

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Monday, October 12, 2020

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Illinois' Latino leaders and organizations launch ¡VOTA YA! campaign to mobilize the Latino electorate and make history on November 3rd

WHAT: Press conference outside the Loop Super Site for early voting to formally announce the launch of the ¡VOTA YA! campaign

WHEN: Tuesday, October 13 at 3:00PM

WHERE: Outside the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph St. (limited in-person capacity due to COVID-19), or attend via Facebook Live at [facebook.com/MetroFamChicago](https://www.facebook.com/MetroFamChicago)

Chicago, IL October 12, 2020 – Prominent Illinois Latino leaders representing over 34 Latino-led and Latino-serving organizations statewide, with a collective reach of over 600,000, have launched ¡VOTA YA!, a non-partisan voter-turnout campaign to encourage every eligible Latino voter to VOTE in the upcoming presidential election.

Campaign leaders will gather outside the James R. Thompson Center at 100 W. Randolph St., the Loop super site for early voting, on Tuesday afternoon to announce the campaign and share facts about early voting options. Speakers will include **Congressman Jesús “Chuy” García** (IL-04), Latino Policy Forum President and CEO **Sylvia Puente**, Puerto Rican Agenda Co-Chair **Cristina Pacione-Zayas**, and Latino Leadership Council Chair **Juan Morado Jr.**

According to the Pew Research Center, the Latino voter participation rate in the 2016 election was 48 percent, compared to 60 percent for Black voters and 65 percent for white voters. Today, the Latino electorate includes a projected 32 million voters in the nation and over one million in Illinois. This will be the first election in U.S. history where eligible Latino voters will outnumber those of any other non-white race or ethnicity.

“The stakes for this upcoming presidential election are huge,” Pacione-Zayas said. “We have a fundamental decision to make on who we want to lead our nation, and who will effectively respond to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the Latino community.”

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed and exacerbated widening inequities in health, housing, education, childcare, economic development, and citizenship for Latinos. In Illinois, over 3 percent of the Latino population has contracted COVID-19, which is highest among all racial-ethnic groups and over three times the rate of the white population (approximately 1 percent). Combined with past injustices like the imbalanced economic recovery of the 2008 recession, the events of 2020 have raised the stakes for the Latino community as high as ever.

“We are heartened by the calls for Black-Brown unity that we’ve heard from the voices in the streets at this moment of civil unrest, and we urge all those who have taken to the streets to take another step and vote,” Puente said.

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“The organizations leading this campaign have direct relationships with Latino communities across the whole state,” Morado Jr. said. “We can’t afford for a single eligible voter to stay home this year—Latinos have to exercise their power by voting, whether by mail or in person, by early voting or on Election Day.”

Organizations and leaders that sign on to the campaign will pledge to:

1. Ask all eligible clients, employees, and their family members to VOTE
2. Promote ¡VOTA YA! on their social media networks, email signatures, and email distribution lists
3. Share facts about early voting and all voting options
4. Give all employees the necessary time off to exercise their right to vote

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¡VOTA YA! is a community-led, non-partisan campaign to increase Latino voter turnout. The campaign is a collaboration of over 34 Latino-led and Latino-serving organizations in communities throughout the state of Illinois, including the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Latino Policy Forum, The Puerto Rican Agenda, Latino Leadership Council, Gads Hill Center, La Casa Norte, El Valor, Metropolitan Family Services, The Resurrection Project, Chicago Commons, ENLACE, EL Hogar del Nino, Latinos Progresando, and Illinois Unidos. To see a complete list of partners and learn more about the campaign, visit WWW.VOTAYAILINOIS.COM.