

# THE LATINO Presidential QUESTIONNAIRE

LATINO  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
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## Julián Castro

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*1. By 2030, California will need [1.65 million](#) more college degrees to stay economically competitive. When fifty-four percent of the state's K-12 public school students are Latino, and in the higher education space, Latinos make up more than one million students, what are your plans to ensure that more Latinos in California attain a college degree?*

My story is a testament to how education is the best way for families to overcome the entrenched and generational racial and economic inequality that Latinos face in California and around the nation.

[My People First Education plan](#) aims to eliminate the inequities in our school system from pre-kindergarten through college and beyond. We must make closing the gaps in access and achievement for students of color a national priority, recognizing that for states like California this is truly an emergency that threatens the future well-being and prosperity of the whole society. We must work to make college more affordable for Latino students, while also ensuring those institutions are set up for Latinos to succeed, and working to improve the K-12 educational pipeline that often leaves Latino students behind.

As president, I will address systemic racism and discrimination in our schools, ensure full inclusion for every student, regardless of disability, criminal history, immigration status, or income, and work to dismantle the school to prison and deportation pipeline. We must recruit

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more qualified teachers to serve high-need areas with a national teacher residency initiative, with a particular emphasis on recruiting teachers that look like the students they serve.

In my [Justice for Farmworkers plan](#), I devote particular attention to ensuring migrant farmworker students in places like California do not fall through the cracks of our educational system. I am also committed to eliminating tuition at public colleges and universities, community colleges, as well as training and vocational schools, as well as with targeted student debt forgiveness and increased Pell grants to ensure that Latinos do not struggle with paying for the education that is their ticket to the American Dream.

*2. There remains [2.9 million](#) uninsured people in California and nearly three out of five of these uninsured are Latino. The uninsured is expected to rise to [4.4 million](#) in the next five years, with Latinos and undocumented residents driving that growth. As president, what policies will you pursue to ensure that Latinos can obtain high-quality, affordable health care?*

Health care is a human right. As president, [I will strengthen Medicare](#) and make it available to everyone. This is the best way to achieve universal coverage at the lowest possible cost. All Americans deserve high-quality, affordable health care when they need it.

We need to invest in rural community hospitals that are closing at a rapid pace by reforming the funding formula and raising reimbursement rates. I also believe we need to end the distinction between mental and physical health care. Too often people suffer in silence and we must reduce the stigma around mental health care.

People who are undocumented also deserve health care because they are human beings. We are already paying for folks without health coverage at the emergency room, the most expensive and least effective method for treating illness, and we need to expand preventative care to everyone.

I also support reforms to lower the cost of prescription drugs. There is no reason insulin should be 10 times more expensive in the United States than in Canada. I support empowering Medicare to negotiate drug prices, reforming intellectual property laws to promote generic drugs, and allow the import of drugs from countries that meet strong consumer protection and safety standards. As president, I will ensure everyone has high-quality, affordable health care.

*3. [Sixty-one](#) percent of Latinos in California face high-rental costs and only 42 percent of Latinos own homes (compared to 64 percent of whites). How will you address the rising costs of rental housing and expand homeownership opportunities for Latinos?*

In small towns, suburbs, and big cities, there is a housing affordability crisis. Every person deserves a safe, decent, affordable place to call home. Working families are struggling to pay the rent or afford the mortgage, and too often a person's zip code determines their future.

[My People First Housing Plan](#) will build at least 3 million affordable housing units, expand housing choice vouchers to every family of modest means, and creates a new renters tax credit to provide relief for hardworking families.

I also have a plan to end veteran, youth, and child homelessness by 2024 and chronic homelessness by 2028. As Housing Secretary, we reduced veteran homelessness almost in half and I believe with the right leadership we can end homelessness in the richest nation on Earth. As president, I will establish a Commission on Zoning Reform to promote affordable, equitable, and transit-oriented zoning reforms to expand the supply of affordable housing in high-opportunity neighborhoods.

