

2025 LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

A report by LatinoJustice PRLDEF

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Introduction

In more than five decades of existence, LatinoJustice PRLDEF has complemented its impact litigation work with advocacy, in the streets and in the halls of legislative power. Fighting discriminatory laws and unconstitutional policies in the courts cannot by itself bring about a just society. Shaping laws that defend and expand rights for all, and working to stop laws that harm people, has been an important part of our work at least the past decade.

Thanks to an expanded advocacy team, LatinoJustice PRLDEF has built up a strong legislative advocacy program in the past 10 years, with a strong focus on legislation related to criminal justice and voting rights, as well as involvement with bills related to immigrant rights, access to education and economic justice.

With a decades-long effective deadlock in Congress, our efforts have focused on state legislatures, where we can more effectively leverage our experience, capacity and resources

Geographically, our advocacy efforts cover states where our organization has a presence – New York, Florida, Texas and California – as well as neighboring states where we have joined legislative campaigns related to our priority issues of interest.

In the states where we work, the 2024-2025 legislative session has been what we expected. With Texas and Florida's conservative supermajorities passing oppressive laws designed to strip immigrants of their rights, erode voting rights protections and increase

discriminatory criminal justice laws, our legislative advocacy has been designed to primarily hold the line.

In New York and California, we saw some opportunities for progress but still came up against the specter of re-elections that spooked some of our legislators and led to more conservative voting behavior.

Overall, we were able to vocally express our opposition to harmful bills across the country, primarily in Florida and Texas, and advance some opportunities in New York and California that will lay the groundwork for more progressive work in 2026.



Criminal Justice Legislation and Advocacy

LatinoJustice is an abolitionist organization and works to dismantle and rebuild the very structures that oppress and discriminate against our minority communities. We assess and seize opportunities to eradicate the prison industrial complex and the abusive policing mechanisms that have terrorized our Latinx and allied communities for generations.

LatinoJustice continues to bridge the gap between legal strategy, public education, and legislative advocacy. Our work this session reflects a strong emphasis on community-driven policy change, the centering of directly impacted voices, and building long-term infrastructure to dismantle systems of mass criminalization.

FEDERAL

Legislation— Ending Forced Labor in Prisons

LatinoJustice is part of the steering committee of the End the Exception coalition, chaired by Worth Rises. The Abolition Amendment, sponsored by Senators Merkeley and Booker, and Representative

Williams, aims to close the loophole to the 13th Amendment that allows for forced labor by those convicted of crimes, disproportionately Black and brown individuals.

Status: The bill will likely be introduced on Constitution Day, September 17, 2025.

CALIFORNIA

Policy – Ending the Death Penalty in California and elsewhere

As part of a targeted coalition to end the death penalty in the state with the largest death row in the country, LatinoJustice PRLDEF has participated in public activity and lobbying to urge Gov. Gavin Newsom to end the death penalty in California and commute the sentences of nearly 600 people currently on death row.

Status: The group met with the Governor in June and delivered a statement from nearly 200 organizations on ending the practice now.

LatinoJustice PRLDEF will continue to work as part of this coalition to keep pressing the Governor to do the right thing before he is slated to leave office in January 2027.

Legislation – SB 672 (Susan Rubio SD22) – Youth Rehabilitation and Opportunity Act

This state bill would allow some people currently serving life without parole who were sentenced for a crime committed when they were 25 or younger to become eligible for a Youth Offender Parole hearing after serving 25 years. California law already allows Youth Offender Parole hearings for many people in the same age bracket but currently excludes those serving life without parole.

Working with partners the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, National Life without Parole Leadership Council, Human Rights Watch,



Criminal Justice Legislation and Advocacy

and New Momentum Strategies, LatinoJustice PRLDEF has lobbied to pass this bill.

Status: The bill passed the Senate and is currently parked in the Public Safety Committee in the Assembly, where it will remain until next legislative session. LatinoJustice will commence lobbying for passage of the bill in the Assembly in early 2026

Program – Fair Chance Hiring

LatinoJustice PRLDEF has partnered with the California Grocers Association (CGA) and other organizations to develop an innovative statewide program that brings together community-based organizations and business interests to curb the rise of offenses that lead to extended prison time while also creating a pipeline of workers to meet the labor needs of retail establishments.

