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Illinois Latino Leaders Call for Judicial Justice: “It’s Time for a Latino to Serve on the State’s Highest Court”

Although Latinos are 18% of Illinois’ population and growing, none of the Justices on the Illinois Supreme Court are Latino.

Chicago, IL - Latino leaders from the community, government, and the private sectors, are unified in voicing their disappointment with the recent announcement about the Illinois Supreme Court's new appointment.

Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court Anne Burke announced that she will step down in November. By Justice Burke’s recommendation, the Supreme Court selected a new justice. In doing so, the court has chosen to deny the historic opportunity to appoint Illinois’ first Latino Supreme Court Justice. As a result, none of the seven justices will be Latino, and there is only one Latino Appellate Court Justice in a state that is 18% Latino and continually growing. Justice Burke presides as one of three justices in Cook County (District 1), where the Latino population is 26%.

“We are dismayed that our community continues to be excluded by the state's highest court. The contributions of the Latino community in Illinois are immeasurable. The highest court has a long way to go to have equitable representation of our diverse state,” Sylvia Puente, President and CEO of the Latino Policy Forum, said.

“Justice Burke resides in a ward that is overwhelmingly Latino. Our community has made great strides in electing judges. This took decades of hard work, education, and judicial seniority to ensure we were represented in our court system. It is important that the highest court in Illinois is reflective of the state population that it serves, and right now, it isn’t,” said Juan Morado Jr., Chair of the Latino Leadership Council. “There are several qualified and capable Latinos on the bench currently who could serve in this role. Latinos are grossly underrepresented on the bench; if the Court System does not support our community, we will elect Latinos at the ballot box.”

The Illinois Latino Agenda is calling on the Cook County Democratic Party to slate a Latino for the Illinois Supreme Court in the 2024 primary election when Burke’s term comes to an end and for the Illinois Supreme Court to appoint a Latino to replace Justice Cunningham on the Illinois Appellate Court.

In solidarity,

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