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# Latino Times

**2021**  
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A BILINGUAL PUBLICATION

**2021**  
—HAPPY NEW YEAR—

## Carlos Villapudua: Elected to serve His Community

By Bob Highfill

Carlos Villapudua took a moment to look up at the ceiling from the floor of the state Capitol in Sacramento. There to undergo training as the newly elected State Assemblyman, District 13, the 52-year-old Stockton native could see the same balcony where he once stood and looked down as a 10-year-old during a tour. Villapudua called it a “wow moment,” when he realized his path from community center director, legislative aide, county supervisor and businessman had led him to the state legislature.

“That’s when it hit me,” he said.

“Who would have thought I would end up here?”

Villapudua grew up in a predominantly Italian neighborhood in east

Stockton, the son of hard-working Mexican immigrants, and learned how to get along with different people. He loved to play baseball and earned pocket money delivering groceries and newspapers. Villapudua attended San Joaquin Elementary and Middle School in downtown Stockton, then St. Mary’s, Stagg and Franklin high schools before he graduated from California State University, Sacramento.

Villapudua had no political aspirations, just a passion to help others. He followed his heart, not his bank account making career choices, which frustrated his late father, Bernardo Villapudua. For instance, Carlos left a steady job with the sheriff’s office that came with good pay and benefits

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California Assemblyman Carlos Villapudua

## Carlos Villapudua: ‘¿Quién hubiera pensado que acabaría aquí?’

Por Bob Highfill

Carlos Villapudua se tomó un momento para mirar el techo desde el piso del Capitolio estatal en Sacramento.

Allí, para recibir entrenamiento como el recién electo asambleísta estatal, Distrito 13, el nativo de Stockton de 52 años pudo ver el mismo balcón donde una vez estuvo parado y miró hacia abajo como un niño de 10 años durante una visita. Villapudua lo llamó un “momento asombroso” cuando se dio cuenta de que su camino desde el director del centro comunitario, el asistente legislativo, el supervisor del condado y el empresario lo habían llevado a la legislatura estatal.

“Ahí fue cuando me di cuenta,” dijo. “¿Quién hubiera pensado que terminaría aquí?”

Villapudua creció en un vecindario predominantemente italiano en el este de Stockton, hijo de inmigrantes mexicanos trabajadores, y aprendió a llevarse bien con diferentes personas. Le encantaba jugar béisbol y ganaba dinero de bolsillo repartiendo comestibles y periódicos. Villapudua asistió a la escuela primaria y secundaria San Joaquin en el centro de Stockton, luego a las escuelas secundarias St. Mary’s, Stagg y Franklin antes de graduarse de la Universidad Estatal de California en Sacramento.

Villapudua no tenía aspiraciones políticas, solo pasión por ayudar a los demás. Siguió a su corazón, no a su cuenta bancaria, tomando decisiones

profesionales, lo que frustró a su difunto padre, Bernardo Villapudua. Por ejemplo, Carlos dejó un trabajo fijo en la oficina del alguacil que venía con un buen salario y beneficios para aceptar un trabajo con un salario más bajo en el condado de San Joaquín para administrar el Centro Comunitario del Noreste en Stockton. Trabajar con personas mayores y jóvenes, desarrollando programas para mejorar sus vidas, como el Programa de Enriquecimiento Juvenil de Verano, alimentó su corazón y alma.

No pasó mucho tiempo antes de que el entonces supervisor del condado de San Joaquín, el difunto Darío Marengo, se diera cuenta del valor del joven Villapudua para la comunidad. Marengo dedicó más recursos para ayudar a Villapudua a expandir los servicios en el centro y conectó a Villapudua con el entonces Supervisor del Distrito 1 del Condado de San Joaquín, Steve Gutiérrez, quien necesitaba un asistente legislativo. El trabajo pagaba menos y tenía menos beneficios que su trabajo en el condado, pero Villapudua volvió a ir con su corazón. Al principio, Villapudua no podía soportar estar detrás de un escritorio respondiendo a las preocupaciones de los residentes por teléfono, por lo que hizo un seguimiento de sus llamadas personalmente y organizó reuniones comunitarias e invitó a los funcionarios del condado a participar.

Cuando Gutiérrez terminó,

Ver **CARLOS** Pág 2

## Governor Gavin Newsom Selects Secretary of State Alex Padilla as California’s Next United States Senator

SACRAMENTO – Governor Gavin Newsom today announced the selection of California Secretary of State Alex Padilla to be California’s next United States Senator, filling the term being vacated by Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. Padilla, who previously served as a Los Angeles City Councilman and State Senator, and is a national leader in the fight to expand voting rights, will become the first Latino to represent California in the United States Senate and the first Southern Californian in nearly three decades.

“The son of Mexican immigrants — a cook and house cleaner — Alex Padilla worked his way from humble beginnings to the halls of MIT, the Los Angeles City Council and the

State Senate, and has become a national defender of voting rights as California’s Secretary of State. Now, he will serve in the halls of our nation’s Capitol as California’s next United States Senator, the first Latino to hold this office,” said Governor Newsom. “Through his tenacity, integrity, smarts and grit, California is gaining a tested fighter in their corner who will be a fierce ally in D.C., lifting up our state’s values and making sure we secure the critical resources to emerge stronger from this pandemic. He will be a Senator for all Californians.”

Secretary of State Padilla was sworn in as California’s first Latino Secretary of State on January 5, 2015 and pledged to bring more Califor-

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# Villapudua

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to take a lower-paying job with San Joaquin County to run the Northeast Community Center in Stockton. Working with seniors and youth, developing programs to better their lives, such as the Summer Youth Enrichment Program, fed his heart and soul.

It wasn't long before then-San Joaquin County Supervisor, the late Dario Marengo, noticed the young Villapudua's value to the community. Marengo devoted more resources to help Villapudua expand services at the center and connected Villapudua with then-San Joaquin County District 1 Supervisor Steve Gutierrez, who needed a legislative aide. The job paid less and had fewer benefits than his job with the county, but Villapudua went with his heart again. Initially, Villapudua couldn't stand being behind a desk answering residents' concerns over the phone, so he followed up on their calls personally and set up community meetings and invited county officials to take part.

