

December 1, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
1303 10th St., Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of UnidosUS, (formerly the National Council of La Raza), I write to express our support for the appointment of California Secretary of State Alex Padilla to the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Vice President elect Kamala Harris.

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization and has built a stronger country by creating opportunities for Latinos for more than 50 years. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers at the national and local levels.

In addition, UnidosUS California-based Affiliates include 58 community-based organizations that invest more than \$1.8 billion and employ more than 15,000 staff to provide direct services to approximately 1.8 million Californians annually. UnidosUS is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has an office in Los Angeles and staff in Sacramento. Through partnerships, community investments, and state research and advocacy on housing, health, and education, UnidosUS advances opportunities for the more than 15 million Latinos who call California home.

California Secretary of State Alex Padilla's life and public service accolades represent the true achievement of the Latino/a American Dream. The son of Mexican immigrants, he was raised in the working-class community of Pacoima, located in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles County. He attended local public schools and went on to graduate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in mechanical engineering. Upon graduation, his talents were directed to public service and he was elected to the Los Angeles City Council. His colleagues later elected him to the first of three terms as council president, becoming the youngest member and the first Latino/a to serve in this capacity.

In 2006, he was elected to the California State Senate and over the course of eight years delivered on diverse and groundbreaking legislation. He authored a series of legislative measures to identify and implement best practices in English learner curriculum and

instruction, advocated for funding reform and accountability for schools and school districts with high concentrations of English learner students, and created a clear and consistent pathway for community college students working to transfer to the California State University system. As the sitting Secretary of State for California, he has been committed to modernizing the office, increasing voter registration, and strengthening voting rights. His efforts to change public policy for the betterment of all Californians, especially Latinos, aligns well with UnidosUS's policy agenda, his commitment to civil rights and equality is unquestioned, and he has made great strides over the years to engage and build a solid working relationship with UnidosUS and with important UnidosUS Affiliates.

Furthermore, your appointment of Alex Padilla would make history. Prior to the 2020 election, only nine Latinos have served in the U.S. Senate since it first convened in 1789. Nationally, Latinos represent more than 60 million Americans, with more Latinos living in the state of California than in any other state in the country. However, our great state of California has yet to elect a Latino/a to the U.S. Senate. Unlike other states, neither major political party in California has even endorsed or elected a Latina/o for the U.S. Senate. The time is ripe to ensure that California's voice in the U.S. Senate is descriptive and substantively representative of the state's Latino/a population.

Your leadership on advancing an inclusive and reflective democracy is paramount for the future of the world's fifth-largest economy. We urge you to be a catalyst for Latino representation and American recovery by appointing California Secretary of State Alex Padilla to be our next U.S. Senator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Murguía". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

Janet Murguía
President & CEO