

This Latina Equal Pay Day, You Can Do Something About It

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Oct 29, 2020(Independent Voter Network: <https://ivn.us/> Delivered by Newstex) This is an independent opinion. Have one of your own? Write it! Email it to [1]The coronavirus pandemic has caused long-lasting impacts that Latinas will face in the years to come on top of the historic inequities they were already burdened with, including the growing wage gap.

Latinas have historically been unseen members of society that are integral to the health of our communities and the economy. However, the inequalities that they face leave them vulnerable to unprecedented changes like a global pandemic. To help Latinas recover from this economic recession and health crisis, we must take direct action during this election. Voting yes on Proposition 16[2] will not only give Latinas the opportunity to live in a more just and equitable California, but it will lift the ban on affirmative action to restore equal opportunities for all. The coronavirus brought a health crisis and a wave of unemployment that has affected everyone, but no community has been as severely impacted as working Latinas. In their 2020 Economic Status of Latinas Report, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) found that 30% of Latinas lost their jobs when the pandemic started compared to only 9% of White women. Undocumented Latinas saw even higher levels of unemployment as 36% lost their jobs in the first few months of the coronavirus lockdown. Thousands of Latinas across California became unemployed and many others have had to cut back their hours or leave the workforce in order to care for their families and children. Through years of hard work, Latinas were well on their way to making slow, but exciting, upward economic growth. However, the coronavirus stalled and even regressed the small progress that had been made. HOPE's Status of Latinas found that the wage gap between Latinas and white men has grown 'since 2011 when they earned 45 cents for every dollar earned by a White man, returning to the 2007 low of 42 cents per dollar.' Living in a pre-pandemic booming economy, Latinas in 2019 earned less money than they did in 2011, while the wage gap for women narrowed. It is clear that concrete action and tangible tools are necessary to begin to close the wage gap among women, specifically for Latinas and women of color. Find More Election 2020 Coverage Here[3]According to their research, HOPE reports that during the Great Recession, Latina-owned businesses grew by 136% between 2007 and 2012 when Latinas started their own micro-businesses. Despite being entrepreneurial powerhouses, on average Latina-owned businesses earn less revenue than all women-owned businesses (\$50,900 versus \$142,900 in 2019), making them more vulnerable to drastic changes in the market. The mandatory coronavirus lockdown severely affected Latino-owned businesses as polls in March and May 2020 showed that 25% of Latino entrepreneurs lost significant revenue and 65% were unable to continue operating beyond a six-month lockdown. Despite suffering severe financial losses, 'polls also found that struggling Latino and Black business owners were less likely to benefit from government loan relief programs in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).' It is clear that the current administration does not favor small business or the people of color who are the backbone of the economy, therefore it is imperative that our state legislators have the tools they need to help our communities recover from the losses they've endured during the pandemic. With federal

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aid nowhere near, our state will need to fight to recover from the devastating effect of the Coronavirus. The structural inequalities that allow for the wage gap to widen for Latinas are the same that contributed to the coronavirus's devastation on our communities. To help our communities recover and to minimize vulnerability to another crisis, we need to have the tools to ensure that Latinas and people of color have equal opportunity to fair wages, access to jobs, and support for their businesses. In voting yes on for Proposition 16, we are voting to lift the ban on affirmative action and give Latinas a shot at equal opportunity. With the passage of Proposition 16, legislators will have the tools to help Latina-owned businesses recover from the devastating losses caused by the coronavirus. Proposition 16 can also give us the opportunity to tackle the systemic structures that have allowed the wage gap to widen, leaving Latinas to earn 42 cents on the dollar. We need to vote yes on Proposition 16 to ensure that programs are designed to help our businesses, our jobs and our community grow and reach equality. By voting yes on Prop 16 we are choosing to invest in Latinas, in our businesses, our futures, and in an equal California for all. [1]: <https://ivn.us/cdn-cgi/l/email-protection> [2]: <https://ivn.us/posts/california-elections-2020-proposition-16-explained-repeal-affirmative-action> [3]: <https://ivn.us/san-diego/election-2020>

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