When Gutierrez termed-out, Marengo encouraged Villapudua to run for the vacant seat and agreed to manage his campaign. There were six qualified candidates in the race, as well. Marengo hammered home an ethos that served Villapudua well then and

again when he ran for State Assembly: "If you don't walk, you don't win." "He said, 'You're going to walk every day after work. He had clipboards of where we were going to walk and we walked for a year.'"

Villapudua went door-to-door and won the seat. He served on the County Board of Supervisors from 2008-2016, during which time he said helping San Joaquin General Hospital stay open, establishing the Lodi winery ordinance and expanding operations at the Port of Stockton and Stockton Metropolitan Airport were among his favorite accomplishments.

Following his stint on the County board, Villapudua went into the private sector and was Chief Executive Officer of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Then, he went into a partnership with Western Pacific Truck School. Villapudua believed his political life was behind him but decided to run in the November General Election for the vacant District 13 State Assembly seat vacated when Susan Talamantes-Eggman was elected to the State Senate. With the blessing of his wife, Edith, Villapudua started walking the campaign trail again just as Marengo taught him, though the reality of COVID-19

prevented him from holding community meetings and visiting constituents inside coffee shops.

Instead, Villapudua and his team volunteered at food banks, interacted with the public on social media and met with groups on virtual streaming platforms. Villapudua trailed San Joaquin County Supervisor Kathy Miller when early results were counted but caught up and eventually took the lead. Villapudua chose not to celebrate before Dec. 3 when the result officially was certified by the county registrar's office. On Dec. 7, Villapudua was sworn into office not at the Capitol but wearing a mask at a COVID-19-altered physically distanced ceremony at the Golden One Center in downtown Sacramento.

"I couldn't have anyone with me," Villapudua said of the surreal scene that day. "I didn't have a conversation with anyone. It was very blah because after that I got in my car and drove back home."

Since then, nothing has been "blah." The Capitol building has been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Villapudua has had to learn without the benefit of face-to-face interaction with his colleagues. But he has been busy and looks forward to tackling his goals and serving on the Agriculture; Water, Parks & Wildlife; Human Services; and Rules committees.

Villapudua wants to enhance nonprofits so they can be more effective reaching underserved populations in his district, which includes much of San Joaquin County: Stockton, Tracy, French Camp, Mountain House and Thornton. He believes messaging the Latino population especially about good health practices is vitally important during the pandemic. He wants to push vocational education in high school, so young people graduate job-ready for high-paying careers, should they choose not to go to college. He believes businesses need to be supported and should reopen as quickly and safely as possible, as well as schools. He will work with city leaders to find workable solutions to homelessness and ensure public safety, and he will demand fiscal responsibility and accountability. "We need to fine-tune everything that we are doing," he said. "We're going to go through some difficult times and we want to make sure the money that's being handed down from the state is being spent right."

Villapudua said he is ready to work with the community and his colleagues to confront today's challenges and those in the future.

"I'm a public servant and that's how I treat this job," he said. "I'm excited to be here. I think it's going to be an uphill battle, but I'm ready for the challenge."

## Carlos

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Marengo alentó a Villapudua a postularse para el puesto vacante y acordó manejar su campaña. También hubo seis candidatos calificados en la carrera. Marengo recaló un espíritu que sirvió a Villapudua una y otra vez cuando se postuló para la Asamblea Estatal: "Si no caminas, no ganas."

"Él dijo: 'Vas a caminar todos los días después del trabajo. Tenía sujetapapeles de por dónde íbamos a caminar y caminamos durante un año.'"

Villapudua fue de puerta en puerta y ganó el asiento. Se desempeñó en la Junta de Supervisores del Condado de 2008 a 2016, tiempo durante el cual dijo que ayudar a que el Hospital General de San Joaquín permaneciera abierto, establecer la ordenanza de vinarios de Lodi y expandir las operaciones en el Puerto de Stockton y el Aeropuerto Metropolitano de Stockton estaban entre sus logros favoritos.

Luego de su paso por la junta del condado, Villapudua ingresó al sector privado y fue director ejecutivo de la Cámara de Comercio Hispana. Luego, se asoció con Western Pacific Truck School. Villapudua creía que su vida política había quedado atrás, pero decidió postularse en las Elecciones Generales de noviembre para el puesto vacante en la Asamblea Estatal del Distrito 13 que quedó vacante cuando Susan Talamantes-Eggman fue elegida para el Senado estatal. Con la bendición de su esposa, Edith, Villapudua comenzó a caminar nuevamente por el camino de la campaña tal como le enseñó Marengo, aunque la realidad del COVID-19 le impidió realizar reuniones comunitarias y visitar a los electores dentro de los cafés.

En cambio, Villapudua y su equipo

se ofrecieron como voluntarios en bancos de alimentos, interactuaron con el público en las redes sociales y se reunieron con grupos en plataformas de transmisión virtual. Villapudua siguió a la supervisora del condado de San Joaquín, Kathy Miller, cuando se contaron los primeros resultados, pero se pusieron al día y finalmente se adelantaron. Villapudua decidió no celebrar antes del 3 de diciembre, cuando el resultado fue certificado oficialmente por la oficina del registro del condado. El 7 de diciembre, Villapudua tomó posesión de su cargo no en el Capitolio sino con una máscara en una ceremonia de distancia física alterada por COVID-19 en el Golden One Center en el centro de Sacramento.

"No podía tener a nadie conmigo," dijo Villapudua sobre la escena surrealista de ese día. "No tuve una conversación con nadie. Fue muy aburrido porque después de eso me monté en mi auto y conduje de regreso a casa."

