



Cook County State Attorney Eileen O'Neill Burke  
69 W. Washington St.  
Chicago, Illinois 60602  
Re: Open Letter from Latino Leadership Council and Illinois Latino Agenda

Dear State's Attorney Burke:

The Latino Leadership Council (LLC) and Illinois Latino Agenda (ILA) were dismayed by your recent interaction with Latino community leaders at a public event and your stated unwillingness to meet with those who raised concerns about issues affecting our communities.

At a time when many Latino families in Cook County are experiencing fear, uncertainty, and deep concern about the actions of immigration enforcement agencies, the role of public officials is to listen, engage, and help build trust. Disagreement over a petition, policy position, or public issue should never be a reason to close the door on community dialogue.

Latino leaders engage elected officials every day across differences in policy, perspective, and ideology. We do so because our communities deserve representation, respect, and access to those entrusted with public office. Advocacy is not a reason to deny a meeting. Raising difficult questions is not a reason to dismiss the communities you serve.

This is not about relitigating a petition or a court ruling. It is about whether the Cook County State's Attorney is willing to meet with Latino community leaders for an honest conversation about issues affecting Latino families, neighborhoods, workers, students, and young people across the county.

The Latino community is an essential part of Cook County. More than one in four Cook County residents identifies as Latino, and immigrant families have helped shape the economic, civic, and cultural fabric of our region for generations. When Latino leaders seek a meeting with the State's Attorney, they are seeking to represent a substantial portion of the people your office serves.

Public officials are not required to agree with every community leader. They are expected to listen. They are expected to engage. They are expected to make themselves accessible to the communities they serve. By not meeting with Latino leaders, you are ignoring not only a significant percentage of the Cook County population but Cook County's commitment to welcome and protect immigrants and respect their contributions to our communities.

For that reason, we call on you to apologize to the Latino community for your comments and your refusal to meet.

We also request a timely meeting with LLC and ILA leadership and participating member organizations, to be held at the location of a member organization. This meeting should provide an opportunity for a direct, respectful, and productive conversation about the concerns being raised by Latino communities across Cook County.

Finally, we ask that you commit to maintaining an open line of communication with Latino-serving organizations moving forward. Productive engagement requires dialogue, especially when disagreements exist.

The State's Attorney's Office serves all residents of Cook County. That includes Latino communities and the organizations that advocate on their behalf.

Our communities deserve to be heard. We remain ready to meet.

Sincerely,

Latino Leadership Council and Illinois Latino Agenda

***About the Illinois Latino Agenda:*** *The Illinois Latino Agenda (ILA) is a coalition of Latino leaders and community organizations across the Chicago region working to advance the wellbeing, equity, and political power of Illinois's Latino communities. ILA is fiscally sponsored by the Latino Policy Forum.*

***About the Latino Leadership Council:*** *The Latino Leadership Council's (LLC) mission is to empower the Latino community by organizing and increasing the culture of political giving, and to advocate for Latino parity and inclusion in both the public and private sector, government resources, government appointments, nonprofit funding, business opportunities, corporate boards, and executive level positions in publicly traded companies.*