staffing our grocery stores and pharmacies, during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet remain unprotected by our laws and leaders as they seek access to healthcare and human services, quality housing, living wages, and the social safety net that they financially support. As our Black and Brown contributions to this nation's economy are gladly accepted, our very existence is simultaneously rejected. Latinos are systematically left out of relief and recovery efforts even as our state and federal governments allocate trillions in stimulus funds to provide relief to Americans through direct payments, expanded unemployment benefits, and the Paycheck Protection Program. This erasure is not new; racist systems replicate historical discrimination, even in the face of a global pandemic where public health and economic recovery are inextricably linked to a healthy Latino workforce.

California has a storied history of multi-racial, multi-ethnic coalition building, from the creation of global cities on the arduous efforts of workers of color, to the fight for farmworker dignity, and transformational movement building to challenge discrimination in schools, workplaces, and halls of power. The 2020 uprisings, led by the courageous and unapologetic leadership of the movement for Black Lives, have challenged all Americans to confront anti-Blackness in ourselves, our families, our communities, and our laws. For Latinos, we commit to becoming stronger allies in the movement for Black lives and acknowledge that though Black and Brown communities have much in common, we can do more to recognize the distinct differences and support reforms that protect Black life.

Our Latino responsibility – as well as the force of our demands presented here – is heightened in California by the sheer size and growth of our community. Forty percent of Californians are Latino, and Latinos make up over a quarter of California's registered voters. The relative youth of our community means that these percentages will only increase in future years. California cannot continue to thrive without Latino leadership, Latino ingenuity, and Latino strength. Our collective success in California depends upon the adoption of policies and practices that reflect this inevitable future.

We have been called upon to lead, act, and stand up for our democracy as we witness the unnecessary loss of life at the hands of failed leadership. We recognize that transformation to unleash the power of America's new majority can only happen through solidarity and reconciliation. This 21st Century Latino Agenda is a first step in institutionalizing the transformations necessary to correct generations of divestment and discrimination; the time calls for retiring failed systems in favor of new voices and equitable policy-making.

# **CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT, AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

## CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT, AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**Task Force Leadership: Hon. Kevin de León and Dr. Michael Méndez, Assistant Professor, UC Irvine**

The climate crisis and pollution from fossil fuel combustion are a public health emergency, and the impacts disproportionately affect people of color. Latinos are particularly vulnerable to climate-related threats due to historic siting of fossil fuel operations in communities of color and a legacy of disinvestment. More than 60 percent of Latinos in the U.S. reside in four key states that have historically experienced extreme events. This includes wildfires and droughts in California, rising sea levels and floods in Florida and New York, and hurricanes in Puerto Rico and Texas. Latinos are well aware of these consequences with eight in ten (84 percent) believing climate change is happening and 70 percent acknowledging it is mainly caused by human activity.

A recent study from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that White populations in the United States contribute more to local air pollution than Latino and Black populations. Yet, Latino and Black communities are overwhelmingly exposed to deadly air pollution – some of the same pollution that also drives global climate change. The impacts of climate change, moreover, exacerbate existing racial and economic inequalities in society. The crisis presents a unique opportunity for public health, economic, and job transformation through a just transition away from a fossil-fuel based economy to a renewable, clean-energy economy. Climate change policy must center on Latinos and communities of color, so that the nation's new majority can drive the new green economy and have equal access to resources, protective measures, and healthy communities to live, work, and play.

Policy recommendations for climate change, environment, and public health include:

### **1. Reimagine Transportation for People**

Just as the federal government-funded interstate highways transformed America in the 20th century, we must now rethink our transportation systems for the 21st century in light of the climate crisis. The federal government must help local governments transform their transportation systems away from fossil fuel vehicles and to mass transit and electrified transportation. With an explicit mandate to invest in frontline communities of color, we can help reverse the harmful environmental and socio-economic consequences of building freeways and freight corridors through Latino neighborhoods. Our transportation system must prioritize people's health.

- Create an Office of Clean Transportation within the U.S. Department of Transportation with the mission to transform our transportation systems, accelerate our transition to zero-emission mass transit (buses and rail) and coordinate with state and local governments to invest federal funding in critical multi-modal (i.e. transit, bicycling, walking) projects in frontline communities of color.
- Prioritize electrifying buses, medium and heavy-duty vehicles, and port operations.
- Provide generous incentives for low-income households to trade-in their old polluting vehicles for brand new or secondary-market zero-emission cars.
- Prioritize an electric vehicle charging network for both cars and long-haul trucks in environmental justice communities.



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## 2. Clean Air that Benefits Brown and Black Communities

Develop clean air policies that simultaneously reduce local air pollution and the global pollution that fuels climate change. We reject the false narrative that climate change is just about carbon emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>). The federal government must exercise stronger authority in crafting air pollution standards that focus on emitters that produce both CO<sub>2</sub> and local emissions that endanger public health.

- Establish the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a cabinet-level executive branch department and designate the agency's Secretary a member of the President's Cabinet.
- Expand the funding and reach of the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and adopt legislation to make it permanent.
- Prioritize a rapid managed decline to decarbonize the economy by phasing-out fossil fuels.
- Require health impact assessments and environmental justice screenings for any project that utilizes \$5 million or more in federal funds.
- Rescind Trump-era rollbacks on environmental protections and make clear that federal rules are a floor, not a ceiling for states that are accelerating climate change policies.
- Prioritize rules that require direct emissions reductions at the source.
- Direct at least 40 percent of climate and environmental investments to frontline and vulnerable communities.

## 3. Democratize Clean Energy

The federal government should prioritize sustainable, zero-emission energy projects to Latinos and other Americans that are de facto or de jure shut out of innovative energy efficiencies and clean energy technology.