Desde entonces, nada ha sido "blá". El edificio del Capitolio ha sido cerrado debido a la pandemia de COVID-19 y Villapudua ha tenido que aprender sin el beneficio de la interacción cara a cara con sus colegas. Pero ha estado ocupado y espera poder abordar sus objetivos y servir en los comités de Agricultura; Agua, Parques y Vida silvestre; Servicios Humanos; y el comité de Reglas.

Villapudua quiere mejorar las organizaciones sin fines de lucro para que puedan llegar más eficazmente a las poblaciones desatendidas en su distrito, que incluye gran parte del condado de San Joaquín: Stockton, Tracy, French Camp, Mountain House y Thornton. Él cree que enviar mensajes a la población latina, especialmente sobre bue-

nas prácticas de salud, es de vital importancia durante la pandemia. Quiere impulsar la educación vocacional en la escuela secundaria, para que los jóvenes se gradúen preparados para el trabajo para carreras bien remuneradas, en caso de que decidan no ir a la universidad. Él cree que las empresas deben recibir apoyo y deben reabrir lo más rápido y seguro posible, así como las escuelas. Trabaja con los líderes de la ciudad para encontrar soluciones viables para las personas sin hogar y garantizar la seguridad pública, y exigirá responsabilidad fiscal y rendición de cuentas.

"Necesitamos ajustar todo lo que estamos haciendo," dijo. "Vamos a pasar por momentos difíciles y queremos asegurarnos de que el dinero que está siendo entregado por el estado se esté gastando correctamente."

Villapudua dijo que está listo para trabajar con la comunidad y sus colegas para enfrentar los desafíos de hoy y los del futuro.

"Soy un servidor público y así es como trato este trabajo," dijo. "Estoy emocionado de estar aquí. Creo que será una batalla cuesta arriba, pero estoy listo para el desafío."

## SBA Disaster News Release – SBA Tops \$5 Million in Disaster Assistance Loans for Civil Unrest

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Director Tanya N. Garfield of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Disaster Field Operations Center-West announced today that SBA has approved more than \$5 million in federal disaster loans for California businesses and residents impacted by civil unrest in Alameda and Los Angeles counties that began May 26, 2020. According to Garfield, SBA has approved \$4,394,300 for businesses and \$679,700 for residents to help rebuild and recover from this disaster.

Small nonfarm businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of any size may qualify for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact.

Disaster loans are available in Alameda, Contra Costa, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Stanislaus and Ventura counties. The interest rate is 3 percent for businesses and 2.75 percent for private nonprofit organizations with terms up to 30 years. The deadline to submit an Economic Injury Disaster Loan application is March 17, 2021.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call (800) 877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155

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## Padilla

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nians into the democratic process as the state's top elections official. With President Trump attacking immigrants and democracy over the past four years, Padilla has been a warrior for voting rights and the American Dream. He was re-elected in 2018 and received the most votes of any Latino elected official in the United States.

"I am honored and humbled by the trust placed in me by Governor Newsom, and I intend to work each and every day to honor that trust and deliver for all Californians," said Secretary of State Padilla. "From those struggling to make ends meet to the small businesses fighting to keep their doors open to the health care workers looking for relief, please know that I am going to the Senate to fight for you. We will get through this pandemic together and rebuild our economy in a way that doesn't leave working families behind."

Since taking office, Secretary of State Padilla has worked to make California's elections more accessible and inclusive, while fighting to protect the integrity of our voting systems. He:

Registered over 22 million voters: Under Padilla's leadership, voter registration is at an all-time high – over 22 million Californians are registered to vote (an increase of more than four million from the day he took office) and the highest rate in nearly seven decades.

Expanded access to the ballot: He implemented innovations like same-day registration, online pre-registration for 16- and 17-year olds and automatic voter registration, also known as "California Motor Voter."

Protected our elections: He oversaw the upgrades and replacement of voting systems in all 58 counties in the state to systems that meet California's newer, higher security standards.

Padilla also served as Chairman of the California Complete Count Committee, where he led efforts to reach hard to count communities and worked with community based organizations to secure a safe and fair Census count.

Growing up, Padilla's mom and dad relentlessly emphasized hard work and a good education as key to a better future. With just an elementary school education, Santos worked as a short order cook for forty years before retirement. He liked to boast that his kitchen "never failed an inspection." For the same forty years, Lupe worked tirelessly as a housekeeper for a group of families in the affluent communities of Studio City and Sherman Oaks.

Santos and Lupe raised their three children, Julie, Alex and Ackley, in a modest home in Pacoima. In the 1980s, the neighborhood became one of the more violent areas of Los Angeles and gang activity, prostitution and open-air drug dealing were rampant. Going to sleep to the sound of police helicopters was not uncommon.

Padilla attended local public

schools, keeping his focus on books and baseball. He worked his way into the starting rotation at San Fernando High as a senior. The same year, his countless hours of study paid off and he won admission to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. He worked his way through college doing a variety of janitorial and administrative jobs while mentoring younger students back home to follow the same path.

It was the conditions in his neighborhood growing up and the feeling that the Northeast San Fernando Valley wasn't adequately served by government that awakened his interest in political activism. As a teenager, Padilla's family helped organize neighbors to take back the streets from crime. He and his mother would periodically join community leaders to protest environmental injustice and demand the closure of the Lopez Canyon Landfill. In 1994, after California voters passed Proposition 187, the sweeping anti-immigrant measure, his parents finally applied for citizenship and Padilla, now a recent MIT graduate, resolved to put an engineering career aside and dedicate his life to public service.

Demanding a fair share of opportunity and resources for the people of the Northeast San Fernando Valley, Padilla was elected to the Los Angeles City Council as a political outsider at the age of 26. As a member of the City Council, he worked to expand after-school programs to serve 16 schools in his district, worked to reduce class sizes and built state-of-the-art libraries and a children's museum. He worked to retain and create more local job opportunities through industrial, commercial and residential development and community reinvestment. And he championed citywide measures to improve air and water quality while directing the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to dramatically increase procurement of renewable energy sources.

