

# Illinois Latino Agenda

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## 2018 Gubernatorial Candidate Questionnaire

Latinos now account for the largest minority group in Illinois at 17.3 % of the total population. After 40 percent growth since 2000, more than 2.2 million Latinos (2,214,749 as of July 2017) are currently living, working, and raising families in the prairie state. While Latino contributions reverberate throughout Illinois in the form of tax contributions and consumer spending, home-ownership, and small business development, the increasing presence of Latinos has also been felt at the ballot box. The Latino share of all Illinois voters rose from 5.4% of the electorate in 2012 to 9.2% in 2016, an increase from 295,000 to 527,000. The impact of the Latino vote in Illinois has strengthened.

The Illinois Latino Agenda, the largest coalition of Latino-led nonprofits in the state, has created a candidate questionnaire to elicit information from candidates that will help inform Latino voters as they cast their ballots for the next Governor of Illinois. With more than 40 member organizations across the Chicago metropolitan region, the Illinois Latino Agenda reaches over 250,000 people each year in a wide range of areas including health care, family services, education, and small business development.

By arming the Latino electorate with salient information, the coalition aims to foster greater civic participation in the upcoming gubernatorial election.

### **State Budget & Operations:**

1. The Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Healthcare & Family Services, and the Illinois Department of Family & Children Services each serve an increasing Latino population throughout the state, but none of the administrators for these agencies is Latino. Currently, Illinois has only two Latino Administrators as heads of State Agencies. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration provide the inclusion of Latinos in leadership and decision-making positions within the executive office, state agencies, and boards & commissions?

*Illinois' diversity is an asset to our state. I am committed to leading an administration that reflects the diversity of the state. Members of the Latino community will hold important roles in my administration. As governor, I will emphasize inclusion as I build a cabinet, make appointments, and engage in stakeholder collaborations. I take this responsibility seriously and have built a campaign team and statewide operation that demonstrates my commitment to inclusivity.*

2. Latinos account for 17 percent of Illinois population after experiencing a 40 percent growth since 2000. However, only a very small percent of state grants to nonprofit agencies are directed to Latino-led nonprofit organizations for the provision of critical programs and services. If elected/re-elected, how will your state budget priorities align with the needs and concerns of Latino residents?

*I've advocated for policies of importance to the Latino community throughout my career. For the past 20 years, I've been a top national advocate to expand early childhood*

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*education and fought to expand school breakfasts to over 230,000 Illinois children in low-income districts. Much of my work in early childhood has been focused on the Latino community. For example, I was the lead sponsor of Educare West DuPage, which was specifically designed to provide preschool for low income Latino families. During my campaign, I've been a strong advocate for the TRUST Act in Illinois as well as the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform at the national level.*

*As governor, I will build on this advocacy by working to make Illinois a welcoming state where everyone is treated with dignity and has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. That means standing up to Donald Trump's bigoted policies, enhancing funding for immigrant and refugee services, expanding healthcare options for undocumented immigrants, providing access to financial aid for undocumented students, and improving the U-Visa certification process for victims of violent crime. Indeed, no candidate in this race has done more to stand up against Donald Trump and his xenophobic policies than I have.*

3. Many state agencies rely on the interpreter line contracted by CMS to communicate with their clients or customers. Bilingual workers are an asset to the state because they can communicate directly with English and Limited English Proficient clients. If elected/re-elected, will you commit to increasing the number of bilingual staff within state agencies?

*I hired diverse leadership at every level of my campaign and will do the same in my administration. More than two-thirds of my senior campaign staff are women or people of color, and I will maintain my commitment to promoting diverse voices when lifting up candidates for office and party leadership. I believe Illinois' diversity is an asset to our state, and I am committed to leading an administration that reflects that diversity. I will emphasize inclusion as I build a cabinet, make appointments, and engage with stakeholders.*

## **Education:**

4. Latino children account for 1-in-4 children under age 5 in Illinois, but many Latino children and families have limited access to early childhood education, including home-visiting and preschool programs. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration expand access and allocate appropriate resources to augment early childhood services and programs for this specific population?

