

# Latina

## EMPOWERMENT DAY

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**February 25, 2022**  
**Hotel Maya – Long Beach**

### **SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

#### **Belinda Barragan, Community Engagement Director, HOPE**

Ms. Belinda Barragan is part of the Executive Team and serves as the Director of Community Engagement for Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE). She is responsible for directing HOPE's community engagement team in executing community outreach events that build relationships with HOPE's key stakeholders, non-profit organizations, and local, state and federal elected officials and community members. Her team executes HOPE's flagship conference Latina History Day and the regional Latina Empowerment Days. She is an accomplished non-profit Director, public affairs and political management professional, with over 25 years of experience working with government entities, Community Based Organizations, corporations and grassroots organizations. A lifelong resident of the San Fernando Valley, Ms. Barragan received her undergraduate degree in Business Finance from the University of San Francisco.

#### **Assemblywoman Lena Gonzalez , District 33**

State Senator Lena Gonzalez represents nearly 1 million residents in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Senate District, which includes Southeast Los Angeles, Signal Hill, portions of South Los Angeles and Lakewood, and her hometown of Long Beach. In the Senate, Senator Gonzalez is a strong voice for working families, prioritizes and fights for a clean environment, digital equity, LGBTQ+ and women's rights and the economic vitality of small businesses among other policy areas. She serves as Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, becoming the first Latina(o) to ever serve in this capacity and the only woman to serve in the last 20 years. Senator Gonzalez also serves as Majority Whip, one of seven Democratic leadership positions in the California Senate. Senator Gonzalez is the proud daughter of a union truck driver father and a mother who immigrated from Aguascalientes, Mexico. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Cal State Long Beach and a Master of Business Administration from Loyola Marymount University.

#### **Monica Estrada Nuñez, Community Engagement Senior Manager, SoCal Edison**

Monica Estrada Nuñez began her career at Southern California Edison in 1997 and has developed broad experience throughout the company spanning Human Resources, Ethics and Compliance, Local Public Affairs and Corporate Giving, currently serving as Senior Manager of Community Engagement. As Senior Manager in Supplier Diversity, Monica led the Supplier Diversity Program which is responsible for ensuring that SCE has a diverse pool of contractors and vendors including women, and disabled veterans. This is where her appreciation for

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Diversity and Inclusion was born and later went on to earn a Diversity and Inclusion Certificate from Cornell University. Monica's career led her to Corporate Giving where she managed a team and budget for grants and sponsorships and led community engagement and outreach to community-based organizations. In 2016, Monica joined Local Public Affairs (LPA) as part of the Issues Management team. In 2020, Monica joined the Corporate Communications & Philanthropy team as the Community Engagement Senior Manager where she and her team are responsible for community relationship building. Monica holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from University of California at Los Angeles and a Master's in Public Administration/Management from New York University. Monica is married and has two daughters, Miranda and Arianna.

### **Peter Kosa, Regional Banking Senior Manager, Wells Fargo**

For over 20 years, Peter Kosa has been a leader in the Financial Services Industry. He is currently the District Manager for the Greater Long Beach District of Wells Fargo Bank, where he oversees 11 retail banking locations with over 110 team members. Prior to his current role, he was the Business Area Manager for the Orange County Region. In his 11 years with Wells Fargo Bank, Peter has lead with integrity and a dedication to personal accountability as he works to find ways to better serve his customers' financial needs.

### **Briana Calleros, Director of Community Education, SUMA Wealth**

Briana M. Calleros is a strong advocate for creative solutions to achieve community empowerment with policy experience in education, nonprofit, and government. As Director of Community Education at SUMA Wealth, she oversees the SUMA Academy platform by breaking down complex financial concepts to create relatable and accessible educational content. She has a personal connection to this work as a "peak millennial" navigating her personal world of finance hoping to also generate wealth in her *familia*. Briana's career goal is to increase participation and inclusion for our *comunidad*.