We must also work to prevent gentrification and displacement from new development, and combat housing discrimination and advance fair housing. Latino communities on the frontlines of the housing affordability crisis, and I will work to hold banks accountable for lending abuses and ensure more folks can pursue the opportunity of homeownership. Housing is a basic human right, and as president it will be a top national priority.

*4. California is home to approximately [2.9 million](#) undocumented immigrants. What steps will you take to protect immigrants in California and what is your timeline for action?*

The cruelties of Donald Trump's immigration policy should haunt our collective conscience. It's time for an immigration policy that puts people first. We must not only expand our political will, but also our moral imagination. We must remember what immigration means to our national identity, and who we want to be as a country.

As president, [I will reform of our immigration system](#), with an accessible and fair pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and other families who do not have a current pathway to legal status, including a pathway to citizenship for DACA-holders and those with TPS and DED status. We must also revamp the visa system, including by strengthening family reunification programs to undo the harms of families separated by deportations.

In my administration, we will terminate three and ten-year bars, allow all deported veterans who honorably served in our armed forces to return to the United States, and strengthen labor protections for immigrant workers and protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. I will also go further than simply stopping or pausing the machinery of deportation and criminalization that immigrants have faced for decades. I will dismantle it, ensuring no future President can ever separate families again, by repealing Section 1325 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and reconstituting the U.S. Immigration and Customs

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Enforcement by splitting the agency in half. I will begin doing this from the first hour of my presidency, beginning with taking every executive action possible to undo the cruelties of the Trump era and making immigration reform my top legislative priority, to be done within the first 100 days.

*5. Latinos are overrepresented in blue-collar occupations like agriculture and construction. Latinos also have the highest poverty rate in the state and possess a median household income that is more than [\\$20k](#) less than non-Latinos. What would your administration do to close the income inequality gap among Latinos and other racial/ethnic groups?*

The entrenched racial and economic inequality faced by Latinos should be treated as a national emergency. The fundamental economic challenge of our time is to reverse widening inequality and lift up working families. While the cost of living is rising, paychecks have stayed the same. [My Economic plan for Working Families](#) will raise wages, invest in opportunities, and support working families in the 21st century economy, including by providing a \$3000 child tax credit, increasing paychecks by up to \$9,000 a year with tax credits and raising the minimum wage to a living wage of at least \$15 per hour for all workers, including farmworkers and domestic workers.

Industries such as agriculture, construction, and domestic work, which disproportionately employ Latino and immigrant workers, deserve special attention, especially those such as agriculture that have historically been excluded from labor law protections afforded to other groups. In my [Justice for Farmworkers](#) and [Dignity for Domestic Workers Plans](#), I lay out specific policy visions to ensure these most essential but exploited workers are fully protected by U.S. labor law, given pathways to citizenship, and are paid fairly and treated with dignity. From domestic workers who reported to work, cleaning multi-million dollar mansions in the Hollywood hills, even as the homeowners had evacuated due to fire warnings, to farmworker families in the Central Valley affected by pesticide exposure and fearing deportation, California is in need of some of the crucial policy changes I seek to make as President of the United States.

*6. The recent Kincaid Fire in California demonstrated that climate change is a real threat to Latino and immigrant communities across the state. In the first 100 days, what actions are you prepared to take to address the urgent issue of climate change?*

Throughout this campaign, I have made clear that climate change will affect those already vulnerable or marginalized in our society the most. The fires in California are a tragic example of this, from farmworkers left working in dangerous smoke conditions to low-income families who watched as the food in their fridge went bad during power blackouts. I know there is no greater challenge facing the next president - and the entire planet - than the climate crisis.

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If elected, I will work both protect our planet and grow our economy for a just and sustainable future as a global leader in the clean energy economy. As my first official act, I will recommit the United States to the 2016 Paris climate agreement negotiated by President Obama and convene world leaders to negotiate an even stronger agreement to reduce emissions and combat the climate crisis.

