

Virginia Latino Leaders Council

Latino Civic Engagement Spring Forum

**With Special Guest
Lt. Governor Ralph Northam**



**Saturday, April 16, 2016
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

**The Palace of Woodbridge
13989 Jefferson Davis Highway
Woodbridge, VA 22191**

www.virginialatinoleaderscouncil.org

Virginia Latino Leaders Council

P.O. Box 6219 Arlington, VA 22206

virginalatinoleaderscouncil.org

A message from the J. Walter Tejada, President



Dear friends/amig@s,

Thank you so much for joining us today. Never before has the urgency for Latinos to participate in our civic life been more important than now, as we prepare for the 2016 Presidential election. Civic engagement is the only way to ensure that our voices will be heard. Here in Virginia, where our nation was founded, Latinos have a record of making a difference.

In the last gubernatorial election, in which about 2 million Virginians voted, the margin of victory for Terry McAuliffe was 56,000 votes. For Attorney General Mark Herring, the margin of victory was just over 900 votes. While every voting constituency can take credit for these margins, it is clear that had it not been for the Latino vote inspired by our Vota Por Tres campaign, the results would have been different. Vota Por Tres worked to elect those candidates who best represented the values and issues of critical importance to the vast majority of Virginia's Latino community.

How do we sustain and increase our community's civic engagement? Because Virginia is a swing state, this year there will be tremendous attention from both parties and nonpartisan groups to get out the vote. How can we take and inspire action? That's the question we seek to answer today at our Spring Forum.

The morning will consist of informative sessions from top national Latino organizations, with an emphasis on Virginia. During the luncheon, we will hear from our Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam. After lunch, we plan an interactive session to identify the many opportunities in which you and others can make a major difference through civic participation, and helping others make informed decisions when voting in November. Our goal is that you will leave energized, with specific ideas on how you can make that difference.

On behalf of the Virginia Latino Leaders Council, thank you for joining forces to become inspired and inspire others, and to network with folks who want to act. Let's inspire one another to move forward and to elect the 2016 candidates who will advocate for the Latino agenda.

¡Adelante!

Virginia Latino Leaders Council (VLLC)

Latino Civic Engagement Spring Forum

“Promoting Latino Leadership, Building for Tomorrow”

Saturday, April 16, 2016
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

10:00 Registration

10:20 Program Kickoff: Mr. Andres Tobar, VLLC Executive Director
Welcome by Mr. J. Walter Tejada, VLLC President

10:30 Introduction: Ms. Leni Gonzalez, VLLC Treasurer

The Growing Importance of the Latino Vote

Ms. Sindy M. Benavides, Director of Civic Engagement & Community Mobilization,
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Office, Washington, DC

11:00 Introduction: Ms. Beatriz Amberman, VLLC Vice President

An Immigration Communications Training Session

Mr. Kristian Ramos, Media Matters Communications Policy Director, Washington, DC

12:00-12:15 Networking

12:15 Luncheon served

12:30 Luncheon Speaker, The Honorable Ralph Northam, Lt. Governor of Virginia

1:30 *An Interactive Dialogue on Latino Civic Engagement*

Moderator: Mr. J. Walter Tejada, VLLC President

Discussion Questions:

1) *What are effective ways to inform the community on the importance of voting?*

2) *What are some of the barriers to Latino civic engagement?*

3) *What resources and strategies are needed to help encourage more civic engagement in the Latino community?*

3:00 Adjourn

www.virginalatinoleaderscouncil.org

Speaker Bios



Dr. Ralph Northam grew up on the rural Eastern Shore before attending Virginia Military Institute, where he graduated with distinction and served as President of the Honor Court. After graduating from Eastern Virginia Medical School, Dr. Northam served eight years of active duty in the United States Army, rising to the rank of Major. Upon his return from treating soldiers injured during Desert Storm, Dr. Northam began practicing pediatric neurology at Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk. Dr. Northam also serves as Assistant Professor of Neurology at Eastern Virginia Medical School and has seventeen years of volunteer services as Medical Director for the Edmarc Hospice for Children in Portsmouth.