Responding to a rise in smash-and-grab robberies that cost businesses millions yearly, and legislative action predictably increasing penalties for these crimes, imposing felony charges and enhancements that add years to prison sentences, the pilot program for Fair Chance Hiring will connect local retail businesses with nonprofits that help prepare young people for employment and for long-term career pathways.

The California Grocers Association comprises over 300 retail companies and more than 6,000 brick and mortar stores and grocery supply companies. It is a major player in California's food industry. The AntiRecidivism Coalition (ARC) and similar organizations will help to build a sustainable talent pipeline of

young adults ages 18 to 25 impacted by the justice system for work with CGA members, providing stipends, training, and educational opportunities.

Status: We are meeting with members of the CGA Board of Trustees to gather buy in for this initiative and are also working with coalition partners, including the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, to reach out to the individual grocery store chains including Jelson's, to cultivate interest.

FLORIDA

Legislation **HB 1061 (Dianne Hart HD61) / SB 1758 (Rosalind Osgood SD32) – Restrictive Housing in Prisons**

This bill directs the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct an annual study on the use of restrictive housing (solitary confinement) in Florida prisons, with a focus on its impact on vulnerable populations such as youth, people with mental illness, and individuals with disabilities. The findings will guide data-driven policy recommendations for humane and transparent reforms.

LatinoJustice has long been an advocate to narrowly limit the use of solitary confinement in facilities to ensure that the civil and human rights of incarcerated persons are upheld. Several of our directly impacted staff have experienced the trauma of solitary confinement firsthand and we are committed to ensuring that this inhumane practice is limited as much as possible.

Status: HB 1061 filed and referred to Criminal Justice Subcommittee; SB 1758 introduced in the Senate and referred to committees.

NEW YORK

Legislation – **Intro 798 (NYC Council Althea Stevens) Abolishing the Criminal Group Database**

LatinoJustice PRLDEF has been a leading partner in the coalition supporting this bill, which seeks to eliminate the NYPD's gang database, a tool widely criticized for its lack of oversight and racial bias.

The database has disproportionately affected Black and Brown youth, often labeling individuals gang members without sufficient evidence, transparency, or due process protections.

This year, LatinoJustice and other coalition members worked to get commitments of support from a majority of Councilmembers. We developed public education materials, and organized community forums in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens to raise awareness, share the experiences of directly impacted individuals and build support. We also participated in a March 11 City Council oversight hearing with NYPD to provide public pressure.

Status: The bill currently holds majority support within the New York City Council and is anticipated to be brought to a vote by the end of 2025.



Criminal Justice Legislation and Advocacy

Legislation – Intro 1176 (NYC Council Chi Ossé) Communities United to Reject Brutality (CURB) Act to restrict the NYPD Strategic Response Group’s ability to violate the right to peaceful protest

In January 2025, Councilmember Chi Ossé reintroduced the CURB Act, which would stop the NYPD from deploying the militarized Strategic Response Group (SRG) to protests and other First Amendment-protected activity.

The unit’s use of aggressive tactics during demonstrations and routine policing activities has raised serious concerns about civil rights violations, racial profiling, and the erosion of public trust. LatinoJustice is calling for the complete disbandment of the SRG as part of a broader effort to demilitarize public safety and protect the rights of New Yorkers.

LatinoJustice contributed to grassroots mobilization and public education to increase support for this bill, expanding the coalition beyond criminal justice advocates to include civil liberties organizations, artists, student groups, and community leaders concerned about free speech and police overreach.

Status: The bill was referred to the NY City Council’s Public Safety Committee in January.

Advocacy – Disciplinary Reform and the Case of Allan Feliz in NYC

In partnership with the Justice Committee and other groups, LatinoJustice has been actively advocating for the dismissal of NYPD Lieutenant Jonathan Rivera, who fatally shot Allan Feliz during a traffic stop in 2019. This advocacy effort is part of a broader push to reform the procedures and standards by which police discipline is administered in New York City.



Criminal Justice Legislation and Advocacy

LatinoJustice PRLDEF, in collaboration with the Feliz family, and other coalition member orgs organized community rallies, participated in press conferences, and engaged the media to maintain steady public pressure on Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch to enforce the recommendation to fire Rivera.