[My People and Planet First plan](#) commits the United States to ensuring all U.S. electricity is carbon-neutral by 2030 and reaching net-zero carbon emissions in the U.S. by 2045 and worldwide before 2050. In the first 100 days, I will begin this process immediately by reducing greenhouse gas emission through maximized executive action such as a renewed Clean Power Plan and ending all fossil fuel exploration and extraction on federal land. I will also focus on equity issues the climate crisis raises, such as ensuring workers affected by the transition away from fossil fuels are not left behind and empowering communities affected by environmental racism to address pollution as a civil rights issue.

I will also prepare the United States to face climate-driven migration, which is already a factor driving migration from Central America, by creating a new refugee resettlement category of climate refugees for people who are displaced by rising seas, worsening storms, prolonged droughts and other effects of the climate crisis. We must respond to the climate crisis with our values, and seize an opportunity to create a more just society, not use the emergency as an excuse to raise new walls or further entrench divisions between the haves and the have-nots.

*7. Latinas in California make [43 cents](#) on the dollar for every man in the state. As Latinas make up half the Latino population in the state, this hurts our ability to grow our economy. How will you use the presidential pulpit to close the gender pay gap for Latinas in California?*

Absolutely. My mom raised my brother, Joaquin, and I as a single parent, who was also raised by my grandmother as a single parent too. Everywhere my mom goes she carries a red purse as a reminder of the gender pay gap. As president, I will fight to guarantee at least 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, which directly contributes to gender pay inequity. We will also establish a national paid sick leave standard of at least 7 days a year and pass legislation to ensure equal pay for equal work.

[My Economic Plan for Working Families](#) includes a massive expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit up to \$9,000 to increase pay for workers with lower wages and also proposes a Child Tax Credit of \$3,000 for every child in homes of modest means. We also need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage of at least \$15 per hour for all workers, including tipped, farm, and disabled workers, and connect future increases to the cost of living. Latina workers are the unsung heroes of our national prosperity, and we must recognize their contributions with pay equity and higher incomes.

*8. The recent mass shootings in Gilroy, CA and El Paso, TX have left the Latino community fearful. What are your plans to curb gun violence in our country that have left too many Latino families grieving?*

The issue of gun violence, and in particular the growing threat of white nationalist anti-Latino terrorism, is personal. The El Paso shooter targeted Latinos, people who look like me, who look like my family. My wife and I are raising a daughter and son, and we worry about them and their friends. They should be able to grow up free from hate and safe from gun violence. Their safety is our foremost responsibility.

[My Plan to Disarm Hate](#) starts with comprehensively identifying the threat of white supremacist domestic terrorism and combatting it directly with a coordinated federal response. We'll also invest in programs to fight radicalization and educational opportunities to bridge racial and cultural divides and lead a global coalition to defeat this rising tide of white nationalism, in partnership with nations such as Mexico who lost several of their citizens on U.S. soil during the El Paso attacks. We must also address our nation's weak gun laws, which enable violent extremism as well as violence in neighboring countries in Latin America. The United States is the only advanced nation in the world where mass shootings occur on a daily basis.

The epidemic of gun violence is also disproportionately affecting people and communities of color, inflicting trauma and pain on the most disadvantaged among us, including in neighborhoods like the one I grew up in. We know common sense gun safety laws will save lives. As president, I will fight for universal background checks, a renewed assault weapons ban, and strict limits on high-capacity magazines. I will invest in a gun buyback program to decrease the number of guns on the streets, support Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws, and invest in community-driven violence prevention programs. These are smart, reasonable reforms that improve safety for everyone. Lastly, as too many Black and Latino families in California have experienced, we must recognize that police violence is also gun violence. My plan to reform policing, including by instituting a national police use of force standard, would hold police accountable and ensure that tragedies like the death of Stephon Clarke in Sacramento do not happen again.