

HWOA-The Latino Vote

Presidential Inauguration and Panel Discussion

Wednesday January 20,2021

Panelists



Rafael Collazo, Director of Political Campaigns, UnidosUS (formerly National Council of La Raza) Department of Legislative and Political Affairs. Rafael leads the execution of important advocacy initiatives organized within the Affiliate and community leadership network, focusing on strategy and campaigning. He recently led UnidosUS' field campaign efforts to elevate the Latino perspective on Federal Budget and Tax policy. Collazo is a seasoned activist and political leader who is one of the foremost experts on non-partisan Hispanic civic engagement and issue-based organizing campaigns. For two decades, Collazo has been implementing successful voter registration, leadership development, and community organizing programs, targeting Hispanics in over 20 states. Prior to his work with UnidosUS, Rafael served as the National Deputy Director of Democracia USA/Democracia, Inc., the nation's largest non-partisan Hispanic voter engagement organization. Mr. Collazo holds a bachelor's degree from Columbia University in New York.



Isamar Garcia-Hernandez- League of Women Voters National - Project Coordinator Isamar is originally from San Bernardino, California, but was raised in Springdale during a time when Northwest Arkansas was first experiencing a dramatic shift in its Latinx composition. As the proud daughter of two Mexican immigrants, Isamar saw first hand how difficult it was for her own family to assimilate in a community that wasn't prepared for them or similar families that were newly settling and calling NWA home. After graduating from the University of Arkansas in May of 2019, Isamar moved to Washington, D.C. to complete a year long Public Policy Fellowship with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute in the office of Congressman Joaquin Castro. It was there that she first experienced lawmakers centering her family's identity when crafting policy. She worked closely with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus as they responded to attacks aimed at immigrants and refugees while also advocating for Latinx representation in classrooms, boardrooms, and every area of the media. After completing her CHCI fellowship, Isamar joined the League of Women Voters US in Washington, D.C. as the VOTE411 Coordinator and works everyday to ensure that democracy spaces keep diverse communities in mind.



Rebeca Soto, Development Officer for the Hispanic Women's Organization of Arkansas

Rebeca has been with HWOA for 5 years. Being involved in numerous civic engagement activities that include citizenship assistance, voter registration and advocacy, Rebeca organizes activities to teach the youth about government and advocacy. Through a comfortable platform for young students/volunteers and local/state leaders Rebeca thinks dialogue has to start in an effort to work together in diversity and community integration. As a young mother, she believes that it is through her example that her kids and other young voters will observe the importance of being an informed Latino voter in Federal, State, and Local elections. Her main role is to write grants to continue providing essential services to our community. She has been with HWOA for 5 years and is happy to continue growing professionally along with the organization. Rebeca has been involved in numerous civic engagement activities such as voter registration throughout her time with HWOA. Although, helping others is one of her best qualities. Rebeca enjoys spending time with her family on her time off doing arts and crafts.



Kevin Flores- Springdale City Council, Ward 2 Position 2 Kevin is the first Latino to serve in city government. He was born in El Salvador during the country's civil war. At the age of three, he and his family moved to the U.S. and eventually settled in Springdale where he graduated from Springdale High School in 2006. Kevin is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. After his service, Kevin obtained a B.A. in economics from Fordham University and a J.D. from the University of Arkansas. He has experience in foreign policy and immigration law. He ran a successful campaign and gained the support of diverse voters. He credits his successes to his family, friends, mentors, and the community that embrace him in Springdale.



Bonnie Miller- League of Women Voters (LWV) Originally from Southern California, Bonnie received her B.A. in Sociology & Anthropology with a minor in Race & Ethnic Studies. In 2008, she moved to Arkansas to pursue a graduate degree in Sociology. She has spent several years working on redistricting reform in the state. Bonnie serves on the Board of Directors for the League of Women Voters of Arkansas and as President of the local League in Washington County. Bonnie also recently served as Chairperson of Arkansas Voters First, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to ending partisan gerrymandering through the establishment of an independent citizen-led redistricting commission. Outside of her redistricting reform work, she helps coordinate voter registration drives & trainings, candidate forums, and education/advocacy programs around ballot issues and elections. She is passionate about civic education and engagement and considers herself a democracy reform and pizza enthusiast.