

March 8, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
 President of the United States
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20500

Endorsement of Lisa Pino for USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services

Dear Mr. President,

The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA) has voted to strongly recommend Ms. Lisa Pino for nomination as the next Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The NHLA is composed of over 40 leading national Hispanic civil rights and public policy organizations.

Pino served in the Obama administration as a Senior Executive where she led the USDA SNAP program, civil rights, immigration policy implementation, homeland security initiatives and cybersecurity solutions. That experience will be crucial to effectively managing the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on food security in America.

A newly published analysis of January-February 2021 Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey data from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities revealed that, when compared to any other race or ethnicity, **Latino children are the likeliest to currently live in households where children did not eat enough in the last seven days because the household could not afford it**, particularly as a result of the devastatingly disproportionate impact of the pandemic.¹

This appalling statistic is partly due to a Trump administration interpretation by the SNAP Administrator that denied households already receiving the maximum SNAP benefit the extra help that Congress intended to grant the poorest among us under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, a rule which disproportionately affected Latino and Black families in equal measure when compared to non-Hispanic white families.²

¹ Dottie Rosenbaum, et al, *Food Assistance in COVID Relief Bill Would Reduce Hardship, Provide Economic Stimulus* (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Feb 24, 2021) Available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/food-assistance-in-covid-relief-bill-would-reduce-hardship-provide>

² Analysis by the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) of [USDA SNAP Quality Control Database for 2019](#). (For Latino and non-Hispanic Black SNAP-recipient households, 37% were already receiving the maximum benefit before the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, whereas only 33% of non-Hispanic white households were. USDA does not recommend using race and ethnicity data nationally due to a high prevalence of unreported race/ethnicity data in some states but, coupled with the

- Alianza Americas
- American G.I. Forum
- ASPIRA Association
- AVANCE Inc.
- Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
- Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
- Farmworker Justice
- Green Latinos
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
- Hispanic Federation
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Hispanics in Philanthropy
- Inter-University Program for Latino Research
- Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
- LatinoJustice PRLDEF
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- MANA, A National Latina Organization
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- Mi Familia Vota
- NALEO Education Fund
- National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
- National Association of Latino Arts and Culture
- National Association of Latino Independent Producers
- National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network
- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
- National Hispanic Council on Aging
- National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
- National Hispanic Media Coalition
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
- National Latinx Psychological Association
- Presente.org
- SER Jobs for Progress National
- Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
- U.S.- Mexico Foundation
- UnidosUS
- United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
- United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
- Voto Latino

For those reasons and more, we need a Latina who understands the most affected communities she must serve to head the office of the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services.

Pino was a Biden-Harris USDA Agency Review Team member. She holds a J.D., M.A., and B.A. with honors from Arizona State University. She completed a National Hispanic Leadership Institute fellowship at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and holds licenses to practice law in Arizona and Washington, D.C.

Pino would provide bold, effective leadership in the Department of Agriculture on behalf of all the constituents it serves. She would bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the position.

As you know, Hispanics represent the largest and second-fastest growing ethnic minority group in the nation, making up nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population. In fact, Hispanics are the most underrepresented minority group in the federal workforce, making up just 8 percent of personnel. There are less than the average 8% of Latinos at USDA and less than 3% Latina representation at USDA.

Pino is uniquely qualified to be our next Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

We respectfully request your thorough and full consideration of Lisa Pino to serve in the administration. We are eager to work with you to promote our shared goals of diversity and ensuring the most qualified individuals are afforded the same opportunity to serve all Americans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Al Gallegos
NHLA Government Accountability Co-Chair
President, National Association of Hispanic
Federal Executives (NAHFE)



Kenneth Romero
NHLA Government Accountability Co-Chair
Executive Director, National Hispanic Caucus
of State Legislators (NHCSL)

well-known reticence of Latinos to unnecessarily reveal ethnic data to the authorities, especially in the last four years, the percentage of affected Latino households would likely increase with better data).