- Adopt ambitious national renewable energy standards: near-zero-emissions by 2040; 100 percent clean energy by 2030 in electricity generation, buildings, and transportation.
- Expand access and affordability for residential (including multi-family) renewable energy and energy efficiency projects for low-income households.
- Prioritize distributed clean energy systems. Invest in community-scale microgrids, storage, and other distributed clean energy systems that integrate energy efficiency, renewable distributed generation, energy storage, and other technologies.

## 4. Job Training & High Road Jobs for Latino Workers

We must ensure that Latinos and other Americans most impacted by climate change have access to and benefit from good-paying jobs that will be generated to combat the problem. We must avoid usual hiring practices of a predominately White workforce receiving priority for new jobs in the green economy.



- Establish an Office of Just Transition Workforce within the EPA to develop programs supporting Latino communities and workers impacted by climate change and the transition to a clean economy.
- Support local hiring programs in frontline communities to ensure a racially diverse workforce for the new green economy.
- Job creation should prioritize high-road employment, meaning jobs that provide permanent, fair, and family-supporting wages and benefits.
- Actively support unionization to democratize the workplace and ensure collective bargaining is the voice of workers for high road employment.

### **5. Make Safe and Affordable Drinking Water a Human Right**

Access to clean and affordable drinking water should be a human right. For decades the federal government has failed Brown and Black Communities in places like Flint, Michigan, and the San Joaquin Valley in California. Yet, there are thousands of other towns with large Latino populations that lack safe and affordable drinking water.

- The EPA must develop a national safe drinking water action plan for community water systems regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) and formally replace the outdated and inequitable policy guidance on water affordability.
- Establish a policy on the Human Right to Water and develop quantitative metrics to measure it, and direct key funding, enforcement, and programs to communities lacking this human right.
- Invest in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure to create high-road jobs while supporting local and regional solutions that provide safe, affordable, and reliable drinking water and wastewater service to communities reliant on failing and contaminated systems.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Task Force Leadership: George Galvis, CURYJ; Dr. Laura Gomez, Professor, UCLA Law; and Eunisses Hernandez, La Defensa**

We introduce our topic by envisioning what a just, versus currently unjust, system of what we colloquially refer to as “the four Ps” could become: police, prosecutors, prison, and probation. While the focus of our conversation today is on the Latino population, we acknowledge the debt we owe to our African American brothers and sisters for leading the national uprising this summer that has allowed us to re-imagine a society in which the four Ps are far less prominent. We understand our oppression as Latino peoples who are Indigenous, Black, and Mestizo because of how intertwined European colonialism, the genocide of Indigenous peoples, the enslavement of African peoples, and the conquest of mestizo populations was in the creation of the United States and the continuing subordination of people of color. These principles shape any discussion of crime policy as well as the reality that the root of “crime” is poverty, food insecurity, inadequate and overcrowded housing, and underfunded public schools that are more racially segregated (albeit by practice, not law) than they were in 1954 when the Supreme Court struck down “separate but equal” in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

- 1. End state-sanctioned police violence and systematically reduce funding of police forces at every level of government (school districts, higher education, cities, counties, states).**
- 2. Fully fund alternatives to policing and incarceration such as restorative justice, community-based dispute resolution, community-based crisis responses, access to mental health care, education, housing, and jobs.**
- 3. Abolish private detention centers and enact a moratorium on all new construction of prisons, jails and immigration detention facilities. Systematically reduce funding for these facilities and reinvest those funds into building out alternative methods and venues of shielding people for their safety and the safety of others.**
- 4. End the use of youth probation, close youth probation camps, and end punitive disciplinary responses in educational settings for young Latinos (24 and under).**
  - Provide young people with access to transformative and culturally humble services, health care, education and high-quality jobs.
- 5. Eliminate gang injunctions and gang databases, which disproportionately impact Latino youth.**
- 6. Decriminalize survival acts such as drug possession and sales, sex work, and houselessness, and provide supportive services whenever requested.**
- 7. Establish a state-level special prosecutor for police misconduct, including excessive force, and special county-level prosecutors for prosecutor misconduct, including discriminatory filing practices.**
- 8. Abolish ICE, break all partnerships between local and state law enforcement with immigration enforcement agencies, and end the school to prison deportation pipeline.**
- 9. Mandate nationwide data collection, by all law enforcement, prison, and state law agencies, by Latino/Latina/x status on par with African American, Indian, and other racial groups.**

**ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND SOCIAL  
MOBILITY**

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

**Task Force Leadership: Dr. David Hayes-Bautista, Professor, UCLA Geffen School of Medicine; Monica Lozano, former President and CEO, US Hispanic Media, Inc.; Ana Valdez, Latino Donor Collaborative**

If the U.S. Latino community were a country, it would be the 8th largest economy in the world and the fastest-growing among fully developed nations. Not only do Latinos contribute over \$2.3 trillion to America's GDP, but they also create 87 percent of all new businesses and drive a disproportionate portion of the growth in income and job creation for all Americans.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted Latino workers and small businesses. From February to March of 2020 the number of Latino business owners dropped by 32 percent and by April 2020, the unemployment rate for Latinos rose to almost 20 percent. The particularly harsh impact of the pandemic on Latino communities and the explicit exclusion of many Latino families and businesses from economic stimulus policies has brought to light the systemic disadvantages that the Latino community still faces despite its entrepreneurial spirit and resilience.

COVID-19 only compounds persistent inequality that curbs the true economic potential of Latinos. Despite demonstrable progress in driving the American economy, Latinos remain the nation's most vulnerable workers; they suffer the largest percentage of minimum wage and overtime law violations, have the lowest levels of pension and health insurance coverage, and face other barriers to upward mobility. Gender discrimination further hinders Latinos economic opportunity; Latinas typically earn only 54 cents for every dollar earned by white men, and must work 23 months to earn what white men earn in 12 months. Improving the standard of living for Latinas and their families requires multi-faceted mandates to strengthen workplace protections, which is indelibly tied to worker power and a robust labor movement.