### **Sara Ochoa, Regional Banking Manager, Wells Fargo**

### **Erica Urenda, Regional Banking Manager – Small Business, Wells Fargo**

### **Vanessa Spagnoli, Policy Director, HOPE**

In Vanessa's decade of advocacy and legislative experience, she has been instrumental in the passage of major bills that directly impact the lives and experiences of children and youth impacted by California's Foster Care system at California Youth Connection (CYC) as their Deputy Director of Advocacy and Training. In her current role at HOPE (Hispanas Organized for Political Equality), Vanessa serves as their Policy Director and is responsible for expanding the organization's advocacy footprint by supporting advocacy, research and uplifting the Latina voice

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at decision-making tables. Vanessa is a founding member of the Sacramento Latina Leaders Network, which has grown to include over 300 women in the Sacramento region who celebrate and cultivate the leadership of Latinas. She also serves as the Recruitment Chair for the New Leaders Council, Sacramento which trains progressive leaders of tomorrow.

### **Helen Torres, HLI '99, Executive Director & CEO, HOPE**

Helen Torres is the Chief Executive Officer of Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) where she supervises and manages the day-to-day operations. Under her leadership, HOPE has grown into one of the leading women's leadership and advocacy organizations in California and the United States. Ms. Torres has over twenty years of alliance-building, community relations, marketing, and fundraising experience and expertise. Ms. Torres works with the community, corporate, and political leaders to create and promote opportunities that advance Latinas by establishing "Latina Smart" policy recommendations. In partnership with the HOPE Board of Directors and staff, Ms. Torres produces statewide and national conferences that educate and train over 3,000 Latinas per year.

### **Mayor Robert Garcia, City of Long Beach**

Dr. Robert Garcia is an educator and the 28th Mayor of Long Beach. Mayor Garcia immigrated to the United States at age 5 and was raised in Southern California. The Mayor, a college and university educator, holds an M.A. from the University of Southern California and an Ed.D. in Higher Education from Cal State Long Beach, where he also earned his B.A. in Communications. Mayor Garcia is focused on making the City of Long Beach a leader in education, economic development, public health, and climate protection. As Mayor, he has championed progressive education policy, launched an aggressive climate plan, supported workers by increasing wages, and fought to expand and protect rights for women, immigrants, and the LGBT+ community. When the global coronavirus pandemic hit Long Beach in March of 2020, Mayor Garcia, the Long Beach Department of Public Health, and the regional health community took swift actions to protect the community. Under Mayor Garcia's leadership, Long Beach was acknowledged by government leaders and media around the country as a model city for its response to COVID-19 for containing the spread of the virus, providing a community-focused testing operation, and excelling at vaccine distribution. He is married to Matthew Mendez Garcia, a professor of political science at California State University, Long Beach

### **Councilwoman Mary Zendejas, District 1**

Mary Zendejas was elected into office on Tuesday November 5, 2019 and sworn into office on December 3, 2019. She is the first Latina wheelchair user to be elected to office in the nation. She has never met a challenge she couldn't tackle and overcome. As an infant, she was diagnosed with Polio, and later in High School started using a wheelchair daily. Her passion for



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living and working hard is rooted in seeing her parents, a field hand and factory worker, provide their children a better life. Their hard-work allowed Mary to go to California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) and become the first in her family to graduate from college. Her advocacy dates back nearly three decades starting in high school, where she organized citizenship fairs to help community members follow their American Dream of becoming US citizens. She is also the founder of Professional Abilities Association of America, an organization created for working professionals with disabilities by working professionals with disabilities, focusing on inclusion in the workforce. Additionally, she is a two-time graduate of Leadership Long Beach, served as a member of Mayor Robert Garcia's Transition Team, a former board member of Housing Long Beach and a past Ms. Wheelchair California. Mary is also currently a board member of several local non-profits and advocacy organizations, including the Murphy Foundation Board and is the current President of the Disabled Resource Center.