Status: On July 3, Commissioner Tisch sought to overturn the guilty verdict against Lt. Rivera. LatinoJustice PRLDEF, NYCLU, Center for Constitutional Rights, Gideon Law, Beldock Levine & Hoffman and Cohen & Green sent New York Police Department Commissioner Jessica Tischa letter asking her to adopt the recommendation to fire him. As of August 15, the Commissioner made a final a ruling that Lt. Jonathan Rivera should not face discipline.

Implementation and Public Education – Clean Slate Act (NY and Connecticut)

The Clean Slate Act, which automatically seals conviction records for most misdemeanor and felony convictions after a certain amount of time has passed since the individual’s last conviction or release from incarceration, began the first erasures in Connecticut in January 2024 and went into effect in New York in November 2024.

Yet many eligible individuals remain unaware of their rights under the law or confused about how to access the law’s benefits, risking significant underutilization particularly among those who need it most.

LatinoJustice, in coalition with other organizations, has disseminated comprehensive digital toolkits designed

to explain the Clean Slate process in clear, accessible language. We participated in a series of community webinars to inform directly impacted communities and partnered with local legal service providers to facilitate record-sealing.

Status: We are currently working in coalition to help implement the Clean Slate Act.

Legislation – S.321 (Julia Salazar SD18) / A.1283 (Latrice Walker AD55) – Second Look Act

The Second Look Act would allow individuals who have served at least ten years in prison to petition for resentencing. The bill advances our sentencing reform goals, challenging the long-standing reliance on excessively punitive sentencing practices.

LatinoJustice support of community education and personal storytelling provided critical tools to showcase the inhuman impact of prolonged incarceration.

Status: Senate version referred to Codes Committee. Assembly version referred to Codes Committee. Although the bill did not reach the floor for a vote, the number of legislative co-sponsors increased, and key Senate and Assembly leaders began to engage more seriously with the proposal.

Legislation – S.6471A (Zellnor Myrie SD20) / A.2036 (Demond Meeks AD137) – Ending Mandatory Minimums Act (EMMA)

EMMA aims to abolish mandatory minimum sentencing requirements in New York, restoring judicial discretion and allowing judges to weigh mitigating circumstances

when determining appropriate sentences. The bill advocates for a more individualized, equitable approach to justice that considers context rather than imposing blanket penalties.

Status: While the bill advanced to the Codes committee in both legislative chambers, it ultimately stalled without a vote. That said, public support for Eliminating Mandatory Minimum sentencing increased significantly this session, particularly among legal aid organizations, faith-based groups, and survivors of incarceration who understand firsthand the damaging effects of severe sentencing laws.

Legislation – S.774A (Jeremy Cooney SD56) / A.1128A (Anna Kelles AD125) – Earned Time Act

The Earned Time Act proposes to expand and retroactively apply good time and merit time credits, allowing incarcerated individuals to reduce their sentences through participation in educational, vocational, and rehabilitative programs. The goal is to incentivize personal growth, reduce prison populations, and support successful reentry into society.

LatinoJustice and its partners led efforts that included testimony at parole board hearings, community education forums, and direct lobbying of lawmakers to promote the bill’s passage.

Status: Although the bill did not pass during this session, it gained new legislative champions and received increased attention through a multi-faceted advocacy campaign.



TEXAS

Legislation – SB 1506 (Tan Parker SD12) – On the frequency with which the Board of Pardons and Paroles reconsiders inmates for release on parole

This bill will now allow the parole board to set longer intervals between when certain incarcerated individuals are denied release and their following parole review.

LatinoJustice supports all reforms that ease the process of applying for and receiving parole for crimes committed. We oppose SB 1506 as further drawing out a process already overly complicated by bureaucratic red tape. We lead the Texas and Southwest parole reform working group and this bill, along with others relating to parole reforms, is part of our priorities in 2026 and beyond.

Status: Approved June 2025, set to go into effect September 2025.

Criminal Justice Legislation and Advocacy



Legislation – HB 2854 (Rafael Anchia HD103) – Relating to the required approval of certain hospital visits as a condition of release on parole

This bill would require certain people on parole to first get permission from their parole officer before visiting a hospital for non-emergency related purposes. Additionally, parole officers are now required to notify law enforcement of the person's hospital visit.