Investing in the growth of the 8th largest and third fastest-growing economy in the world will be fundamental to economic recovery. As Latinos are projected to increase their share of the workforce and continue to drive economic growth across the country, policy mandates that promote job creation, increase wages, and remove systemic barriers for Latino workers and business owners alike are necessary for the well-being of all Americans.

Policy recommendations for economic opportunity and social mobility include:

### **1. Increase Access to Capital to Unleash Latinos' Entrepreneurial Potential for Business and Job Creation**

Latino business owners are less likely to get the capital they need to start or grow businesses and are pushed to take on more personal financial risk than White business owners.

- Require financial institutions that borrow from the Federal Reserve's discount window to show a demonstrable 10 percent annual increase in the volume and amount of loans given to Latinos.
- Dramatically increase funds from the U.S. Department of the Treasury for the creation of new Latino-led community development financial institutions (CDFI) that deploy capital to entrepreneurs of color who are underserved by traditional bank lenders.
- Provide cultural and language-appropriate training and legal support to Latino business owners on the range of options and requirements to access capital for their businesses.

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- Invest substantial government resources to build business incubators within Latino communities and other communities of color.

## **2. Empower Workers and Eliminate America's Racial/Ethnic Wealth and Income Disparities**

- Strengthen organized labor and the right of workers to use collective bargaining as a means to raise wages and rebuild the middle class.
- Mandate a living wage for all workers.
- Mandate all workers have access to health insurance, sick leave, parental leave, subsidized childcare, and paid vacations, and retirement security benefits.
- Expand and enforce workplace health and safety regulations for all workers fueling our economy.
- Penalize companies who engage in pay discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, language ability, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics and allocate significant government resources for enforcement activities.
- Mandate all companies that who receive tax dollars from any government program to collect and report pay data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and veteran status on an annual basis.

## **3. Invest in the Skills of Tomorrow's Workforce**

Latinos' share of the U.S. labor force will increase faster than any other population group over the next decade. Closing the opportunity gap to a college degree and career technical education requires bold affirmative action policies that ensure racial and ethnic diversity in admissions and government contracting. Upskilling, retaining, and college attainment must integrate robust financial aid and affordability mandates to ensure Latinos and other students of color have true access to government-supported education programs and degrees.

- Mandate Latino representation, retention, and graduation in institutions of higher education through affirmative action, robust financial aid, and integrated social welfare programs to support housing, food security, health care, and other service needs.
- Grow and design apprenticeship and career-pathways programs tailored to Latinos that provide employable and transferable skills, knowledge on job searching and hiring, and direct connections with potential employers. Expand targeted apprenticeships in growing fields with good-paying jobs including health science, information technology, advanced manufacturing, engineering, and green technology.

#### **4. Promote Wealth Creation through Increased Homeownership**

Between 2009 and 2019 Latinos accounted for almost 52 percent of net growth in U.S. homeownership. However, the impacts of the pandemic threaten an increase in mortgage defaults and foreclosures, which will wipe-out growth in Latino homeownership and reduce Latino wealth, akin to the Great Recession.

- Extend mortgage payment and foreclosure moratoriums until COVID-19 is resolved.
- Create a grant and loan protection program for Latino landlords until COVID-19 is resolved.
- Expand access to capital for new Latino homeowners requiring financial institutions that borrow from the Federal Reserve's discount window to increase their lending to Latinos and by investing in Latino-led community development financial institutions (CDFI).

#### **5. Restructure the Tax Code to Reduce the Tax Burden on Small Minority-Owned Businesses and Working-Class Families**

By 2027, almost half of Latino businesses will face tax increases as provisions that benefit small business owners under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act are set to expire.

- Provide access to tax break and tax credits to all taxpayers, regardless of immigration status or whether they file taxes through a Social Security Number or an Individual Tax Identification Number.

#### **6. Rebuild America's Infrastructure**

Infrastructure investments are great economic multipliers. Efforts should be placed on assuring that Latinos are not only the workers who build America's 21st century infrastructure, but also the owners of engineering and infrastructure projects.

- Prioritize infrastructure investments in Latino populated areas with a special emphasis on areas that have been historically under-resourced and highly polluted.
- Ensure equitable distribution of public infrastructure contracts to increase the representation of Latino-owned engineering and construction companies in infrastructure projects.
- Encourage project labor agreements in infrastructure and construction projects.



**EDUCATION**

## EDUCATION

### ***Task Force Leadership: Maria Echaveste, The Opportunity Institute; and Michele Siqueiros, The Campaign for College Opportunity***

In all its forms, education is the key to creating sustainable improvements to the quality of life of all Americans. Latinos are a significant part of the student population across all education levels. Today, around 1 out of every 4 students in pre-K and K-12 schools and 1 out of every 5 university students are Latino. Nationwide, from 1996 to 2016, the share of Latino students increased by at least 10 percentage points at all levels. Yet, this increase in enrollment and representation has not materialized into access to quality education.

Structural disadvantages such as higher poverty rates and lower proficiency in academic subjects, including reading, limit Latinos' access to high-quality education and negatively affect their academic performance. Latino children entering kindergarten are 42 percent more likely to be in the lowest quartile of performance on reading readiness compared to 18 percent of White students. Among Latino students who started college in 2010, only 54 percent finished in 6 years or less compared to 64 percent of White students and 60 percent of students of all races.

Given the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Latino communities, Latino students are likely to face additional and higher barriers to improve their educational attainment. Education policies targeting the specific circumstances of Latino students and their families need to be implemented to address the opportunity gap and ensure all students have access to quality education. Improving educational attainment and quality for Latinos is not just good for Latinos; our country's future success depends on it as this demographic drives the American economy.