In 2001, Padilla's colleagues elected him the youngest Council President in Los Angeles history. As President, he provided citywide leadership at critical times. He was Acting Mayor during the tragedy of September 11, 2001. He assisted in the interview and selection of William Bratton as Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department and helped negotiate the approval of LA Live and the modernization of Los Angeles International Airport. In 2005, his colleagues throughout the state elected him President of the California League of Cities.

In 2006, Padilla was elected to the State Senate to represent the more than 1 million people in the San Fernando Valley. As a State Senator, he would go on to author more than 70 bills signed into law by both Republican and Democratic governors.

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# Biden Picks Xavier Becerra to Lead Health and Human Services

WASHINGTON — President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr. has selected Xavier Becerra, the Democratic attorney general of California, as his nominee for secretary of health and human services, tapping a former congressman who would be the first Latino to run the department as it battles the surging coronavirus pandemic.

Mr. Becerra became Mr. Biden's clear choice only over the past few days, according to people familiar with the transition's deliberations, and was a surprise. Mr. Becerra has carved out a profile on the issues of criminal justice and immigration, and he was long thought to be a candidate for attorney general.

But as attorney general in California, he has been at the forefront of legal efforts on health care, leading 20 states and the District of Columbia in a campaign to protect the Affordable Care Act from being dismantled by his

Republican counterparts. He has also been vocal in the Democratic Party about fighting for women's health.

If confirmed, Mr. Becerra will immediately face a daunting task in leading the department at a critical moment during a pandemic that has killed more than 281,000 people in the United States — and one that has taken a particularly devastating toll on people of color.

Born in Sacramento, California, Becerra is the son of working-class parents and was the first in his family to receive a four-year degree, earning his Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Stanford University. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Stanford Law School. His mother was born in Jalisco, Mexico and immigrated to the United States after marrying his father. He is married to Dr. Carolina Reyes, and they are the proud parents of three daughters: Clarisa, Olivia and Natalia.



## Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation Launches Webinar Series featuring Aaron Judge First in four debuts January 21, 2021 "ALL RISE for Leadership in the Clubhouse"

Linden, CA - The Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation is pleased to announce the ALL RISE for Leadership webinar series which will debut January 21, 2021, 6PM ET / 3PM PT.

The first in the series, 'ALL RISE for Leadership in the Clubhouse' will feature Aaron Judge, Outfielder, NY Yankees, and Zack Britton, Pitcher, NY Yankees.

It will be moderated by Chad Bohling, New York Yankees, Director of Mental Conditioning. Enjoy a candid conversation and gain an understanding of what leadership looks like in clubhouses. The cost of each webinar is \$15.00. Register at [AaronJudgeALLRISEfoundation.org/webinars](http://AaronJudgeALLRISEfoundation.org/webinars).

"I am very excited to launch the ALL

RISE for Leadership series," states Aaron Judge, Founder. "Leadership is something I enjoy talking about and delving into. With the ALL RISE mission of helping our children and youth develop into responsible citizens, I believe this series is a great opportunity for us to create a dialogue about leadership in many different facets that can benefit anyone of any age."

Webinar guests will enjoy conversations that will include such topics as: Identify and evaluate the challenges athletes face in a team setting; demonstrate key principles in building a positive and supportive team atmosphere; and share insight and reflect on leadership skills developed through mentors and coaches. Students and student athletes, sports fans and community members can all gain from the conversations at "Leadership in the Clubhouse" webinars.

"We all benefit from hearing what those in leadership positions have to say," said Patty Judge, President of the Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation. "This webinar series will help us reach

our audience of children and youth by engaging those that are most responsible for tomorrow's youth - their parents, coaches and educators."

The webinar series will delve into leadership in different arenas and examine where those skills overlap. Future webinars to be explored in 2021 will be Leadership in Education, Leadership in the Boardroom, and Leadership in Philanthropy. For more information on the webinar series visit: [AaronJudgeALLRISEfoundation.org/webinars](http://AaronJudgeALLRISEfoundation.org/webinars).

ABOUT ALL RISE

The Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation focuses on developing positive character traits; provides awards and incentive programs in schools and local organizations to encourage and reward academic improvement and excellence; supports children and youth experiencing difficult health and family circumstances; and fundraising events to support ALL RISE Mini-Grants and Programs. For more information on the Aaron Judge ALL RISE Foundation visit: [aaronjudgeALLRISEfoundation.org](http://aaronjudgeALLRISEfoundation.org).

## The religious composition of the 117th Congress

When it comes to religious affiliation, the 117th U.S. Congress looks similar to the previous Congress but quite different from Americans overall.

While about a quarter (26%) of U.S. adults are religiously unaffiliated — describing themselves as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular" — just one member of the new Congress (Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz.) identifies as religiously unaffiliated (0.2%).

Nearly nine-in-ten members of Congress identify as Christian (88%), compared with two-thirds of the general public (65%). Congress is both more heavily Protestant (55% vs. 43%) and more heavily Catholic (30% vs. 20%) than the U.S. adult population overall.

Members of Congress also are older, on average, than U.S. adults overall. At the start of the 116th Congress, the average representative was 57.6 years old, and the average senator was 62.9



years old.<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center surveys have found that adults in that age range are more likely to be Christian than the general public (74% of Americans ages 50 to 64 are Christian, compared with 65% of all Americans ages 18 and older). Still, Congress is more heavily Christian even than U.S. adults ages 50 to 64, by a margin of 14 percentage points.<sup>2</sup>

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# President-elect Joe Biden has selected Connecticut education commissioner Miguel Cardona as his education secretary

“Dr. Cardona has a proven track record as an innovative leader who will fight for all students, and for a better, fairer, more successful education system,” Biden said in a pre-Christmas announcement. “He will also strive to eliminate long-standing inequities and close racial and socioeconomic opportunity gaps -- and expand access to community colleges, training, and public four-year colleges and universities to improve student success and grow a stronger, more prosperous, and more inclusive middle class.”