*For Illinois to grow its globally competitive workforce, we need a world-class education system. I've spent decades advocating for greater access to high quality early childhood education starting at birth. As governor, my priority will be ensuring that all kids in Illinois get the quality education they deserve, from birth through college. That's why I released a five-point plan to build a comprehensive, birth-to-five system that gives every child an opportunity to achieve their potential. My plan will ensure every child has a seat in a kindergarten classroom, put Illinois on a path to universal preschool, increase access to quality and affordable childcare, expand home-visiting programs and create an*

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*online portal to get new parents the resources they need, and invest in teachers and our education infrastructure.*

5. School districts are now serving English language learners in 92 out of Illinois' 102 counties. The academic performance of English Learners is also a more amplified component to school accountability (i.e. more than half of Illinois schools will now have to report on their outcomes). Schools across the state, however struggle to hire a sufficient number of bilingual licensed teachers whose support is most optimal for student academic achievement. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration prioritize efforts to increase the number of bilingual licensed teachers in Illinois across PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade?

*Illinois must do a better job of honoring and supporting teachers throughout the state. The governor's 736-day budget crisis created an unprecedented amount of uncertainty for schools and made a career in education look unappealing to prospective teachers, which is a contributing factor to the teacher shortage plaguing areas across the state.*

*Despite lawmakers' efforts to make teaching more attractive in Illinois, Bruce Rauner vetoed a bill to raise teachers' wages to \$40,000 a year. Their current minimum wage sits between \$9,000 and \$11,000 a year and hasn't been updated in decades. Nearly 80 percent of Illinois school districts are grappling with a worsening teacher shortage, and this failed governor is doing nothing about it. I will sign this bill if I'm elected governor.*

*Every classroom in Illinois should be led by a teacher who can meet the instructional needs of their students. A growing number of children require language support services from teachers who speak Spanish or other high-need languages. Illinois cannot successfully expand early childhood education or adequately meet the needs of children in elementary and secondary school without recruiting and retaining more teachers who have the training and skills necessary to teach ESL and bilingual education. As governor, I will make it a priority to address the teacher shortage and focus on recruiting people to fill the highest need positions in our state's educator workforce.*

6. Since 2005, English Learner student population has increased by 47%. The staffing within the Illinois State Board of Education is critical to provide the necessary oversight and support to ensure school code and federal civil rights are upheld and protected. These rights also reflect research-based best practice for optimal academic outcomes. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration appropriately staff the Department of English learners to best support the needs of this vibrant and growing population?

*It's the constitutional obligation of the governor to propose a balanced budget to the legislature every year. Bruce Rauner hasn't met that obligation. Instead, he manufactured an over two-year budget crisis that decimated our state. As governor, I will work with the legislature and stakeholders to craft forward-looking budgets that prioritize job creation, expanding healthcare coverage, and providing a quality education for every child – regardless of their native language.*

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## Economic Development

7. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration encourage job creation in low-income, Latino communities? Please describe the tools and/or incentives you will utilize to bolster economic development?

*Latino families have been left out and left behind when it comes to economic prosperity and job growth. Making matters worse, Bruce Rauner's fiscal mismanagement has stunted job creation, destabilized local economies, and eroded the financial security of working families.*

*One of my most important goals as the next governor of Illinois will be to create jobs and restore economic stability and vibrancy to the hardest hit communities in our state. If we improve the prospects for economic prosperity of a community, we can create greater stability for our children and families and reduce the potential for violence. I believe we can and must accomplish this goal, especially for Illinois' black and brown communities.*

*I am committed to expanding economic opportunity for the people of our state. That's why the first policy proposal I released in this campaign focused on job creation and economic development in minority communities. It calls upon the state to:*