#### **1. Ensure Every Child Succeeds by Making Early Child Care and Education a Reality for All Latinos**

- Guarantee universal access to quality preschool for every child, including prioritizing the continued expansion of subsidized preschool for low-income families and investing in effective 0-3 community and family-based programs that are culturally relevant and focused on supporting parents and caregivers in the early care of their children. Create living-wage early childcare and education jobs so that workers and families have the resources necessary to thrive and put children on a pathway to educational success.

#### **2. Ensure Latinos Have Access to Quality Neighborhood Schools & Close the Opportunity Gap**

- Ensure Latinos have access to quality education and delivery of meaningful college preparation curriculum, by mandating equitable funding formulas for K-12 schools, including developing new models of funding that are less or not dependent on local property taxes and the zip codes of the district.
- Restructure schools and child-serving agencies to provide the resources and opportunities that adequately meet the individual needs of the "whole child," by building community schools, building positive educational environments, mandating restorative approaches to discipline and eliminating school police, and creating multi-tiered systems of support to address student's educational, social service, and public health needs.

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- Implement programs that promote biliteracy for those students whose home language is not English while ensuring that every student has the language support to ensure mastery of academic English.
- Adopt an evidence-based, statewide system of equity indicators to monitor district-level progress for reducing racial disparities in achievement, and guarantee consequences for failures and successes.

### **3. Increase Latino Access and Success in Post-Secondary Education**

- Enable consideration of race, ethnicity, and gender in admissions, hiring and government contracts for community colleges and public universities.
- Focus financial aid on need, not merit, taking into account the true cost of attendance to advance affordability and reflect today's housing and income crises. Ensure that financial aid programs are student-centered, simplified, and transparent for Latino students and families to understand.
- Significantly increase funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), with accountability mandates so that these resources are spent to support the success of Latino students. Mandates should include demonstrable progress on closing the gaps in access and completion for Latino students, increases in the matriculation of Latino transfer students to four-year institutions, restricting necessary funds to developing the research capacity of Latino students through graduate fellowship awards, pre- and post-doctoral programs, and financial aid programs that retain students, even during emergencies like COVID-19 or tuition changes.
- Tie federal and state funding to public and private institutions of higher education to increases in Latino representation across executive leadership, academic senate faculty, managerial staff, and undergraduate and graduate student bodies in tandem with their share of a state's population, and ensure a strong campus climate that supports Latinos in the academy.

### **4. Invest in a Culturally Diverse and Economically Stable Education Workforce**

- Invest in affordable Career Technical Education and mandate paid apprentice structures to increase Latinos' access to a living wage and high-wage jobs, especially in the health sciences, engineering, energy, and technology.
- Increase the salaries and diversity of teachers to ensure Latino communities support quality public education schools and jobs. Support programs and initiatives to dramatically increase the number of Latino teachers, educational leaders, and support workers, including improving compensation, retirement systems, professional development, and other support for teachers and other adults in the education system.

- 5. Invest in welfare and mental health services to improve the social wellbeing of students and their families allowing schools to focus their budget and staff on providing quality education**
  - Extend access to social welfare programs to everyone regardless of immigration status. Many Latino students and their families are currently excluded from supplemental nutrition assistance, Medicaid, unemployment benefits, supplemental security income, and other benefits that would increase the wellbeing of students and improve their academic performance.
  - Invest in culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care for students and their families beyond the limits of their school.
  
- 6. Expand voting rights at local level to permit all stakeholders to participate in selection of governing boards, including school district elections.**

## **HEALTH & SOCIAL SAFETY NET**

## HEALTH & SOCIAL SAFETY NET

**Taskforce Leadership: Jane Garcia, MPH, La Clínica de La Raza; Dr. Jeffrey Reynoso, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California; and Dr. Arturo Vargas-Bustamante, Associate Professor, UCLA Fielding School of Public Health**

As COVID-19 cases surge across the United States (US), the nation continues to grapple with sufficient and timely testing, tracing, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and COVID-19 related healthcare for all. Specifically for Latinos, the underlying social and economic conditions have accelerated the longstanding historical and structural health inequities, which have manifested as a disproportionate number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. Latinos are most vulnerable to economic uncertainty due to the pandemic because they are the most likely to experience a job loss or pay cut, least likely to be able to shelter in place and most excluded from the federal CARES Act individual rebate programs. In addition, anti-immigrant and anti-Latino rhetoric and policies at a federal level, including increased ICE raids and the implementation of the public charge ruling, have produced a “chilling effect” that has decreased enrollment and use of health and social services among Latino immigrant families. As a result of this social and economic environment, Latino children and adults are experiencing negative mental health impacts from anxiety and depression to more serious mental conditions. The current COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed decades of disinvestment within the nation’s healthcare system and social safety net programs. While there were gains as a result of the Affordable Care Act, Latinos are also less likely to have health coverage, a usual source of primary and specialty care, and a culturally and linguistically diverse health workforce, which directly impacts the overall quality of health care. It is imperative to have health care and public health policy centered on Latinos to ensure access to affordable, high-quality health care and a diverse health workforce in both rural and urban underserved areas to achieve health equity for all.

Policy recommendations for health and social safety net include:

### **1. Equitably Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic through Testing, Contact Tracing, and Treatment**

- Expand testing capabilities to known high-positive areas and “testing deserts” in rural and urban underserved areas.
- Invest in linguistically and culturally diverse contact tracing to reach Latinos effectively.
- Ensure that all COVID-19 treatment is available to all regardless of income or immigration status.
- When a vaccine becomes available, prioritize individuals and communities who are disproportionately affected by health inequities and are most at-risk, including older adults and individuals with chronic conditions.
- Invest in a robust multi-pronged communications campaign to clarify confusion and misinformation around COVID-19 and build awareness of available coverage and access to health care and public benefits, with a focus on reaching Latino populations through partnering with ethnic media organizations and CBOs.
- For adults who lose employer-sponsored health coverage during the pandemic, cover the full costs of COBRA insurance.