Dr. Northam ran for state senate promising to approach public service with the same passion and focus on results that he served with in the military and as a doctor. He was elected twice in a swing Senate district whose rural, urban, and suburban makeup represents a microcosm of Virginia. In the Senate, Northam authored Virginia's restaurant smoking ban, which then Governor Tim Kaine signed into law. Northam led the fight to defeat the infamous, invasive transvaginal ultrasound bill and he supported the bipartisan 2013 Transportation Bill.

Despite being outspent 2:1 in the 2013 Democratic Primary for Lieutenant Governor against a candidate from Northern Virginia, Ralph Northam ran as the doctor defending women's access to health care and won the nomination by 9%. He won a majority of support in the Democratic stronghold of Northern Virginia and received 65% of the vote in Hampton Roads. In the General Election, he won in an 11% blow out and received more votes than any candidate in Virginia history in an odd-year election. As Lieutenant Governor, Northam chairs the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success and secured a federal grant to create thousands of Pre-K spots for children in low-income families.



Kristian Ramos believes in the power of progressive policy and the positive effects it has for the Latino community. He has worked in national and local politics, in both the House and Senate working most recently for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Kristian started his career working for LULAC in their national office and cut his teeth on policy at NDN and The New Policy Institute. Prior to that he worked in the United States Senate for Majority Leader Harry Reid in the Democratic Communications Center. He is currently the communications and outreach director of Inclusion Matters at Media Matters For America.



Sindy Marisol Benavides is a Honduran-American immigrant who has experienced the American dream and devoted her career to public service and ensuring that countless of youth, women, and immigrants have the same opportunity. She currently serves as the National Director for Civic Engagement and Community Mobilization for the League of United Latin American Citizens, the oldest civil rights Hispanic organization in the country. She previously served as the Vice President of Field & Political Operations for Voto Latino and as Northern Virginia Political Director for the 2012 Kaine for Virginia Senatorial campaign. She has also served as the National Director of Community Outreach for the Democratic National Committee and Latino Liaison and Director of Board Appointments for Governor Timothy M. Kaine. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia, where she graduated Valedictorian of her class and studied Political Science with a minor in Spanish. She is also attending American University for her Master's degree in International Affairs.

About the Virginia Latino Leaders Council

On September 3, 2014, about fifty Latino activists were invited by Governor Terry McAuliffe to meet with him and members of his Administration to discuss issues of importance to Virginia's Latino community. It was an excellent conversation on issues that matter to our community and to the Governor.

Following the meeting, a few of us began discussing the idea of forming a statewide organization comprised of Latino leaders and activists who will focus on Latino civic engagement, including establishing a dialogue with the current and future state government administrations. Among activities proposed include identifying and communicating with Latino voters throughout Virginia to encourage them to vote. These activities and a structure for Latinos in Virginia to engage with Virginia's state government officials will be the focus of the Virginia Latino Leaders Council. While we started with a small group primarily from Northern Virginia, it is our intent to expand the group to have Latino representation from throughout the Commonwealth.

We were delighted to host our first event on Sunday, June 14, 2015, when over 100 activists came together to participate in the 2015 Latino Civic Engagement Forum. Our keynote speaker was **Attorney General Mark Herring**. Several top leaders also addressed the important contributions Latinos are making in Virginia and their growing political influence. The Forum was organized by the Virginia Latino Leaders Council and the Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VACOLAO).

Our next event was on Monday, October 26, 2015, when we hosted "A Latino Civic Engagement Reception: Promoting Latino Leadership, Building for Tomorrow", to encourage Latino

participation in the November elections. We were delighted to have **U.S. Senator Tim Kaine** as our Special Guest of Honor, and to recognize six outstanding organizations who promote civic engagement in Virginia.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you in future activities as we prepare for the 2016 elections and beyond, ensuring that Virginia remains a welcoming community for all.

Founding Members

<p>The Honorable J. Walter Tejada President</p> 	<p>Beatriz Amberman Vice-President</p> 	<p>Andres Tobar Executive Director</p> 	<p>Leni Gonzalez Treasurer</p> 
<p>Sam McTyre Legal Counsel</p> 	<p>Edgar Aranda-Yanoc Member-at-Large</p> 	<p>The Honorable Fernando "Marty" Martinez Member-at-Large</p> 	<p>The Honorable Emma Violand Sanchez Member-at-Large</p> 

www.virginialatinoleaderscouncil.org