- *Restore and expand Small Business Development Centers across the state,*
- *Empower under-served communities by giving them a seat at the table,*
- *Re-envision investment incentives for distressed communities, and*
- *End the Rauner era of systemic disinvestment through innovative funding models*

*Since then, I've traveled throughout the state and met with minority families, business owners, and community leaders to gain their perspective about what needs to be done to improve the economy for minority workers and business owners.*

*With their collective guidance, Juliana and I released a 12-point plan for economic inclusion specifically designed to expand opportunities for minority workers and small business owners across the state. If elected, Juliana and I will:*

- *Expand opportunities for minority business owners to secure state contracts by increasing the use of sheltered markets, expanding the range of contracts subject to the Business Enterprise Program, increasing the M/WBE aspirational goal to 30%, unbundling contracts, and adding metrics to the procurement scoring process that benefit firms that meet diversity benchmarks in both their public and private sector work.*
- *Create new loan programs to ensure that minority business owners have the resources, working capital, and bridge financing they need to expand their businesses and compete for state contracts.*
- *Establish M/WBE-focused accelerators in communities across the state that provide entrepreneurs with access to targeted resources & services, mentorship, technical assistance, bridge financing, and investment capital.*

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- *Establish state-funded career readiness and pre-apprenticeship programs targeting disadvantaged communities.*
- *Create a Cannabis Equity Program that promotes black and brown entrepreneurs in the ownership and licensing of new marijuana dispensaries and offers fee waivers, technical assistance, and subsidized loans to equity applicants.*
- *Provide tax incentives for businesses that relocate or initiate new businesses in Opportunity Zones and adhere to state diversity targets.*
- *Expand employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth throughout the state by enhancing the geographic reach of youth employment programs and the number of youth participating across the state.*
- *Partner with banks and financial institutions to provide banking services in public libraries and public spaces in underserved communities.*
- *Establish rate caps on how much check cashing agencies can charge consumers.*
- *Provide entrepreneurs with a comprehensive online portal to help them identify and apply for non-predatory business loans.*
- *Establish consumer protections for small businesses that will safeguard against predatory lending practices by unscrupulous lenders.*
- *Build statewide high-speed broadband internet infrastructure to ensure access in underserved communities across Illinois.*

*Our plan to foster economic inclusion will lower the Latino unemployment rate, expand opportunities for minority entrepreneurs and small business owners across the state, and reverse the trend of disinvestment and outward migration.*

8. Latinos represent the fastest growing segment of Illinois' workforce and are responsible for virtually all of the state of Illinois' labor market growth. However, many adult workers lack the skills to compete for jobs in high-growth sectors of the economy. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration foster job-training opportunities for Latino workers?

*From early childhood through the end of a productive career, our state will prosper only by making a world-class education available to all of our residents. During the past three and a half years, college has become even less affordable, students have increasingly left our state, and too little is being done to train our workforce for jobs of the future.*

*Higher education in Illinois is not being properly utilized to expand economic opportunity. While our public colleges and universities outperform national averages in many categories, we have a long way to go to achieve equity in the enrollment, persistence, and completion rates of low-income students and students of color. Data shows that students of color have a lower 6-year college completion rate than the state average. For Illinois' economy to continue to thrive, we must work to achieve economic inclusion through our institutions of higher education.*

*Colleges and universities are hubs of economic growth, workforce training, and innovation, and I will prioritize them as investments toward a stronger Illinois. We can help all students have the opportunity to succeed by ensuring they have support services*

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*when they arrive at school. And we can raise wages and strengthen our economy by training people for jobs in major industries and emerging sectors. Employers looking to grow their businesses in Illinois want replenishing pools of highly skilled workers, so Illinois must support and expand the availability of vocational education, apprenticeship programs, and workforce development. Illinois needs every worker, regardless of whether they pursue a degree or a certification, to be trained for the jobs of today and tomorrow. By encouraging and strengthening partnerships between employers and community colleges, we can prepare our workforce for high-demand, good-paying jobs in every corner of our state.*

## **Health Care:**

9. Latino-led nonprofit organizations currently play a significant role in the provision of a wide range of health care services in Latino communities. If elected/re-elected what steps will your administration take to ensure that the new networks set up by Managed Care entities include Latino-led providers and how will you hold other entities accountable for providing culturally and linguistically responsive services across the state?

