Illinois Latino Agenda Calls for a Latina or Latino to Serve as the Next Illinois House Speaker

Two months after the first anniversary of Operation Midway Blitz, Latino voters decisively joined people from every walk of life in delivering a clear and resounding mandate to their elected leaders. Here at home, they returned supermajorities to both chambers and sent five new Latino members to Springfield.

For more than a year our neighbors watched our own government turn against us — families torn apart, people taken from workplaces and courthouses and sidewalks. They did not look away and they did not wait it out. They blew their whistles and documented the abuse, they stood with our communities, and then they voted with us to demand accountability and justice.

This did not happen overnight. Latino turnout has more than doubled in Illinois since 2000 — from roughly 218,000 voters to about 485,000 in 2024. The Latino electorate has grown 56 percent since 2012 and now stands at about 1.2 million eligible voters. More than 30,000 Illinois Latinos turn 18 every year, and because ours is the youngest electorate in the state, our participation will keep rising as our total numbers grow.

Numbers alone are not power. Latino-led organizations have spent years organizing our people into rapid response networks and legal clinics that kept families safe, and registration drives that put new voters on the rolls. We built coalitions year after year with Black, Asian American, labor and faith partners. And when other communities have come under attack, our organizations have leveraged what we built to show up for them too.

Our state was prepared to meet ICE because Latino advocates and leaders built those systems step by step, bill by bill. Those protections never stopped at our community. The Trust Act shields every immigrant family in Illinois, not only Latino ones, and the same holds for the wage, health and language-access protections our advocacy won. When Latinos organize, the floor rises for everyone. That is why the strength, leadership and solidarity of Illinois Latinos will be just as decisive in making sure Springfield delivers for all the working families who delivered this election.

Latino power is ascendant. And it is ascendant at the exact moment our communities are under attack. Health coverage that immigrant seniors depended on has been dismantled. Federal cuts and new eligibility rules are pushing families off SNAP and Medicaid even as our youth are denied equitable access to higher education. And our families live in fear of being brutalized and torn apart by federal immigration authorities who answer to no one. The people bearing the brunt of all of this are the people who keep this state moving — staffing Illinois's hospitals, warehouses, fields, kitchens and construction sites.

The people who hold this state up should not be the first ones cut off. Equitable access to public benefits — for the community members who make Illinois what it is, irrespective of immigration status — is the clearest test of whether this chamber's priorities match its voters'.

So we urge the Democratic caucus to recognize that Latinos are now a core and growing constituency of your super-majority, and the next Speaker should reflect the needs and realities of that constituency.

Choosing a Latina or Latino leader for Speaker of the House would be a historic first for this chamber and a fitting answer to the election Illinois just held, anything less would be a missed opportunity.

Whoever is chosen, the members of the Illinois Latino Agenda will stand united to hold the Speaker accountable to our communities and ensure they deliver on our priorities while working alongside them to deliver on an agenda that serves not only our Latino community, but all working people across the state.

Respectfully,

The Illinois Latino Agenda