



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Illinois Latino Agenda met with Chairperson Toni Preckwinkle to discuss the Cook County Democratic Party's commitment to equitable representation in the Illinois Judiciary**

*The Cook County Democratic Party is in the slating process and will make a decision by August 15th about which candidates it will endorse*

*\*media interviews available\**

**CHICAGO** - Yesterday, members of the Illinois Latino Agenda (ILA) met with Toni Preckwinkle, Chairperson of the Cook County Democratic Party, to discuss the urgency for the Party to increase equity on our state's highest court by slating a candidate with roots in Latino communities. Given recent retention, it is unlikely that voters will have a chance to elect a Latino Supreme Court Justice in Cook County for at least another ten years.

Although the ultimate decision of who becomes Illinois' next Supreme Court Justice comes down to voters, the Party's endorsement has been a seal of approval and a path to victory for all Supreme Court candidates they've slated in recent history.

"We thank Chair Preckwinkle for the opportunity to meet with her and discuss the historical underrepresentation of Latinos in our state's judiciary, and we continue to urge her to consider supporting a Latino to serve as an Illinois Supreme Court Justice for the first time in our state's history," **said Jose M. Muñoz, Co-Chair of the Illinois Latino Agenda.** "We believe that a Latino Supreme Court Justice, who understands the issues we face and has roots in our community, will enrich the Court and help make more inclusive and culturally responsive decisions."

In the past five years, there have been three vacancies filled in the Illinois Supreme Court—three opportunities to finally bring Latino representation to the state's highest court. Despite the community's vocal and united effort to have a Latino appointed in these vacancies, they were ignored, and no Latino was appointed.

"Illinois may be a progressive state, but when it comes to equity in the highest levels of government, it is falling short," **said Sylvia Puente, Co-Chair of the Illinois Latino Agenda and CEO of the Latino Policy Forum.** "We can no longer accept a court that is not reflective of the communities it serves, which is why we are strongly advocating for committee

members to support a Latino candidate with lived experience who can give voice to the values and needs of our communities.”

Latinos are one of the fastest growing demographics in Illinois, and they make up more than 26% of the population in Cook County and 18% in the state. Even though Illinois has [the fifth largest Latino population](#) in the country, it is not on the list of ten states with a Latino Supreme Court Justice.

“Having an open dialogue with Chair Preckwinkle and other Party representatives about the importance of Latino representation in all levels of government is a step in the right direction, and we look forward to working with her to also ensure more Latinos are represented in state Appellate and Circuit Courts,” **said Juan Morado, Jr., Chair Emeritus of the Latino Leadership Council and Illinois Latino Agenda member.** “We are now counting on the support of the Party’s committeemen to help Illinois create a more equitable judiciary.”

The Illinois Latino Agenda is resolute in its commitment to advancing the wellbeing of Latinos throughout Illinois and advocating for increased representation of Latinos across all sectors and all levels of government.

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