Parole is already a bureaucratically laden process that is in dire need of reform across the country. We oppose this bill, which makes it more burdensome for vulnerable individuals to receive the medical treatment they need. This bill is part of our priorities package of general reform-related bills under the umbrella of the parole reform working group that we lead.

Status: Approved June 2025, set to go into effect September 2025.

Legislation – SB 8 (Charles Schwertner SD5) – Agreements between certain sheriffs and ICE to enforce federal immigration law

See Immigrant Rights section.

Legislation – SJR 1 (Joan Huffman SD17) – Proposed constitutional amendment denying bail under certain circumstances for undocumented immigrants charged with felonies

This bill would mandate the denial of bail to anyone “not lawfully present in this country” and accused of certain felonies.

We strongly oppose this bill and submitted testimony in opposition. This bill is a good example of the inhumane laws coming out of Texas that live at the intersection of criminal justice and immigrant rights.

Status: Died in chamber.

Legislation – HB 1482 (Terri Leo-Wilson HD23) – Changing the eligibility for community supervision for certain repeat intoxication offenders

During public hearing, LatinoJustice introduced a point of order that removed incredibly harmful language that would require people to spend more time in prison before becoming parole eligible, saving Texas taxpayers nearly \$300 million in increased incarceration costs if those provisions stayed and the bill passed.

Status: Died in committee. Senate version referred to Senate Criminal Justice Committee.

Legislation – SB 2767 (Molly Cook SD15) – Relating to Public Facility Corporations

LatinoJustice, along with our partners at Lioness: Justice Impacted Women's Alliance and the Texas Civil Rights Project, successfully helped introduced this bill, which seeks to overhaul the state's Medically Recommended Intensive Supervision (MRIS) program.

The bill would expand eligibility and remove barriers that keep so many incarcerated individuals from being meaningfully considered for early release based on age and/or medical condition. Importantly, it would also create a strong presumption of release for those who meet the program's criteria and remove the ability for an individual's release to be denied solely because of a perceived threat to public safety.

Status: Died in committee. Referred to Local Government Committee.

Advocacy – Sunset Review for Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Board of Pardons and Paroles, and other related adult correctional agencies.

Every legislative session, most state agencies undergo a process known as Sunset, which is directed by the Sunset Advisory Commission. This process examines select agencies to determine if they are still necessary and how their operations can be made more efficient and effective.

LatinoJustice played a strong role in the Sunset review of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Board of Pardons and

Paroles, and other related adult correctional agencies. We met with legislative offices and provided testimony calling for the closure of prisons facing chronic staffing challenges. We also advocated for measures that would address the daily challenges and harms experienced by those directly impacted by the state's parole system, while also pushing for larger and more structural changes in how parole and the Medically Recommended Intensive Supervision program operate in the state.

VIRGINIA

Legislation – HB 2647 (Karen Keys-Gamarra HD7) SB1409 (Lamont Bagby SD74) – Restorative housing and isolated confinement

This bill would prohibit the use of solitary confinement in state correctional facilities, with some exceptions. The bill would require administrators to place incarcerated people in less restrictive settings before opting for restorative housing or isolated confinement for their own protection. It would also require administrators to review placements in restorative housing or isolated confinement every 48 hours with medical and mental health evaluations.

Status: The bill passed Senate and Assembly, but the Governor did not sign it before the end of session. The bill will have to be reintroduced in the Virginia legislature in 2026 and start the process to passage anew.

Education and Economic Justice Legislation and Advocacy

LatinoJustice is deeply invested in supporting educational and economic justice legislative advocacy that protects and preserves all avenues to financial stability for Latinx communities. Protecting equitable pathways to educational opportunities ensures that no child is left behind.

NEW YORK

Legislation – S2237 (Andrew Gounardes SD26) / A2125 (Latrice Walker) – Fair College Admissions Act

This bill would prohibit universities from including information about where an applicant's relatives attend college in that applicant's admissions file and would impose a civil penalty of \$50,000 on colleges who are found to violate the law.

