

July 15, 2020

Dear Convening Participant:

This virtual convening brings together a multi-generational cadre of California's Latino leaders during a historic moment when a growing number of people are awakening to the widespread racial/ethnic disparities that have only been exacerbated by the three intersecting crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic insecurity and the proliferation of state-sanctioned racial violence. It is also occurring on the cusp of the most important election in our lifetime and a redistricting process that will be based on the potentially unacceptably flawed U.S. Decennial Census, which will determine political power for the next decade. These crises have laid bare the challenges Latinos face in the best of times and the immense burden they have been made to carry to keep Americans safe and drive the economy forward, all while being denigrated from the office of the President.

Today, the Latino population numbers 60 million, about 18.3 percent of all Americans, making it the single largest racial or ethnic minority in the country. And with those numbers and economic outputs, including the highest workforce participation of any demographic, Latinos are the world's 8th largest economy. Latinos are increasingly buying homes, starting businesses, and driving the growth of America's economy. Now, as one young Latino ages into the electorate every 30 seconds, we are presented with immense opportunity to build political power in this critical election year and beyond.

In California, UCLA research has found Latinos are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 infections and death; least likely to have health insurance; most vulnerable to economic uncertainty; least likely to be able to shelter in place; most excluded from the federal CARES Act individual rebate program; and represent high shares of California's jobless workers, including the majority of those ineligible for unemployment benefits. The movement for Black Lives has challenged policymaking to repair a history of disinvestment that has prioritized discriminatory policing over community investment and expansion of the social safety net.

Going into the November 2020 election, Latinos represent a significant voting bloc that cannot be ignored. In five key states, Latinos make up a plurality of non-white voting Democrats. And here in California, an estimated 8.5 million Latino citizens will be of voting age in California. Yet, barriers to opportunity and mobility complicate Latinos' full inclusion into the promise of 21st century ingenuity. In conjunction with other communities of color—namely Black Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans—Latinos face discriminatory barriers to fair housing, full employment, quality educational opportunities, the ballot box, public safety, and healthy communities, all of which work to lift people out of poverty.

Evidence-based interventions and reforms are necessary to ensure policy and politics integrate the California's Latino population as we seek to rebuild our economy and safeguard our democracy.

Over the course of today, we hope to build a 2020 Latino Agenda for COVID-19 Relief & Recovery with an actionable roadmap that drives evidence-based, culturally appropriate policy solutions that increase opportunity and mobility for all, especially our most vulnerable communities of color.

Thank you for joining us and we look forward to a fruitful dialogue that leads to a new vision for our future and renewed commitment that no one will be left behind.

Sincerely,



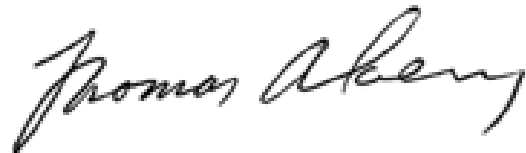
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