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- Extend the open enrollment period of Affordable Care Act marketplaces for middle-income Americans and increase subsidies to reduce health care costs.

## **2. Establish Universal Health Coverage and Access for All**

- Establish a public option on the Affordable Care Act exchanges for all regardless of immigration or employment status.
- Leverage the recommendations of the Healthy California for All Commission to advance progress toward achieving a health system that provides coverage and access through a unified financing system.

## **3. Modernize the Medicaid Program for Low-income and Immigrant Latinos**

- Streamline Medicaid's eligibility and enrollment process by utilizing presumptive eligibility and allowing data from other programs (i.e., SNAP, WIC, etc.) to be used to enroll families for other benefits, such as express lane eligibility.
- Remove eligibility restrictions based on citizenship status so that all children who meet the income eligibility requirements for Medicaid and CHIP can enroll.
- Automatically enroll all newborn children, before they leave the hospital, in Medicaid and CHIP with at least 12 months of continuous coverage if their parents' health insurance does not cover them.
- Expand integration of a community health workforce in Medicaid, including home visitors and community health workers (CHWs) to achieve strong outcomes for all families.
- Invest in marketing, outreach, and enrollment assistance to Latino communities to increase and maintain coverage and improve access to health care.

## **4. Reinvest in Community Health Centers**

- Invest in safety net providers who serve medically underserved areas to increase their capacity to meet the primary and preventive, dental, specialty care, and behavioral health needs of their patients as well as their ability to address social determinants of health.
- Expand the availability of school-based health centers in targeted communities to improve child and family access to health services.

## **5. Strengthen the Latino Health Workforce through Education, Training, and Job Security**

- Leverage the recommendations from the California Future Health Workforce Commission to accelerate a health workforce that has the capacity, competencies, agency, and diversity to meet the Latino community's evolving health needs.



- Address the shortage of primary care Latino providers, including but not limited to physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurse midwives, and dentists by increasing health professional school admissions for Latino students and Spanish speakers, investing in residencies for Latino health professionals through the National Health Service Corps, and reducing the barriers for Spanish speaking International Medical Graduates to practice medicine in the U.S.
- Improve the wages, benefits, and working conditions of all healthcare workers, particularly those most economically disadvantaged such as promotoras, community health workers (CHWs), peer support specialists, home care workers, behavioral health counselors, technicians, therapists, and other allied healthcare workers.

### **6. Bolster Public Health Research, Infrastructure, and Programs**

- Significantly increase funding for public health agencies, including but not limited to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, and state and local public health departments.
- Restore full funding to the World Health Organization.
- Increase funding for public health research through the National Institutes of Health, particularly translational research on health inequities, the social determinants of health, and policy approaches to address these disparities.

### **7. Close the Digital Divide to Increase Access to Telemedicine**

- Expand and improve access to telehealth services, including investments in broadband internet in Latino neighborhoods, subsidies to increase access to digital technology, and technology in community health centers and other healthcare providers that serve the Latino community.

### **8. Protect the Health & Safety of Latino Workers**

- Create and enforce strict health and safety regulations—including protection from COVID-19 exposure—for Latino workers who are overrepresented in low-wage occupations including but not limited to: agriculture, meatpacking, distribution, food retail, restaurants, domestic work, and others key sectors.

### **9. Include all Latinos in Social Safety Net Programs and Emergency Stimulus Packages**

- Integrate all Latinos into all federal and state social safety net programs, such as food, housing, and economic assistance, regardless of immigration status.
- Design safety net policies to address historical and structural inequalities that have disadvantaged Latinos for centuries, such as effects of redlining and subprime mortgage crisis impacting the Latino wealth creation through housing policy.

# HOUSING

## HOUSING

**Task Force Leadership: Dr. Melissa Chinchilla, AltaMed Institute for Health Equity; Chris Iglesias, The Unity Council; and Noerena Limón, National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals.**

The future of housing in the U.S. rests on the back of the Latino community. Over the past decade, Latinos have accounted for over 40 percent of the overall growth in household formations, driving demand for new renter and owner-occupied housing. Affording adequate housing is a growing challenge, complicated by the grave shortage of available housing options in both urban and suburban communities and the skyrocketing cost of living in states with the largest Latino populations.

For communities of color, homeownership continues to be the number one vehicle for building wealth in the U.S., particularly when homeowners have 44 times the wealth of renters. Latinos have already played a pivotal role in the housing market and with shifting demographics, the future of the U.S. housing market will become increasingly dependent on sustaining Latino homeownership growth. Over the past decade, Latinos have accounted for over half of the country's homeownership growth and were the only demographic to have increased their homeownership rate for the past five consecutive years; these trends were encouraging given that Latinos lost over two-thirds of their household wealth during the Great Recession. However, the Latino homeownership rate remains at 47.5, far below that of their White counterparts at 73.3.

Homeownership is not an option for many Americans and the majority of Latinos are still renters. In 2016, over half of Latino-headed households (54 percent) rented, compared to 28 percent of White households. The share of Latinos who are "housing cost-burdened" – those who spend more than 30 percent of household income on housing costs – has risen from 42 percent in 2000 to 57 percent in 2015. Rising housing costs and a lack of federal renter support puts Latinos at a particular risk of eviction and displacement.

The rising cost of housing goes hand in hand with the rise in homelessness across the nation; California remains the epicenter of unhoused Americans. Currently, Latinos comprise about 22 percent of the nation's homeless population, but only 18 percent of the population overall. Homelessness is a public health concern with notable social and economic costs. Unhoused individuals are more likely to be exposed to unsafe living conditions, social isolation, poor nutrition, and barriers to healthcare; these are even more magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Housing policy must reverse course and meaningfully integrate Latinos at all levels – local, state, and federal – in building housing stock, supporting homeownership, preserving and expanding affordable housing, and ending the draconian practice of leaving Americans unsheltered.

