



Latinx Voter Committee of the Coconino County Democratic Party highlights issues of importance to the Latinx community, promotes Democratic Latinos in or wishing to run for public office, and encourages Latinos to mobilize our families and community to vote. *Please share this newsletter with your interested family and friends.*

August 4 Primary Election Is Here!

Let's think of this year's elections as a three week process rather than a single day. The *last* day to vote in the Primary Election is August 4. But voting is already underway and many have voted. In the midst of a pandemic, the safest thing to do -- for ourselves, for the poll workers, and for our community -- is to vote early.

Early in-person voting is now available. The Flagstaff in-person early voting locations are at the **Flagstaff Mall (next to Dillard's)** (Monday - Friday 12:00 pm - 7:00 pm) and at a drive-through service window located at **2304 N 3rd Street, Flagstaff** (Monday- Friday 8:00 - 5:00 pm but closed for lunch 11:00 am - 12:00 pm). There will also be drive-through emergency voting available in Flagstaff on **Saturday, August 1** at the **Flagstaff City Hall, westside parking lot, 9 am – 3 pm**. Concerns about COVID-19 constitute an “emergency.”

Polling location change ALERT.

Because the King Street Health Department Building does not have enough space for safe social distancing, the polling location that has been there in the past will move to Coconino High School for the

August 4 Primary Election. Please tell your friends and neighbors!

Some other polling locations have changed also.

Here is the complete list of polling locations everywhere in the County:

<https://tinyurl.com/CoconinoPollingPlacesAug2020>

Vote Centers

On August 4, everyone who lives in Coconino County, including Flagstaff, can vote at any of these three Vote Centers, no matter where you live:

FLAGSTAFF MALL – at the old Denny's entrance

NAU WALKUP SKYDOME

TUBA CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Vote Your Ballot By Mail!

If you received your ballot by mail, **the LAST day you should put it in the mail is July 29**. After that (or before) you can *skip the postal service* and take your vote-by-mail ballot directly to one of the official drop boxes at the King Street County Building or Downtown at 110 E. Cherry Ave. Or, you can take it to the Flagstaff Mall Elections Office next to Dillard's before August 4.

On August 4, if you still have your mail ballot, take it to any of the Vote Centers or other polling locations, walk to the head of the line, and drop it in the box for mail-in ballots.



How to get involved

Our Latinx Voter Committee was formed in 2019 and will be here through and after the election in November. Our purpose is to address issues of importance to our community and recruit and support LatinX candidates. We are currently holding online meetings. We are hoping to see you in person later when safety allows. However, until then, we are getting out the word via phone calls, texts, and social media. If you want to hear from us or get more involved, let us know by calling our office 928-214-0393 or contacting us through our **Facebook Page @LatinXCoconinoDems**, where you can see videos of our meetings, statements from candidates, and information about voting and issues of concern to our community.

Mission for Arizona

Mission for Arizona (MFA) is the coordinated campaign to elect Joe Biden, Mark Kelly, and other Democrats. Field organizers employed by Mission for Arizona are working in our community for the few months leading up to the General Election. Their job is to educate voters about the candidates and get people to vote. One of these is Angélica Afanador who has spoken to some of our Facebook Live meetings. Angélica introduces herself here:

“The first time I volunteered for a campaign was back in 2008 for the Obama campaign. Back then, my parents

and I weren’t citizens, so we never received a call from our local organizer and nobody ever reached out to us. We just showed up at our local campaign office and picked up a canvassing packet to start knocking doors. But that wouldn’t have been possible this election. We are completely virtual and there’s no campaign office for someone to just show up. If someone is never called, they aren’t given the opportunity to volunteer and make a difference in this election. This election is too important to let anyone sit on the sidelines. The only way that we can win this election is by building bridges. Make sure to spread the message and get your friends, family, and neighbors involved.

“Join us in reaching out to our Latinx community by signing up to make calls in Spanish, attending one of our Latinx community events, and getting all of your family and friends involved along the way. **Please email me at aaafanador@missionforarizona.com to get started!**”

Should We Open Our Schools?

By Carrie Sampson

First, let me position myself. I am a mother of two school-aged children, an incoming kindergarten and third grader. I am an educator. As a faculty member at Arizona State University, I teach and research educational equity, leadership, and policy. I am mixed-race, with Latinx and Black heritage, born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona in a trailer park off Lake Mary Road. I have a bachelor's degree in economics, a master's in education, and a PhD in public affairs. I, along with my spouse, rely heavily on schools to care for our children while we work full-time. Will we be sending our children to school in-person this Fall? NO.

Arizona has become the epicenter for COVID-19. Today, as I write this, Arizona has 138,553 confirmed cases of COVID-19. This equates to 21,373 cases per 1 million, surpassing New York (21,037 per 1 million) for the highest proportion of confirmed cases (The COVID Tracking Project). I think our state reopened too soon and failed to place necessary mandates that could have protected people from contracting COVID-19. Moreover, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities are disproportionately represented at the higher numbers in these confirmed cases and the deaths from COVID-19. Also, many BIPOC

