

September 9, 2020

Office of Supervisor Cindy Chavez  
County of Santa Clara, District 2  
70 West Hedding Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Fl  
San Jose, CA 95110  
*Via EMAIL*

**RE: La Raza Lawyers Association of Santa Clara County Urges Additional Resources to Latino Community During Pandemic**

Dear President Chavez and Members of the Board:

Santa Clara County La Raza Lawyers Association writes to urge the Board to address the racial disparities of Covid-19 infections and related health consequences. The Latino community, including our undocumented residents, hold a disproportionate number of “essential” jobs that continue to operate despite the pandemic. As such, our community suffers substantially higher risk of Covid-19 infection. According to the SCC Covid-19 Demographics Dashboard, as of September 7, 2020, 55% of the county’s COVID-19 cases exist in Latino communities. Accordingly, Latinos require proportionate resources for protection, treatment, and to sustain themselves financially. We urge the county to focus attention in the following areas:

**Increase testing.**

While we commend the county for providing free testing, we are concerned that the sites operate predominantly during limited business hours on weekdays, while essential workers are working, and therefore, unable to use these services. We are also concerned about long lines and wait times, with some reporting waiting hours in line to get tested. The county needs to provide additional, easily accessible sites that run efficiently in the most affected communities. We also advocate establishing funds to enable multi-family or multi-generational households to self-isolate after identifying COVID-19 infections.

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### **Increase access to information.**

Access to rapidly changing information is crucial to public health and safety. Despite an increase in outreach with translated materials, immigrants and those with limited resources remain unable to access timely and accurate updates, especially while traditional communication channels like churches and community centers remained shuttered. We urge further support to ensure availability of accurate and culturally competent information, along with resource and technology assistance. The county should also include Latinos and communities of color on response task forces.

### **Ensure access to legal services.**

Access to legal services has become increasingly important. Residents with limited English abilities, including undocumented immigrants, need legal advice about unemployment benefits, evictions, immigration enforcement, and are at risk of malicious employers withholding wages. We ask that the Board ensure bilingual and bicultural staff are available to help individuals access legal services.

### **Education for children.**

With schools across the county engaged in online learning, the existing education and opportunity gap for Latino children will undeniably widen. We urge the county to invest in technology programs and tools that provide adequate learning support accessible to all families, especially historically marginalized communities. We acknowledge the County's pledge to ensure all students of wireless access for online learning.

We also commend the Board and Dr. Cody's leadership at the onset of the crisis and acknowledge your efforts to ensure that all residents are protected and safe. We ask that you continue to address the immediate needs and ongoing disparities faced by the Latino community.

Sincerely,

***SANTA CLARA COUNTY LA RAZA LAWYERS ASSOCIATION***