Policy recommendations for housing include:

### **1. Address Housing Shortages through New Construction**

- Fund additional construction of multifamily affordable housing and owner-occupied units for first-time homebuyers through state-local partnerships.
- Enforce the Surplus Land Act to transform unused public lands into public goods like affordable housing and open space.

## Shaping a 21st Century Latino Agenda

- Eliminate land use policies that effectively bar the development of affordable multi-unit housing near transit stations and in opportunity-rich communities with high-performing schools and access to quality jobs.
- Address the construction labor shortage driving up the cost of building housing in the U.S. and stifling economic growth by enacting federal immigration reforms that legalize and offer a path to citizenship to the current workforce and provide new avenues for workers to meet continuing workforce needs. Provide adequate workforce training and career support—such as apprenticeships—to these workers so they can move up the economic ladder. Guarantee a living wage to all workers.
- Tie federal transportation funding to cities that ease zoning restrictions to increase production of affordable housing supply (i.e., tie federal funding to affordable, rental and owner-occupied housing construction).

### **2. Mandate Housing Security and Protections for Latino Households**

- Extend the moratorium on evictions, foreclosures, and utility shut-offs indefinitely until unemployment rates for all racial groups fall below the average pre-pandemic rate while providing housing grants for low income and unemployed residents. The economic effects of COVID-19 shutdowns are estimated to drive up U.S. homelessness by as much as 45 percent in a single year.
- Increase funds for the preservation of existing affordable multifamily rental housing to prevent displacement and homelessness, and mandate affordable housing thresholds for new projects that utilize federal dollars.
- Create a program designed to assist small landlords during the pandemic. The program would be structured as a low interest loan designed to cover rental income losses contingent on landlords not evicting tenants. For those who own less than four units, the loan would be eligible for loan forgiveness.
- Establish a codified right to counsel in eviction proceedings for low-income tenants.
- Establish “just cause eviction” policies to protect tenants from displacement due to gentrification pressures.
- Ensure that federal funding for homeless services includes designated funds for legal aid, allowing local service providers to establish partnerships with housing and immigration advocates.
- Increase funding to create housing options for people exiting prisons and transition age youth exiting the foster care system.
- Provide incentives for healthcare-housing partnerships through Medicaid expansion.

### **3. Promote an Equitable Housing Finance System to Address Disparities in Homeownership**

- Expand down payment assistance and loan programs for Latinos to purchase their first home in response to the rising costs of rent. Latino homeownership has grown because of programs that support first time homebuyers.
- Support the elimination of loan-level price adjustments (LLPAs) for loans that are covered by private mortgage insurance. LLPAs are an excessive penalty for lower-income borrowers.
- Increase Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) that ensure the availability of local down-payment assistance programs and infrastructure needed to rehabilitate homes for single-family homeownership.
- Ensure that Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs) have a clear commitment to serving low-to moderate-wealth borrowers, fully fund programs that serve underserved communities such as the Housing Trust Fund and Capital Magnet Fund, and set clear goals and strategies for how to meet these commitments.
- Ensure that federal underwriting and housing finance rules ensure broad access to affordable credit and do not disproportionately exclude the credit realities of communities of color.
- Enforce housing anti-discrimination laws through the Fair Housing Act's Disparate Impact Standard.
- Promote new credit scoring guidelines that address racial biases in the current system and expand credit availability for Latino homeowners.
- Include federal funding for housing counseling in the next stimulus bill and expand forbearance options for non-federally backed loans.

### **4. Support Affordable Housing through Current Mechanisms and New Funding Streams**

- Increase the supply of rented and owner-occupied homes by imposing an empty homes or vacancy tax that will discourage landlords from intentionally keeping units off the market.
- Address housing instability by de-commodifying housing and by developing funding streams for limited equity cooperatives and community land trusts.
- Create new funding streams for public housing, including new construction and the upkeep of current units. Oppose efforts to privatize federal housing.
- Expand federal funding for permanently affordable housing for very low-income individuals. This includes expanding existing programs from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Urban Development and the Department of Treasury to mitigate housing insecurity and improve access to quality housing.

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## 5. Defend the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) by Protecting Homeowners of Color

- Defend the core principles of CRA that help first-time homebuyers. Prioritize lending for first-time homebuyers with financial incentives to lenders and disincentivize the use of CRA funds for non-housing related investments, including athletic stadiums or bridges.
- End discriminatory practices by evaluating CRA compliance through metrics that distinguish between homeownership, rentals, and commercial property.

## **IMMIGRANT RIGHTS**



# Shaping a 21st Century Latino Agenda

## IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

**Task Force Leadership: Alma Hernandez, SEIU California; Dr. Raul Hinojosa, Professor, UCLA; and Angelica Salas, CHIRLA**

The burden of a broken and inhumane immigration system falls disproportionately on Latino communities in the United States. Over 50 percent of all immigrants, 75 percent of unauthorized immigrants are from Latin America or the Caribbean, and millions of Latinos are eligible for and apply for naturalization, lawful permanent residence, and a host of permanent and temporary visas each year. Of the 60 million Latinos in the US, most have a connection to immigration: 20 million of them are first-generation immigrants and an additional 19 million have at least one immigrant parent.

The only legislative reforms to our immigration laws since 1986 have focused on strengthening the apprehension and deportation capabilities of immigration authorities and increasing annual enforcement funding levels while exacerbating the economic vulnerability and fear of immigrant communities across the country. In fact, since their creation in 2003, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have spent a combined \$381 billion – more than all federal law enforcement combined. Over 90 percent of people deported by the federal government are Latinos, and their deportation has separated families, broken communities, and destroyed the dreams of many in our communities.