The New York Coalition for Fair College Admissions is leading the advocacy effort for this bill. LatinoJustice is a member of the coalition, along with dozens of educational, community based and civil rights groups.

Status: The bill sat in committee and did not make it to the floor for a vote prior to the end of the legislative session.



Education and Economic Justice Legislation and Advocacy

TENNESSEE

Legislation -- SB0836 (Bo Watson SD11) / HB 793 (William Lamberth HD44) -- Authorizing Local Education Agencies and public charter schools to refuse to enroll students unlawfully present in the US

Status: The bill passed the Senate in April but was stopped in the House by majority leader William Lamberth, who said he wanted to confirm whether the legislation would put at risk \$1.1 billion in funds the state receives from the federal Education Department.

As an active participant in the Education for All coalition, which includes 80+ civil rights, immigration and education groups hosted by the National Immigration Law Center, LatinoJustice attended coalition partners and signed onto key endorsement letters publicizing our support for this bill. The coalition is dedicated to protecting access to K-12 public education across the country for all children, regardless of immigration status.

This year, we supported the effort to stop a state bill that would have deprived students of their constitutional right to a public K-12 education based on their immigration status. In an intense eightweek period, educators, parents, small business owners, students, and faith leaders pressured their representatives to kill the bill.



Immigrant Rights Legislation and Advocacy

Immigrant rights is a core pillar at LatinoJustice and intersects with all of our other work on criminal justice, voting rights and economic justice. While many of the states in which we work are openly hostile to immigrant rights, particularly in the South, there were some opportunities for progressive change in New York, as evidenced by the legislation highlighted below. Nonetheless, we did not see any immigrant rights-related legislation or budget asks make it into the FY26 budget for New York, and are calling for a special session to continue working on these issues.

Legislation – A8318 (Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas AD34) / S7789 (Cordell Cleare SD30) – New York CARES Act

This bill would allow undocumented noncitizen survivors of crime to apply for and receive public benefits for themselves, their spouse and unmarried children under the age of twenty-one for such time as their immigration application is pending.

Once the application is granted, the crime survivor would be eligible for the benefits available to refugees. Under current law, there is no eligibility to receive public benefits if you are undocumented, even if you have experienced a crime as a noncitizen. California and Illinois have passed similar legislation, protecting thousands of immigrant crime survivors, and New York should be next.

LJP leads this coalition in close collaboration with Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, who previously sponsored the bill in the Assembly, and Senator Cordell Cleare, who introduced the Senate version of the bill in 2024.

Status: While the bill was reintroduced in the Assembly and Senate by the same champions, our budget ask of \$80 million did not make it into the Assembly one house budget bill.

Legislation – S2235 (Andrew Gounardes SD26) / A3506 (Karines Reyes AD87) – New York for All Act

The legislation prohibits New York’s state and local government agencies, including police and sheriffs, from colluding with ICE, disclosing sensitive information, and diverting personnel or other resources to further federal immigration enforcement. LatinoJustice is a strong supporter of this bill.

Status: The bill did not move this legislative session, but we signed a petition calling for a special legislative session to protect immigrant New Yorkers.

TEXAS

Legislation – SB 8 (Charles Schwertner SD5) – Agreements between certain sheriffs and ICE to enforce federal immigration law

This bill requires all Texas county sheriffs who operate or contract to operate a jail to seek and enter into formal agreements with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

LatinoJustice has been keeping an eye on all 287-g agreements between local/state law enforcement and federal entities in states where we have staff and conduct business. We oppose this bill and have submitted testimony in opposition.

Status: Approved June 2025, set to go into effect January 2026.





Voting Rights Legislation and Advocacy

LatinoJustice is deeply committed to the preservation of a functioning democracy that enables access to the ballot for all eligible voters, and much of our legislative advocacy work is centered on preserving this access and ensuring that once voters make it to the ballot box, they are able to cast their vote in a meaningful way.

LatinoJustice has played a leadership role in advancing state voting rights acts across multiple states.

CONNECTICUT

Implementation – Voting Rights Act

LatinoJustice was part of the coalition that helped make history in 2023 by passing the Connecticut Voting Rights Act (CTVRA), the

nation’s most comprehensive state voting rights law, including regarding language access provisions and robust enforcement mechanisms.