Cardona's background is primarily in elementary and secondary education. In 2003, Cardona, then 28, was the

youngest principal in the state when he became head of Hanover Elementary School in Meriden, Conn. After becoming an assistant superintendent for teaching and learning at Meriden Public Schools in 2013, he rose quickly in the state system, becoming head of the state's K-12 schools just last summer.

As a student, he attended Meriden Public Schools and graduated from Wilcox Technical High School. Cardona attended Central Connecticut State University for his bachelor's degree and the University of Connecticut, where he completed his master's degree in bilingual/bicultural education and his doctorate in education.



## San Joaquin County hospitals dealing with a critical surge of COVID patients

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY, Calif. — San Joaquin hospitals are in crisis. That's according to the county's public health officer, who said ICU Demand this week reached an all-time high of 175%.

“None of our seven hospitals have notified me that they are entering this crisis care, however, we know they are technically really in crisis already,” Dr. Maggie Park.

Of the COVID patients hospitalized about a third are in intensive care.

“I think that people don't real-

ize it's taken away from our ICU patients in general. We're losing capacity for just our basic strokes, heart attacks traumas,” San Joaquin General Hospital ICU Nurse Jessica Vasquez said.

Vasquez said the influx of coronavirus patients impact all levels of the hospital as space and resources are stretched thin.

“We're putting them on backup ventilators, portable ventilators, ventilators that are just meant to transport the patients,” Vasquez said.

The county's EMS agency said

the greater challenge is more of a staffing issue.

“So technically a room that was intended for one person, now it has two. Different units throughout the hospital like telemetry units are now being used for ICU units,” Marissa Matta, a spokesperson for the San Joaquin County EMS agency said.

The public health department said area hospitals had to bring in military assistance and hire travel nurses at \$250 to \$350 an hour! Vasquez said the expenses could

have been spared. Dozens have spent the past two years working without a contract, and because of that union representatives estimate 150 nurses have left during the pandemic.

During Tuesday's board of supervisor meeting, the clerk read nurse statements.

“Especially those struggling to breathe with COVID, sometimes all they need to slow their breathing is a hand to hold but sadly, with no staff, there isn't time for this,” one statement read.

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# Governor Newsom acknowledges that vaccine distribution has been very slow

California Governor Gavin Newsom acknowledged on Monday that the administration of the vaccine “has not been good enough” since only about 35% of the doses that reached the state have been applied. Newsom promised new funding and efforts aimed at speeding up the rollout.

California has received just under 1.3 million doses of vaccines, but they have only been injected into just over 454,000 people, according to figures released by the governor.

Newsom also explained that “the first 10 or 15 days we are going to start to pick up pace slowly, then you will start to see a faster distribution”, but that, even so, he admitted that the process “had been too slow for many of us.”

“We want to see that 100% of what we receive is immediately applied in the arms of the people,” he said in a briefing. “It is a challenge throughout this

country. It is a challenge, in this case, in the rest of the world. But that is not an excuse”.

Another 611,500 are expected to be shipped to California soon. According to Newsom, the budget he will present to the state Legislature this week includes approximately \$ 300 million to support vaccination efforts by funding logistics, a public education campaign and other needs.

He also promised to reveal more details “on some new strategies to deal with some obstacles” in the coming days.

Another challenge in vaccine distribution is ensuring that doses are not wasted. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, both approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and available nationwide, are packaged in vials that contain multiple doses. Each of them has a limited shelf life once opened.



## Gobernador Newsom reconoce que la distribución de la vacuna ha sido muy lenta

El gobernador de California, Gavin Newsom, reconoció este lunes que la administración de la vacuna “no ha sido lo suficientemente buena” ya que solo se han aplicado alrededor del 35% de las dosis que llegaron al estado. Newsom prometió nuevos fondos y esfuerzos destinados a acelerar el despliegue.

California ha recibido poco menos de 1.3 millones de dosis de vacunas, pero solo se las han inyectado a poco más de 454,000 personas, según las cifras que pre-

sentó el gobernador.

Newsom explicó también que “los primeros 10 o 15 días vamos a comenzar a ganar ritmo lentamente, luego comenzará a ver una distribución más rápida”, pero que, aún así, admitía que el proceso “había ido demasiado lento para muchos de nosotros”.

“Queremos ver que el 100% de lo que recibamos se aplique inmediatamente en los brazos de la gente”, dijo en una sesión informativa. “Es un desafío en todo este país. Es un desafío, en este caso, en el resto

del mundo. Pero eso no es una excusa”.

Está previsto que pronto se envíen a California otras 611,500. Según Newsom, el presupuesto que presentará a la Legislatura estatal esta semana incluye aproximadamente \$300 millones de dólares para apoyar los esfuerzos de vacunación mediante el financiamiento de la logística, una campaña de educación pública y otras necesidades.

También se comprometió a revelar más detalles “sobre algunas estrategias nue-

vas para hacer frente a algunos obstáculos” en los próximos días.

Otro de los retos que conlleva la distribución de las vacunas es asegurarse que las dosis no se desperdicien. Tanto la vacuna de Pfizer como la de Moderna, ambas aprobadas por la Administración de Fármacos y Alimentos (FDA, por sus siglas en inglés) y disponibles en todo el país, se empaquetan en viales que contienen múltiples dosis. Cada uno de ellos tiene una vida útil limitada una vez que se abre.

Health Plan  
of San Joaquin

## Coping with COVID-19

Getting used to lifestyle changes with stay-at-home orders

Let's lift ourselves up and ring in the new year with a positive outlook with our mental, physical and emotional health in mind. Ask, “**What can I do to keep myself healthy?**”. There is a brighter future in store. We will get there *together*.



### Ways to improve the mind and body while at home



The CDC recommends 7+ hours of sleep daily for adults. Lack of sleep, can affect your mood and productivity. Quantity and quality of sleep is essential to your health.