Over the last 30 years, Congress has failed to address the inadequacy and inhumanity of our broken immigration system. Furthermore, presidential administrations have utilized a patchwork of policies that provide insufficient protection to too few immigrants and are vulnerable to legal demise. Provisional policies such as Temporary Protection Status (TPS) and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) are important, but do not provide the permanent and robust protection for individuals to live full lives without fear of apprehension or deportation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has evidenced that immigrants are essential members of our society and a critical part of a sound economy. Immigrants are overrepresented in the frontlines of the coronavirus response from doctors and healthcare workers to cashiers, farmworkers, and delivery personnel. As we recover from the pandemic and its effects, the country needs a fair, inclusive, and equitable immigration system that protects the rights, health, economic opportunity, and dignity of everyone.

Policy recommendations for immigrant rights include:

- 1. Adopt and Implement in Full the Recommendations Set Forth in the Biden-Sanders Unity Task Force on Immigration and Expand the Reach of their Recommendations by Addressing the Policies from this Task Force Listed Below. Importantly, this would include overturning the Draconian Policies and Regulations Issued by President Donald Trump, Including, but Not Limited To The: Travel Bans, Halt to Asylum Applications, Termination of TPS, Public Charge, and Increases in Fees for Immigration Related Processes**
- 2. Immediately, Pass Just and Humane Immigration Reform That Provides a Path to Citizenship for Undocumented Immigrants, Opens up Access to the Legal System to Latinos and Other Excluded Populations, Protects Immigrant Workers and Their Families, and Safeguards Family Unity as a Cornerstone of the Immigration System**

**3. Include Immigration Reform as a Critical Aspect of National Economic Recovery Efforts and Ensure That There Is Full Inclusion of Immigrant Workers, Entrepreneurs, and Small Business Owners for the Growth of Latino Prosperity and a Robust Recovery**

**4. Enact an Immediate and Indefinite Moratorium on All Deportations**

**5. Strengthen and Enforce Workplace Protection for All Immigrants**

- End immigration and community raids, including but not limited to I-9 audits and No-Match SSA Letters.
- Prohibit immigration enforcement during any labor dispute.
- Extend labor rights and protections to all temporary workers, including workers on H2A visas.
- Mandate immediate health and safety protections in the workplace to all immigrant workers.
- Improve the wages, working conditions, and benefits of all agricultural workers, many of whom are immigrants.

**6. Fully Integrate all Immigrants into the Social Safety Net**

- Extend benefits from all federal and state social welfare and healthcare programs to all immigrants regardless of legal status.
- Extend federal and state COVID-19 related benefits, including unemployment insurance benefits and health care coverage, to everyone regardless of immigration status.
- Eliminate current restrictions under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) for legal and undocumented immigrants.
- Recognize that immigrants are taxpayers and should be eligible for tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, and any tax rebates to help working people emerge more resilient from this pandemic and economic crisis.
- Address discrimination against immigrants based on national origin, including language, in accessing health care, safety-net programs, employment, and housing.
- Provide access to safe and affordable housing programs so families can live together in public housing, regardless of the immigration status of any family member.

**7. Protect Immigrants' Constitutional Rights & Ensure Access to Justice**

- Investigate and bring action against police departments that violate the U.S. Constitution in their detention of immigrants upon release from state and local criminal detention centers.

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- Remove the Legal Services Corporation immigration restrictions and expand legal services programs to ensure immigrants have access to justice in seeking immigration relief.
- Mandate and fund legal representation for individuals in immigration proceedings. Building on the efforts of state and local governments as well as cornerstone federal funding provided to the Legal Services Corporation, the federal government should develop framework for a universal representation model that would provide counsel to all immigrants in removal proceedings, to unaccompanied migrant children, to LGBTQIA immigrants, and to asylum seekers in all proceedings.

### **8. Redirect DHS Funding from Immigration Enforcement and Invest in Efforts that Will Strengthen Immigrant Integration and Communities of Color**

- Defund Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Borders Protection including all their sub-agencies like Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Enforcement and Removal Operation (ERO), the U.S. Border Patrol.
- Invest in building a 21st Century immigration system by increasing funding for legalization, naturalization, grants to state and local governments for the inclusion of immigrants, English-language and adult education services, social cohesion, as well as other programs that recognize immigrants as a strength to our nation.
- Create and fully fund the Office of New Americans to ensure and support full immigrant integration and access to full citizenship

### **9. Establish a Plan to Invest and Revitalize with the People of Latin America, especially Central America, to Address the Root Causes of Migration Including Matching and Leveraging of Remittances-Based Savings Bonds Through Institutions Such as the North American Development Bank.**

- Develop a comprehensive regional strategy on climate change including its impact on migration. This will include the creation of a program to welcome migrants displaced by climate disasters, and set a floor of accepting 50,000 climate migrants per year. Work with international bodies such as the UN to lead a global strategy to develop a strategy for climate migrants.

### **10. End Family Detention, Accelerate the Closing of Immigration Detention Facilities and Release All Immigrant Detainees.**

## **VOTING RIGHTS & POLITICAL REPRESENTATION**

## VOTING RIGHTS & POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

**Task Force Leadership: Dr. Fernando Guerra, Professor, Loyola Marymount University; Arturo Vargas, CEO & President, NALEO; and Helen Torres, CEO & President, HOPE**

As the 2020 General Election looms, access to the ballot box has become urgent and necessary to safeguard our democracy. The nation's lack of response to the COVID-19 pandemic has not only made it more difficult to vote, but exposed and exacerbated the systemic barriers and inequalities that Latinos and other voters of color face in accessing the franchise. Democracy has been under continued siege by racially-motivated voter suppression practices across the country. A likely inaccurate decennial census count and the upcoming 2021 redistricting cycle make voting rights and political representation a paramount concern for Latinos. California has served as a model for voting and electoral reform, yet Latinos continue to lag behind in voter participation, even as franchise-expanding efforts are implemented. This is most evident in the exclusion of Latinos from the first eight randomly-selected members of the California Citizen Redistricting Commission. Reforms, including those focused on good government, that are not centered on the needs of racial/ethnic communities of color perpetuate inequality.