*Bruce Rauner's two-year budget crisis caused real damage to Medicaid recipients as providers who bore the brunt of the unpaid bill backlog had to diminish services provided to Medicaid patients. He insisted on overhauling the Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs), but he has provided little oversight to ensure that they are providing the care coordination and preventative care that will bring down costs in the long run.*

*As governor, I will work with community partners and lawmakers to ensure stable investment in consumer-led, community-based programs that give Medicaid consumers the tools they need to live independent, meaningful lives in their communities.*

10. With registration in the IMPACT system to become an Integrated Health Home beginning September 17<sup>th</sup>, if elected/re-elected, how will your administration ensure that community agencies who serve the Latino communities are not excluded from the IHH roll out?

*My administration will bring community stakeholders to the table across issues.*

11. Illinois currently provides several free/affordable diagnostic services such as the breast and Cervical Cancer Program, which was established by the CDC to increase early diagnosis of breast and cervical cancer among the uninsured and undocumented residents in most states of the union. However, the program does not fund treatment modality for cancer positive women. Cervical and breast cancer are among the top three causes of mortality among Latina women. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration address this need?

*The Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program is a repeated victim of Bruce Rauner's misplaced priorities and mismanagement. In 2015, Bruce Rauner proposed a 71 percent*

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*cut to the program. During the first year of Bruce Rauner's budget crisis, almost 7,000 fewer women were screened for cancer under IBCCP according to data from the Department of Public Health — that's a 34 percent drop.*

*Thousands of women went without access to critical cancer screenings during Bruce Rauner's budget crisis. This governor failed to do his job, and women were denied critical healthcare services as a result. As governor, healthcare will be one of my priorities. That's why I've put forward a plan that would expand coverage right away. My public health insurance option plan, called IllinoisCares, would allow every Illinoisan, regardless of county or income level, to be covered and would give middle class families and small businesses a break on the high cost of health insurance.*

## **Immigrant Integration:**

12. The Office of New Americans provided a wide range of important services to the state's diverse immigrant community. What is your vision for immigrant integration in Illinois and if elected/re-elected, how will your administration, staff this office as well as implement and monitor effective policies?

*Donald Trump's hateful rhetoric and bigoted agenda is an attack on communities across Illinois, especially our Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian communities. Instead of uniting our country to build a more tolerant and prosperous nation for everyone, he has built his political career on divisive attacks that are tearing apart families and attacking the foundation of our American values. Bruce Rauner, his silent partner in Springfield, blamed immigrants for crime in Chicago, demonizing entire communities with a vicious attack that may as well have come directly from Donald Trump's mouth. This is divisive and shameful rhetoric from a failed governor who time and again has stood in the way of investing in communities and passing commonsense gun safety legislation to keep families safe.*

*Unlike Donald Trump, my values have led me to become a civil rights advocate for decades. It's why I protested at O'Hare when Trump's Immigration Executive Order was issued in January. I'm also proud to say I have earned endorsements from the only Latino member of Illinois' congressional delegation, Luis Gutiérrez, the only Latina statewide officeholder, Susana Mendoza, as well as the Chair of Chicago City Council's Latino Caucus, Alderman Gilbert Villegas and City Clerk Anna Valencia.*

*As governor, I will make Illinois a welcoming state where everyone is treated with dignity and provided with an opportunity to achieve their full potential. I will enhance funding for immigrant and refugee services, oppose a federal registry program based on race, religion, and country of origin, and I will seek diverse input and ensure all Illinoisans have a seat at the table and a voice in their government.*

13. The Illinois Trust Act has proven instrumental in keeping an open line of communication between the community and local law enforcement officials. This has enabled law

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enforcement to continue doing their jobs effectively. If elected/re-elected, how will you ensure that the Illinois Trust Act is enforced?