Physical activity will help you feel more relaxed and energized. Take 15-30 minutes to walk/jog around the block. If you have stairs, use those! Dance or do something fun that gets your heart pumping.



Exercise your brain through reading, or puzzles. Both offer a way to relax and unwind. It also can improve your memory and positivity.



Learning to cook or training yourself to buy fruits and vegetables takes time. Making the change to healthier options will leave you full and satisfied and provide more nutrients.



Nature works in mysterious ways. Getting some fresh air, smelling the flowers or tending to a garden, can help with stress and anxiety.



Everyone needs a person or group of people they can trust to confide in or call for help. Conversation brings relief. It may not change your situation, but it can help.

Community resources available at [www.hpsj.com/covid19](http://www.hpsj.com/covid19)

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); Mayo Clinic, [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)



# San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission Launches ACE Means-Based Fare Program: Community Assistance Program (CAP)

The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC) is pleased to announce the launch of the NEW Altamont Corridor Express (ACE®) Community Assistance Program (CAP) that began December 15th, 2020. The ACE CAP discount is a timely initiative to address equity and provide low-income passengers access to the ACE service.

San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission staff is utilizing Caltrans Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) grant award funding to provide up-to 50% discount off regular ACE fare tickets to qualifying applicants as part of the ACE CAP discount for 2020 -2021. CAP will involve the coordination with community-based organizations throughout the ACE Corridor to identify and distribute discounted tickets online to individuals that meet a certain income threshold. The staff have begun coordinating with community-based organizations throughout the ACE Corridor, including 211 of San Joaquin with Family Resource & Referral Center (FRRC), to perform income assessments for applicants. “We are excited about the partnership and look forward to providing this transportation program to the applicants. Connecting San Joaquin callers to much needed resources is a vital part of 211 services,” said Tiffany Phovixay, FRRC Chief Operation Officer. Simple Steps for Applying: Download ACE Mobile App - Create an account using the ACE Mobile App by providing a valid email and password to retrieve an ACE mobile ID number.

Apply Online - Fill out the ACE CAP Application form found on [acerail.com/cap-program/](http://acerail.com/cap-program/). For questions or more information call 1 (800) 411-RAIL (7245).

Get Verified - Call 2-1-1 of San Joaquin at 1-800-436-9997 for income assessment verification to retrieve a Client ID number.

Submit Form to ACE Ticketing - Submit ACE CAP Application form to ACE Ticketing Department at [Ticketing@acerail.com](mailto:Ticketing@acerail.com) or in person at the Stockton (Robert J. Cabral) Station, 949 East Channel Street during Ticketing hours of 8am – 5pm, Monday through Friday, for validation within 3 – 5 business days.

Enjoy Your Ride -Applicant will have access to purchase CAP tickets on the ACE mobile app. In-person ticket purchases will be available at the Stockton (Robert J. Cabral) Sta-

tion. For ACE Station information visit [acerail.com](http://acerail.com).

“We are excited to launch the new ACE CAP program to make the ACE service more accessible to our communities,” says Christina Fugazi, Chair of SJRRRC. “Our hope is that commuters and families get out of their cars and spend quality time working or relaxing while riding the train.”

The development and implementation of a means-based discount has been a key priority for SJRRRC to enhance regional mobility and transit affordability for people with low-incomes. Launching of the CAP program during the current COVID-19 pandemic will increase access to low-income populations still needing to get to essential jobs. While a 50% ticket discount is currently offered to persons with disabilities, seniors, and those with Medicare cards, the inclusion of a means-based discount would offer the same discount for qualifying low-income individuals which previously was not available.

For new ACE riders, the CAP discount offers commuters the flexibility to work on the train without the need to drive and an improved quality of life. For leisure travelers, the new CAP discount provides a safe and scenic ride to their destination. ACE CAP users will have the same transit connectivity that current travelers enjoy. ACE offers free transfers to The Wheels bus service which operates from the Pleasanton Station to connect passengers to the Dublin BART Station as well as Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority’s (VTA) services at the Santa Clara and San Jose Diridon Station.

ACE CAP discount is a one-year pilot program funded by the Caltrans Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP), which is one of several programs that are part of the Transit, Affordable Housing, and Sustainable Communities Program established by the California Legislature in 2014 with Senate Bill 862 (SB 862). If ACE CAP is proven successful, the SJRRRC will be pursuing additional funds to maintain the service.

The ACE train service is a growing commuter rail service that serves passengers Monday through Friday with service from Stockton to San Jose with stops in Lathrop/Manteca, Tracy, Vasco, Livermore, Pleasanton, Fremont, Great America, and Santa Clara. For additional information about the NEW ACE CAP discount, visit <https://acerail.com/cap-program/>.



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# MICKE GROVE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY Announces the appointment of Dr. Maria Garcia-Sheets to Executive Director

STOCKTON, CA, - The Board of Directors of Micke Grove Zoological Society (MGZS) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Maria Garcia-Sheets to Executive Director. In her new role, Garcia-Sheets will lead the 42-year-old Society to ensure a high level of organizational management and strategic planning with the goal of supporting the Micke Grove Zoo. Garcia-Sheets will continue to build community awareness of the Society, as well as lead the financial and volunteer efforts for the projects and community education programs that support Micke Grove Zoo.

“It is my pleasure and honor to use my advocacy, development, and communication skills to build programs and develop community engagement

for Micke Grove Zoological Society. As Executive Director, I look forward to providing vision that will help make our zoo a place that all community members will not only enjoy, but also be an example of what collaborative leadership can shape and build,” states Dr. Garcia-Sheets.

A native Californian and lifelong resident of San Joaquin County, she has been highly involved in the community. Most recently she served as Director of the MESA Program on the University of the Pacific campus where she provided vision, direction, leadership and coordination to advance student success, inclusion and academic attainment. Through her programs, initiatives and services, 18,000, 6th through 12th grade students through-

out San Joaquin County were positively affected.