communities live in multigenerational households and rely on our extended families. Even for myself, my mother lives with us and we have several family members nearby- many of whom are considered high-risk because of their age and health status. Even before COVID-19, schools were cesspools of germs with children playing together, sharing food, and sneezing in each other's face. I applaud school and district leaders who are expending enormous efforts in planning to reopen schools safely, developing policies to limit exposure and minimize risk. But let's be honest. Will children really be able to remain 6 feet from their friends, sit far enough on the bus ride to school, refrain from sharing their crackers, and vigorously wash their hands for 20 seconds? I doubt it. And what will happen when, not if, some in the school contract COVID-19? I have been serving on the reopening taskforce for my children's school. Their plan includes mandatory masks or face shields for staff and optional masks for students unless required by the city or county. Students will undergo daily temperature screens even though many children are asymptomatic, sit more than 3 feet apart at lunch even though health officials recommend social distancing be 6 feet apart with masks, and not be allowed to socialize in a group of more than 10 students at recess which essentially dismisses the mask and social distancing recommendations for avoiding exposure to COVID-19. Families are torn about what to do. Some, like me, will not send their children to schools. Some refuse to put masks on their children. Others want a hybrid option so their children can have social interaction. And still others need support because they have no option to work from home or perhaps their child has special needs that require in-person instruction. Teachers and staff are also torn. Some feel an obligation to serve their students in-person. Others, given all the uncertainties, feel like they are being sent to a warzone. And many have decided to retire early or quit. Right now, we need courageous leadership to make the tough decisions that will prioritize the safety and well-being of our communities. We are in the middle of a pandemic. There will be an endpoint.

We will find a vaccine. And countries like New Zealand, which implemented a strict shutdown, have already been victorious as they are reporting only 1 or 2 new cases a day. We can and will beat this. But we must come together -- schools, districts, county and city officials, and most importantly our youth, families, and broader communities -- to act collectively for our communities, our elders, and our future generations.

Opening schools in-person is not safe for the collective good of our communities. While I, along with my healthy children and spouse, will likely survive COVID-19 if exposed, my mother, my aunts and uncles, and those who live with pre-existing conditions are less likely. And our actions to either protect or not protect those among us who are most vulnerable will remain in our children's minds and hearts for generations to come. Families that have the option to keep their children home, should. For those families without that option, schools must build partnerships in neighborhoods, and with community organizations, churches, and higher education institutions to create safe pods of children who can be sufficiently cared for.

And all this does not mean that learning stops. We have the option of virtual learning, which is not ideal, but far outweighs putting our families at-risk, and the trauma of witnessing our students, families, teachers, and staff getting sick and some even dying from COVID-19. Instead of putting time and resources into planning a "safe" in-person reopening of schools, I urge leaders -- schools, districts, counties, cities, and families -- to shift the focus to increasing our technological capacity for online learning. We must ensure all children have adequate equipment and access.

Finally, let's see this as an opportunity to set aside standards and accountability, which research shows does not equate to quality learning. Instead, let's think about how we can embrace the learning that is happening constantly. Our kids learn through the stories our elders tell us, the card games they play with siblings, and the forts they build out of blankets. Let's ask ourselves, how might schools broaden their view of learning, and adopt a more humanizing and culturally responsive understanding

of teaching? Learning can, and is, happening outside of schools, whether in our homes or online. And now, with platforms like Zoom and Facebook Live, we have access to individuals, communities, and information like never before.

Let's leverage this opportunity. And leverage what our families and communities have to offer. Let us prioritize our collective humanity over our individual selves by keeping schools closed but learning open. This might just be the blessing in disguise that many of us have long hoped for.

Did You Know?

Did you know that the Arizona Legislature makes more laws than Congress? Especially laws affecting education and schools! But also laws that control how our city council can govern and environmental protection. That's why it's so *important to vote for our candidates for Legislative District 6: Felicia French for Senate and Coral Evans for House!*



COVID and Latinos

by Sarah Benatar

Latino populations are being hit hard by the coronavirus. Latino death rates are higher than whites, according to the Center for Disease Control. What isn't being documented, however, is that Latinos have a more difficult time accessing COVID-19 tests and results.

Earlier this month our family had to be tested for coronavirus. Our 15-month old came down with a fever and symptoms first. We knew to call our pediatrician and got her scheduled for a COVID test right away. When I started to show symptoms, I knew immediately where to go to get tested. Thankfully, our household all tested negative. We were all able to get tested quickly because we have the kinds of jobs and insurance that make this easy.

For many Latinos, geography and bureaucracy work together to ensure that is not the case.

Latinos are living in fear right now. Trump has conscripted agents (often untrained for the task) to serve as secret police. He has placed lawfully protesting citizens of Democratic-led cities in their crosshairs. He continues to try and undercount minorities on the Census and exclude undocumented immigrants entirely from population counts for Congressional representation purposes. In Arizona, Governor Ducey implied during a conference call with a member of Trump's Coronavirus Task Force, that the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases was (in part) a result of Mexican Americans "coming across the border for better medical care." It only makes sense that, across the country, Latinos fear COVID-19 testing; they have been taught to fear their government.

Access to tests for Latinos comes with its own bureaucratic challenges. Companies such as CVS and Walgreens are offering free tests but either a state-issued photo ID or social security number is required. In Phoenix, testing sites in predominately Latino communities are understaffed and overwhelmed. Parts of the valley, where Latinos make up over 70% of the zip code, saw wait times as long as 13 hours. Even if you do get tested, some in Arizona are waiting weeks for test results.

We need to highlight these cases and continue to advocate for our Latino communities to receive timely, accurate testing. In order to bring down the death rates Latinos are facing we must first provide them with the resources to address this virus from the onset. That means removing barriers in access to testing, results, and health care, which according to recent Brookings Institute research is not happening. Indeed, Brookings found majority-white zip codes nationally averaged one test site per 14,500 people, compared with one per 23,300 in zip codes with 75% of the population being of color. We can only defeat this virus if we help all communities, but wealthier and whiter zip codes continue to receive priority in much of the country.

Vamos a Votar – My family will vote; please make sure your family does, too.