*The United States is a nation of immigrants. Every generation, our country is strengthened by men and women from across the globe seeking freedom and opportunity here. Rather than welcome this generation of immigrant children and families, our president has demonized immigrants, turned his back on Syrian refugees, and has implemented a modified travel ban to several Muslim-majority nations. Estimates from 2015 found that if Donald Trump were to succeed in deporting every undocumented immigrant in Illinois, the state could lose \$25.6 billion in economic activity, \$11.4 billion in gross state product, and approximately 119,214 jobs. We must protect our ideals and do everything possible to make the promise of America the practice of America.*

*Illinois should serve as a beacon of hope, a place where every person is given the tools to build a better life, contribute to their community, and help strengthen our economy. Illinois is home to approximately 1.8 million immigrants, but Bruce Rauner has proactively taken steps to jettison immigrant integration programs and kill pro-immigrant bills. Immigrants were nearly 18 percent of Illinois' workforce in 2013, and in 2012, undocumented immigrants in Illinois paid approximately \$793.7 million in state and local taxes.*

*Today's immigrant families want the same thing my great-grandfather did when he came to the United States as a refugee: safety, freedom, and the opportunity to build a better life. As governor, I will strive to build the social and economic infrastructure necessary to create opportunities for everyone, regardless of citizenship. Unlike our governor, I will welcome refugees with open arms and send a message to the president that Illinois is a welcoming state. I will restore and expand funding for immigrant integration services. Finally, there were provisions to protect immigrants that were eliminated during the course of negotiations of the Trust Act. I will proudly work to advance those provisions and look forward to standing with immigrant families to rebuild trust in our communities.*

14. If finalized, experts anticipate that the proposed Public Charge rule change would cause major increases in poverty, hunger, and unmet housing and health care needs. One in four children in Illinois have at least one immigrant parent, consequently the proposed rule change would result in a poorer, sicker, hungrier Illinois. If elected/re-elected, will you commit to publicly speak out against the Public Charge rule change?

*Making immigrant families choose between feeding and housing themselves and obtaining green cards is one of the most vicious and cruel attacks Donald Trump has waged on our communities. Designating the use of public benefits as a factor to deny someone's green card application is a cruel policy designed to push immigrants into the shadows and out of this country. This callous proposal will force many families to withdraw from programs that provide them with access to healthcare, basic nutrition, and affordable housing. I am appalled by this bigoted rule and stand with immigrant families across Illinois in the fight for fair treatment.*



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## Census 2020:

It is essential that all Illinois residents are counted in the 2020 Census. However, the 2020 Census may include untested questions and new methods of deployment that could discourage some Illinois residents from participating.

15. Illinois could potentially lose two Congressional seats and a significant portion of our State's annual allotment of \$19.7 billion federal dollars, if residents are reluctant or unable to respond. If elected/re-elected, how will your administration help ensure a full and fair count? How will you support local governments and community organizations that perform Census outreach and assist people with completing the Census?

*It's critical that Illinois residents believe in the integrity of the U.S. Census Bureau. The 2020 Census will enable the nation to conduct a full count of its residents, guide the allocation of more than \$600 billion in federal funding, and inform public decision-making at all levels of government. It will also determine the size of Illinois Congressional delegation and affect the state's redistricting process.*

*Immigrant families are routinely undercounted in the census because they fear that participation will provide federal officials with information that will lead to them being detained or deported. Undercounting undocumented residents would diminish their representation in legislative and congressional districts and would significantly harm the state at large. Undercounting the people who live in Illinois would compound any actual population loss the state has experienced and during reapportionment could cost the state one or two Congressional seats in 2022 like it did in 2012. Undercounting Illinois residents would also cost the state hundreds of millions in federal dollars because many programs rely on census data to determine how funding is distributed to state and local governments for education, Medicaid and other health-related programs, housing, public safety, roads, and a wide range of other areas.*

