



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 23, 2018

### **Latina Candidates Fill the Ballot**

FRESNO—Fresno County is fortunate to have several talented Latinas running for office this year. Through their efforts and their example, the Central Valley will benefit from better governance and enable greater political engagement from our Latinx population. Latinx are the largest ethnic group in California, but unfortunately this group is underrepresented in our government. Eight Latina candidates are working to change that and deserve your attention.

“Their time is now,” says Michael D. Evans, chair of the Fresno County Democratic Party. “For many years, we have seen Latinas drive many of our best political campaigns and work behind the scenes for our elected officials. Now, many are stepping forward to offer a new approach to governance—responsiveness to the community.”



In western Fresno County, into the Salinas Valley and north to Stanislaus County, Anna Caballero is running for State Senate District 12. Currently serving in the State Assembly, Caballero has worked her way up in politics for the past 25 years. As a lawyer, she fought on behalf of striking farmworkers and factory employees. She was rewarded by being elected mayor of Salinas and then moved on to the State Assembly. Now she is running for an open State Senate seat against Madera Republican Rob Poythress.



Melissa Hurtado is running in State Senate District 14, which extends from downtown Fresno to northern Kern County. Hurtado currently serves on the Sanger City Council. She has helped people receive the state resources they need to create more work, access to health services and provide quality education. Her opponent, incumbent Republican Andy Vidak, has let the tainted drinking water crisis fester under his watch, while voting against economic development that would help bring jobs into the area’s economy.



Paulina Miranda is seeking the State Senate District 8 seat. District 8 runs from Fresno County well north to Amador County. Miranda, originally from Mexico, is an educator who has been involved in Democratic politics for years. Miranda has assisted with multiple political campaigns and volunteered with various community organizations.



In eastern Fresno County, Aileen Rizo is running for State Assembly. Rizo's civic consciousness was unearthed six years ago when she learned that a newly hired male colleague at the Fresno County Office of Education was being paid more than her even though she had higher levels of education and seniority. Rizo, holder of two master's degrees in mathematics and technology education, fought this injustice and won a major legal victory in defense of equal pay. In Assembly District 23, she faces Jim Patterson, a Republican who has voted against state protections for undocumented immigrants and children's health plans that would help undocumented families.



In eastern Fresno County, Magdalena Gomez is seeking a seat on the State Center Community College District board, which governs local community colleges. Her district focuses on Reedley College. Gomez spent some time in the financial industry but returned home to give back to her community. In that, she follows a family history of activism that stretches back to the early days of the United Farm Workers movement. Gomez now operates her own business advising local entities on creating more efficient operations, as well as volunteering to provide college education forums to high school students. As a candidate, Gomez pledges to use her business sense to advocate for classes and opportunities that fit the distinct rural communities of her district.



Running for a separate State Center Community College seat is Annalisa Perea. She is an urban planner giving her a background in not only crafting policy but also implementing it. Her top policy goals include career technical education, the availability of classes for students so they can transfer to four-year schools and overseeing the addition of a campus in west Fresno. Perea is recommended by the current holder of her prospective seat, Miguel Arias.



Veva Islas is running for Fresno Unified School District in Trustee Area 4, the McClain High School area. Islas is the founder and director of Cultiva La Salud and was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley Board. She is dedicated to the ideal that Fresno students should have ample opportunities deriving from a first-class public education.



In Kingsburg, Jewel Hurtado is running for City Council in District 1. The youngest candidate on this list, Hurtado is nonetheless a lifelong resident of her district who currently serves on the Community Services Commission and works with Valley Forward, a nonprofit focusing on community engagement, empowerment and mobilizing voters. Hurtado's political drive represents the fuel California needs to catapult the next political generation into the position to reshape our state.

These eight Latina Democrats represent a promising future for our Central Valley. Currently, our county's Latinx population has a worryingly low level of engagement in electoral politics. If this community were to fully awaken its political power, they would be a force that no government could ignore.

"These candidates are a harbinger of positive change," says Evans. "The entrenched establishment will now have to listen and respond to community concerns. Latina leadership will not abandon our communities."

People have the power. Vote on Nov. 6.

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