“The Society has raised in excess of \$2 million dollars to improve and upgrade Micke Grove Zoo,” states Linda Jimenez, Board President of the MGZS. “We are excited to have Dr. Garcia-Sheets in this newly created position to help us as we continue to lead the efforts to support this San Joaquin County treasure, the Micke Grove Zoo.”

Dr. Garcia-Sheets will occupy the new offices located at 1150 W. Robinhood, Suite 11A, Stockton California, 95207. To reach the Executive Director or find out about donor or volunteer opportunities with the Micke Grove Zoological Society, please visit [mgzs@mgzs.org](mailto:mgzs@mgzs.org) or 209-623-4921.



Dr. Maria Garcia-Sheets

# Alejandro Mayorkas: A Portrait of the Intended Nominee for DHS Secretary



Alejandro Mayorkas

The man tapped to become U.S. Department of Homeland Security secretary, Cuba-born Alejandro “Ali” Mayorkas, would wear many hats running one of the country’s largest bureaucracies. With some 240,000 employees, the DHS conglomeration created after 9/11 melds counterterrorism intelligence, emergency management, cybersecurity, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Secret Service. But the planned nomination also portends far-reaching impacts on all forms of

legal and illegal immigration.

Already, the 61-year-old Mayorkas has shown early interest in an oversight role over U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CPB), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the agency he once headed, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

But despite largely laudatory media reviews of a Mayorkas appointment, his public service legacy features serial ethical imbroglios, a pointed de-emphasis on immigration fraud and law enforcement, and strong-arm management tactics to spike acceptances of immigration and asylum applications in disregard of eligibility.

While media organizations may have trod lightly over these trouble spots, a Senate confirmation process required for a DHS secretary nomination likely won’t, a public interest that argues for re-visitation and a more complete picture of how Mayorkas may manage this policy area.

The son of Jewish-Cuban refugees who fled the 1959 communist revolution, Mayorkas served President Bill Clinton as an appointed U.S. attorney in California from 1998 through 2001, President Barack Obama as head of USCIS from 2009-2013, and as deputy secretary for DHS from 2013-2016, before retiring to

a blue-chip law firm in Washington, D.C. He served perhaps most controversially as head of USCIS, the huge immigration-benefits management agency that oversees asylum approval processes, a fraud detection corps, residency and visa application processes, the E-Verify and SAVE immigration status-checking systems, and the citizenship naturalization process.

In their initial coverage, Politico, the Washington Post, the New York Times, National Public Radio, and other media organizations quoted former friends, colleagues, and Democratic figures praising Mayorkas for his experience and centrist politics. But the exuberant coverage largely tokenized several ethically questionable moments in Mayorkas’s public service career dating to his California U.S. attorney days, leaving an incomplete portrait.

For instance, in its article about the prospective Mayorkas nomination, the Washington Post noted that only “Republicans” are likely to bring up a 2015 DHS Inspector General report that found Mayorkas inappropriately helped companies associated with powerful Democratic Party figures reverse employment visa denials for wealthy foreign nationals. The Post did not elaborate on its brief description of the scandal.

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# Charles Schumer confirms \$ 2,000 stimulus check for self-proclaimed Senate leader

Democratic leader Charles Schumer (New York) has called himself the leader of the Senate and promised that his first action will be voting for a \$ 2,000 stimulus check to Americans.

“The Senate Democratic majority is committed to making bold change and helping Americans in need ... help is on the way,” he said.

The senator surprised this morning with a statement and a press conference, although only Raphael Warnock’s victory in Georgia has been confirmed, but Jon Ossoff leads the count.

Asked about his advance to celebrate the Democratic majority,

Schumer said there were votes pending in the runoff process, but that the majority would go to Ossoff.

“For the first time in six years, Democrats will have a majority in the United States Senate, and that will be very good for the American people,” said Schumer.

Schumer and other Democrats in the Senate pushed the vote for the increase from \$ 600 to \$ 2,000 in financial aid for the coronavirus pandemic, but Republican leader Mitch McConnell (Kentucky) denied allowing it on three occasions, despite some of his co-workers. party also supported the motion.



# Charles Schumer confirma cheque de estímulo de \$2,000 al autoproclamarse líder del Senado

El líder demócrata Charles Schumer (Nueva York) se autoprocclamó líder del Senado y prometió que su primera acción será la votación para un cheque de estímulo de \$2,000 dólares a estadounidenses.

“La mayoría demócrata del Senado está comprometida a realizar el cambio audaz y ayudar a los estadounidenses que los necesitan... la ayuda está en camino”, indicó.

El senador sorprendió esta mañana

con un comunicado y una conferencia de prensa, aunque solamente se ha confirmado el triunfo de Raphael Warnock en Georgia, pero Jon Ossoff lidera el conteo.

Cuestionado sobre su adelanto de celebrar la mayoría demócrata, Schumer dijo que había votos pendientes en el proceso de desempate, pero que la mayoría serían para Ossoff.

“Por primera vez en seis años, los demócratas tendrán una mayoría en

el Senado de los Estados Unidos, y eso será muy bueno para el pueblo estadounidense”, dijo Schumer.

Schumer y otros demócratas en el Senado impulsaron la votación del incremento de \$600 a \$2,000 dólares de ayuda económica por la pandemia de coronavirus, pero el líder republicano Mitch McConnell (Kentucky) negó en tres ocasiones permitirla, a pesar de que algunos de sus compañeros de partido también apoyaron la moción.