*The Trump Administration's relentless attacks on immigrant families can only worsen the response rate of immigrant residents in Illinois. His recent Department of Justice request that the Census Bureau add a new question about citizenship will further discourage immigrant participation and harm Illinois.*

*Immigrant families do not deserve to live in constant fear of the federal government, especially in the execution of a government function as important as the decennial census. As governor, I will support efforts to ensure that people have access to information about the Census, understand their legal rights, stay informed about the benefits of participating, and oppose any effort by the federal government to use census information for immigration enforcement.*

## Housing:

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16. If elected/re-elected, how will you address homelessness in Illinois? What role, if any, will your administration play in developing and implementing a statewide strategy to end homelessness along with supporting or coordinating municipal efforts?

*We must take a comprehensive approach to creating more affordable housing for lower-wage households and fostering the economic opportunities and conditions that enable people to experience upward economic mobility and purchase homes. When we invest in communities and provide children and families with the tools they need for success, like quality, equitable public education and economic opportunity, we incentivize families to stay and thrive here in Chicago and across the state. Finally, Illinois must invest in resources that families experiencing homelessness can use to improve their well-being. Restoring services for families experiencing homelessness and investing in affordable housing will be a priority in our administration.*

17. There has not been a comprehensive capital plan in IL in nearly a decade. One state strategy to promote affordable housing is the creative use of tax credits, i.e. the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit. If elected/re-elected, in addition to existing tax credit strategies, how will your administration approach a capital plan to assure appropriate and equitable funding to ensure the development of affordable housing?

*When I'm governor, I'll prioritize a comprehensive 21<sup>st</sup> Century Capital Bill. We need roads and bridges and waterways that allow Illinois to be the center of the supply chain for companies across America. We also need to invest in affordable housing and our public education system. And there's another kind of infrastructure investment we need to create jobs: high-speed, broadband internet all across central and southern Illinois that will not just attract large businesses from outside Illinois, but will help promote small business creation, and expand online education opportunities.*

*The cost of not doing anything to upgrade the state's infrastructure is too great for our state and future. I will work with federal lawmakers to ensure Illinois secures as many federal dollars as possible for capital projects, and I will work with state lawmakers so that any agreement on investments fit within a balanced budget.*

## **Optional**

What do you want Latino voters to remember about you when they enter the voting booth?

*I've spent my life getting big things done for Illinois families and communities in both the public and private sectors. For over 20 years, I've been a national advocate for early childhood education, including organizing President Obama's White House Summit on Early Childhood Education in 2014 and working to expand federal school breakfast grants to over 230,000 Illinois children in low-income school districts. Five years ago, I founded 1871, a non-profit startup business incubator, which has helped create over 7,000 new jobs in Illinois and has helped make Chicago one of the top technology startup hubs in the world. I chaired the bipartisan Illinois Human Rights Commission and turned it around. And I led the creation of the*

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*Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center which teaches more than 120,000 children and teachers from across Illinois each year to fight bigotry, hatred, and intolerance.*

*And I have a comprehensive first-in-the-nation plan to expand healthcare called IllinoisCares. IllinoisCares would allow every Illinois resident the chance to purchase lower cost health insurance through the state's Medicaid system like President Obama proposed. With the creation of IllinoisCares, small businesses, families and individuals can save thousands of dollars each year on health insurance premiums while making insurance more affordable for those without it. IllinoisCares would expand healthcare coverage in Illinois at little or no cost to the taxpayers.*

*Illinois faces some enormous and unique challenges after the damage done by Bruce Rauner's failed leadership. As governor, I'm committed to bringing people together to move our state forward. We need to think big, innovate, and come together to get things done in our state again, and I believe I have the record of accomplishments, vision, and leadership that Illinois needs.*