

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- Tuesday, May 18, 2021

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Illinois Latino leaders launch the Illinois Latino Agenda 2.0 coalition for racial equity and justice

The largest Latino coalition in the region relaunches with a renewed focus on equity after a year of widespread illness, death, and economic devastation.

CHICAGO -- Latinos comprise about 18 percent of Illinois' population, about 25 percent of Cook County's population, and about 30 percent of Chicago's population. In 2019, the community had a buying power of nearly 2 billion dollars statewide. Yet there remains a long way to go towards achieving equity for Latinos in virtually every sector.

In the wake of a devastating year of widespread illness, death, and economic devastation throughout the community, as well as the tragic police shootings of Adam Toledo and Anthony Alvarez, the coalition is relaunching with a renewed vision as the ILA 2.0.

"Our community is coming out of this pandemic with many challenges, but it is also energized and looking forward," said Raúl Raymundo, CEO of The Resurrection Project. "We are seeking to leverage more investments into the neighborhoods, improve our schools, participate in greater numbers as an electorate, and be owners and producers of the economy, not just consumers."

The original Illinois Latino Agenda comprised a broad range of Latino-serving nonprofits and was the largest Latino coalition in the region. The ILA 2.0 will continue to convene the CEOs and community leaders of the original coalition with a new and improved strategic focus on equity. The ILA 2.0 will advocate for:

- Equitable representation of Latinos in the government, business, philanthropic, and social impact sectors.
- Equitable investment and allocation of resources to Latino communities.
- Strengthening the political and electoral power of Latinos.
- Advancement of civil rights, social justice, and protection for all Latino communities.
- Upholding the diverse cultural identity of all Latino communities.
- Support for Latino-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

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“Latinos are not adequately or equitably represented at any level of government, in corporate America, in philanthropic America, and in other sectors,” said Latino Policy Forum President & CEO Sylvia Puente. “As we embark on this pursuit of equity, we stand in solidarity with the Black, Indigenous, Asian, and LGBTQ+ communities and other disenfranchised communities. Our cause is about inclusivity for all of us. It is not about ‘either/or.’ It is about ‘both/and.’”

Among the first actions of the ILA 2.0 was delivering a list of demands to the City of Chicago for youth and family investment in Little Village and the broader Latino community. It included requests of \$30 million towards direct services and programming to youth and families in Little Village, a plan from Chicago Public Schools to build the future pipeline of teachers and administrators, and an immediate halt to all police foot pursuits on top of a federal investigation into the deaths of Toledo and Alvarez.

“Adam Toledo was a 13-year-old boy, and Anthony Alvarez was a young man, and both of them were denied the right to due process,” said Jessie Fuentes, Director of Policy & Youth Advocacy for the Puerto Rican Cultural Center and Co-Chair for the Puerto Rican Agenda. “Foot pursuits have put young people, specifically young people of color, and police officers on a collision course to one or the other getting hurt in an incident. They put officers in a position where they are in a heightened emotional state that forces them to make irrational decisions that ultimately lead to the deaths of our young boys and men.”

The ILA 2.0 is a non-partisan coalition that stands in solidarity with all other disenfranchised communities and communities of color seeking equity, inclusion, and social justice. Visit www.IllinoisLatinoAgenda.org for more information.

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