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August 26, 2021

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UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE LAUNCHES NEW LATINO-FOCUSED RESEARCH HUBS WITH FOUNDATION SUPPORT

LOS ANGELES – The UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative (UCLA LPPI) announced today that it has received \$300,000 in funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (WFHF) to support its leadership programs and voting rights research. The two initiatives at UCLA LPPI are aimed at training current policymakers and the civic leaders of tomorrow to leverage research for a more inclusive democracy as well as ensuring that all eligible voters have access to the ballot box.

“Our nation was founded on a set of ideals that have yet to be fully realized,” said **Sonja Diaz, founding director of the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative**. “This funding will expand our capacity to train the leaders who will continue to push us closer to those ideals and to protect our core democratic principle – a government of the people, by the people, which is only possible when the right to vote is protected.”

UCLA LPPI aims to increase the substantive representation of America’s new majority in leadership positions across society, from politics to academia to newsrooms. UCLA LPPI does this by bringing together the brightest young minds and exposing them to the policy challenges of today to prepare them for their role in building a more just America tomorrow. Through its [fellows program](#), undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students are given the opportunity to engage in rigorous, action-oriented research led by the deepest bench of Latino experts in the country and to learn how to put that research to work to drive evidence-based policy. Furthermore, LPPI fellows are exposed to advocates, elected officials and academic experts who provide critical insight into organizational strategy, strategic partnerships, communications, and the political process, enabling alumni fellows to distill comprehensive research into concrete policy solutions, shape new narratives about our democracy and the role of communities of color and mobilize communities to act.

With nearly [400 bills introduced in 48 states](#) in 2021 to restrict voting, being able to comprehensively assess the impact of any proposed voting legislation is critical to protecting the integrity of elections and the path towards an inclusive and just democracy. Through training provided to policymakers in key states with growing Latino electorates – like Arizona, Georgia, and Texas – UCLA LPPI will empower decisionmakers to effectively utilize data to inform evidence-based policy that strengthens our elections and expands voting rights. These leaders will be equipped with an avenue to increase policy accountability by utilizing real-time data to underscore the significance of policies that expand rather than restrict the vote. Ultimately, UCLA LPPI’s data for action theory of change can accelerate on-the ground-outcomes for communities, enabling cross-jurisdictional leaders to put a spotlight on the opportunities to expand access to the ballot box for all Americans.

"Last year’s election cycle showed us the vulnerabilities of our democracy to disinformation, the need for reliable data on voting and the importance of making sense of that data in real time." said Carla Bernal, Hewlett Foundation Program Fellow. "Supporting UCLA LPPI is a unique opportunity to address all three of those issues together."

Funding for UCLA LPPI was granted under the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation’s U.S. Democracy Program to strengthen America’s electoral and governing institutions and build public trust in our democracy.

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ABOUT UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE

The UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative addresses the most critical domestic policy challenges facing Latinos and other communities of color through research, advocacy, mobilization, and leadership development to expand genuine opportunity for all Americans.