For the first time in history, Latinos are projected to be the largest non-White electorate in the 2020 presidential election. Going into the November 2020 election, voters of color are the majority of Democrats in 17 states and Latinos represent a plurality of non-white Democrats in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas. While gains in Latino political representation have occurred since 2000, including the first Latina elected to the U.S. Senate, Latinos remain grossly underrepresented at all levels of government. In 2018, Latinos comprised only 1.2 percent of all local, state, and federal elected offices. We are at an inflection point, where policy and leadership must mandate an inclusive democracy by ensuring Latinos have access to the ballot box, are able to elect their candidates of choice, are fairly represented across all three branches of government (legislative, judiciary, and executive), and are accurately reflected in the U.S. Census.

### 1. End Voter Suppression in America

- Ensure all voters, especially Latinos and other voters of color can cast a ballot during the coronavirus pandemic without the risk of infection to themselves, poll workers, volunteers, and election observers. Mandate and allocate resources to state and local elections officials to: provide no-excuse absentee voting, pre-paid return postage, increase the number of in-person poll locations and limit the ability of states to consolidate or close historically used polling locations, facilitate two-weeks of early voting, and institute new voting modalities and safety measures to maintain the health of all involved in the election.
- End discriminatory voter suppression tactics like Voter ID and proof of citizenship requirements by reinvigorating the Voting Rights Act through amendments that would create a new coverage formula based on a "Known Practices Coverage" inquiry. Here, political subdivisions and states would have to justify the implementation of any electoral policies or practices that are known to be or closely associated with discriminatory effects on protected classes.
- End voter harassment and intimidation for all elections and reimplement the *DNC v. RNC* consent decree, which would permit federal courts to review and stop "ballot security" and other voter intimidation programs.

- End felony disenfranchisement, allowing all citizens to vote, and ensure that ex-felons who are immigrants are able to pursue naturalization that would enable them to access to the franchise.
- Restore the California Voting Rights Act (“CVRA”) to its original legislative intent to authorize influence districts and expand its application to permit challenges to single member districts that function to dilute the voting strength of Latinos and other communities of color.

### **2. Increase Ballot Access**

- Ensure the vigorous enforcement of federal and state Voting Rights Acts by allocating a significant increase in resources to ensure 25 percent more government attorneys and legal observers are able to monitor the November election.
- Ensure all language minority groups have access to ballot materials and instructions in their preferred language, to account for the particular vulnerabilities of limited-English proficient voters in casting a ballot.
- Provide increase funding for language accessibility, geographic accessibility, and accessibility for persons with disabilities to vote by mail this November. This includes meaningful resources to state and local election officials to train workers and volunteers on how to support all voters, including language minorities, to correctly register and vote by mail.
- Provide full access to technology—including universal access to the internet—to enable voters to access online registration and information for voting.
- Make the voter registration process more accessible and easier to complete by implementing pre-registration for 17-year-olds, online voter registration, same-day voter registration, and support widespread voter education and training to support low-propensity and first-time voters.

### **3. Institutionalize Voter Mobilization and Voter Education as a Government Function**

- Mandate federal, state, and local elections officials incorporate voter mobilization into their election administration efforts with the articulated goal of closing the voter registration and voter turnout gap for Latinos. This means initiating government-run GOTV programs to reach low-propensity voters, first time voters, and first-time vote-by-mail voters for federal and state elections using digital, in-person, and mail strategies.
  - i. Build on other examples in which the government has been proactive in educating the populace, including Census participation, ACA enrollment, and COVID-19 empowerment.
- Revise the statutory duties of the chief election officers in each state to mandate that election officials’ duties include expanding access to voting, increasing voter registration, and increasing voter turnout.

# Shaping a 21st Century Latino Agenda

## **4. Count Latinos & Base 2021 Apportionment on an Accurate Count**

- Declare that the 2020 Census is in a state of emergency and allocate sizeable government resources to ensure an accurate count of Latinos and other Hard-to-Reach residents during the coronavirus pandemic. If the 2020 Census count is less accurate and complete than the 2010 Census or with greater racial and ethnic disparities in the count, the Census Bureau must redo the count in 2022.
- Require the use of total population as the only population basis for local and state redistricting during 2021 and onward.
- Mandate that public participation and transparency in redistricting not be sacrificed because of a shortened redistricting timeline created by the delay in Census data delivery. Ensure reforms at the state and local levels do not result in disparate impacts to protected classes and promote the cultivation and adoption of equitable good government reforms that implicate fundamental rights around democratic participation and voting.

## **5. Dramatically Increase the Representation of Latinos Across State and Federal Appointments**

- Substantially increase the appointment of Latinos to executive and judicial appointments at the state and federal levels by allocating substantial resources to ensure Latinos apply, are appointed, and have the resources necessary to be successful. This includes remedying the atrocious representation of Latinos across the judiciary and appointing a Latina to the California Supreme Court and a Latino from the Southwest to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Mandate local, state, and federal governments publicly disclose the application and appointment of executive and judicial appointees by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and other demographic information on an annual basis.
- Advocate for fair representation across all governmental appointments at a level on par with a jurisdiction's population of unrepresented groups.

## **SIGNATURES IN SUPPORT OF THE 21ST CENTURY LATINO AGENDA**

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# Shaping a 21st Century Latino Agenda

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