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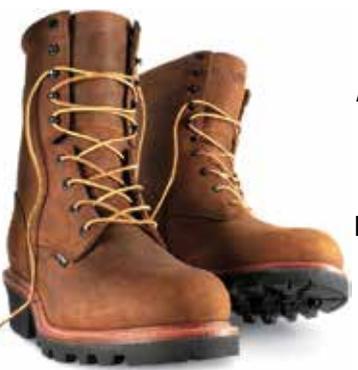
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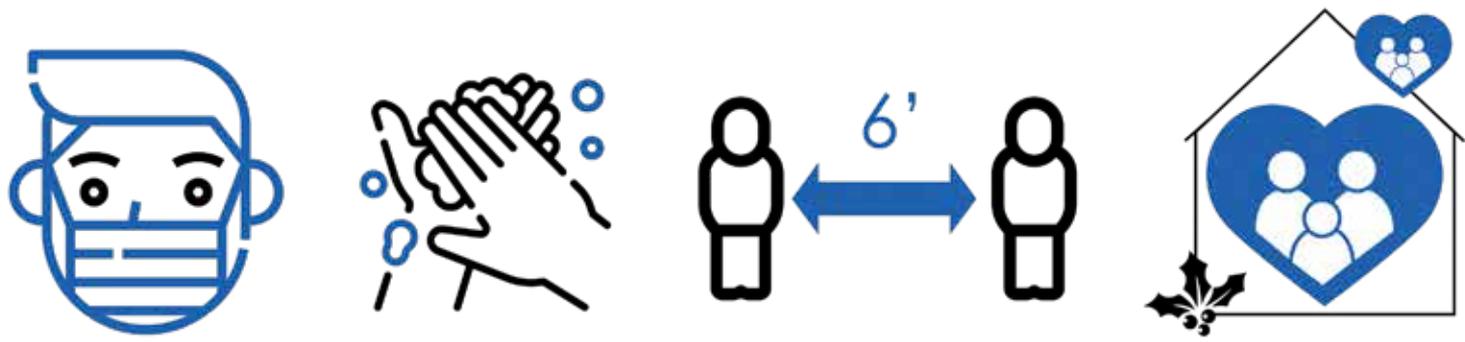
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# En esta temporada de fiestas



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## Health Plan of San Joaquin amplía el acceso a la vacuna contra la influenza para sus miembros

Debido a la preocupación por el posible contagio simultáneo de COVID-19 e influenza, Health Plan of San Joaquin (HPSJ) amplió el acceso a la vacuna contra la influenza de este año para todos sus miembros.

Ahora, todos los miembros de HPSJ pueden recibir la vacuna contra la influenza de cualquier proveedor contratado de HPSJ.

Para los miembros de 19 años de edad y mayores: los proveedores recibirán un reembolso por la vacuna y por la administración. Los miembros pueden vacunarse contra la influenza en el consultorio del doctor o en la farmacia.

Para los miembros menores de 19 años

de edad: los proveedores recibirán un reembolso solo por la administración. La vacuna se proporciona a través del programa Vaccines for Children (VFC). Para los miembros de HPSJ que no se atienden con el proveedor que tienen asignado, esta ampliación del acceso solo corresponde a la vacuna contra la influenza. No corresponde a los servicios y beneficios adicionales.

Los miembros que tengan preguntas pueden llamar gratis al Departamento de Servicio al Cliente de HPSJ, al 1-888-936-PLAN (7526), TTY/TDD: 711, de lunes a viernes, de 8:00 a. m. a 5:00 p. m. Si habla español, llame al 1-888-312-PLAN (7526).

Durante la temporada de fiestas, HPSJ continúa promoviendo hábitos saludables. Estos incluyen celebrar solo con las personas que viven en el mismo hogar y conectarse con los demás de manera virtual. El personal de HPSJ recomienda que, para mantenerse seguro en las fiestas, continúe siguiendo la regla de las tres M: Mascarilla: úsela cada vez que salga, Manos: láveselas con frecuencia, Mantenga la distancia: por lo menos 6 pies de todas las personas con las que no vive. ¡Y vacúnese contra la influenza!

Health Plan of San Joaquin es un plan de salud público sin fines de lucro que presta servicios a sus miembros y a

la comunidad desde 1996. Se encuentra en el corazón del valle central multicultural de California y es el principal proveedor de cuidados administrados de Medi-Cal, que brinda servicios a más del 91 % de los beneficiarios de Medi-Cal en el condado de San Joaquin y al 69 % en el condado de Stanislaus. Health Plan of San Joaquin ofrece una amplia red de proveedores y trabaja de cerca con los doctores para preparar programas y servicios a fin de garantizar cuidados médicos de calidad a 353,000 miembros que son, en su mayoría, familias de trabajadores y niños, y también personas mayores y residentes con discapacidades.

## Catholic Cemeteries



DIocese of Stockton

### • COVID 19 GUIDELINES •

Due to the state COVID-19 Guidelines, the Catholic Cemeteries have made changes to both visitation and burial options for our families.

- The cemetery gates and mausoleum at San Joaquin Catholic Cemetery in Stockton are open daily between 8:00am and 4:30pm.
- All cemetery offices are open by appointment only. These appointments must be scheduled with the cemetery staff.
- Please limit visitations to our cemetery grounds. We ask everyone to follow the state and county shelter-in-place guidelines.
- Burial services are being held following cemetery guidelines.

*We thank you for your cooperation during this difficult time.*

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# Collins Electrical Company Inc. Donates 1000 Light bulbs to Local Non-Profits in Four Local Counties

Without electricity, there is darkness but for 90+ years, Collins Electrical Company has illuminated our community. This year our employees donated toys to the California Foster Families through the IBEW Local 595 but also wanted to give back in a different way that related to the pandemic we are all dealing with. Ten local nonprofits were chosen to receive the gift of light through our donation of LED light bulbs!

We donated 1,000 LED light bulbs to ten organizations in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Placer, and Yolo counties. The list includes Haven Women's Center of Stanislaus, Stockton/SJ Emergency Food Bank, Puffy's Thrift Mercantile, Creative Child Care, Inc., Dome of Hope, Women's Center Youth and Family Services, Empower Yolo, Stand Up Placer, San Joaquin Pride Center, and Changeist Stockton. "The power of Collins Electrical Company is in it's people and our core values.

We hope this gift will bring light to so many people in our local communities." said Melissa Flores, Collins Electrical Company, Inc. Marketing Manager.



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