This year, LatinoJustice focused on ensuring that the Connecticut Voting Rights Act received the funding necessary for full implementation. The organization submitted testimony urging the Governor to include funding in the state budget.

Status: Governor Lamont signed the Connecticut budget, which includes full funding for the Secretary of State’s Office to implement the CTVRA and robust support for the office’s overall operations.

FLORIDA

Advocacy – Election Protection Efforts

LatinoJustice deployed over two dozen bilingual poll monitors across three counties on Election Day to assist voters and address language barriers. Sent a letter to the Supervisors of Elections (SEO) highlighting the county’s needs and advocating for resource allocation improvements.

Expanding Language Access in Orange County: We are in the early stages of developing an advocacy campaign to expand language access across Orange County, with an intentional focus on Haitian Creole.

This initiative seeks to ensure that the whole

election process is accessible to the growing Haitian community. Our goals include increasing translated materials, improving interpretation services, and building community awareness around language rights.

Status: In partnership with All Voting is Local and Haitian community organizations, we are developing a campaign to roll out language access protections for Haitian Creole speaking voters at the Orange County level.

Voting Rights Legislation and Advocacy

Legislation – Florida Voting Rights Act – Laying the Groundwork for the Florida Voting Rights Act:

We are supporting a multi-year campaign to advance the Florida State Voting Rights Act. While current political conditions in the state make passage unlikely, our focus has been on messaging, public education, and coalition-building to prepare the ground for future legislative success when the political landscape becomes more favorable.

Status: The bill is did not make it for a floor vote during the 2025 legislative session and will be reintroduced in 2026.

Advocacy – Florida Boiler Room Support

LatinoJustice served as an expert on language access during 56 shifts during the election period, providing critical support to ensure voters with limited English proficiency received the assistance they needed.

GEORGIA

Advocacy – Poll monitoring

Partnered with MESE to deploy over two dozen poll monitors in Georgia across four counties, ensuring proper election processes and supporting voters.

MARYLAND

Legislation – Voting Rights Act

LatinoJustice joined a coalition advancing a comprehensive package of bills known as the Maryland Voting Rights Act. We participated actively with bill language and submitted testimony supporting the entire package, emphasizing the critical need for stronger state-level voting protections and equitable language access for Limited English Proficient voters.

Status: While not all components ultimately moved forward this session, the language access bill successfully passed in 2025.

NEW JERSEY

Legislation – Voting Rights Act

LatinoJustice has been a consistent supporter of the New Jersey Voting Rights Act (NJVRA), which similarly to other state voting rights bills we have supported, protect voters of color and strengthen New Jersey’s democracy. Throughout the session, LatinoJustice engaged in sustained advocacy, submitting testimony in support and maintaining ongoing conversations with Senate allies to secure a hearing and advance the bill.

Status: The bill cleared the Assembly in 2024, but ultimately did not pass. The bill was favorably voted out of committee early in 2025 and now awaits consideration in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

PENNSYLVANIA

Legislation – Voting Rights Act

LatinoJustice has built on years of

engagement through the Cada Voto Cuenta election protection program. Over time, LatinoJustice has developed trusted relationships with grassroots partners and election officials and now serves as a principal drafter of Pennsylvania’s forthcoming state voting rights act’s language access provisions.

LatinoJustice was chosen to lead education sessions statewide on language access and how a state VRA can remedy existing barriers. LatinoJustice’s record of effective advocacy with county election administrators to improve language access has directly strengthened its credibility and leadership in the PA Voice coalition drafting Pennsylvania’s state voting rights act.

Status: The bill draft is largely complete and the coalition is soliciting partner feedback on the various provisions.

Voting Rights Legislation and Advocacy



Project – Model Legislation for State Voting Rights

LatinoJustice is a principal drafter of the language access provisions in the model State Voting Rights Act developed with the Legal Defense Fund, Campaign Legal Center, the Election Law Clinic at Harvard Law School, and the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

This model legislation offers a comprehensive framework to counter discrimination and expand access to the ballot. LatinoJustice led the creation of a novel system for determining when and how jurisdictions must provide language assistance to limited English proficient voters, moving beyond older, static formulas to establish a more flexible and inclusive standard.

The model includes six core provisions: prohibitions on vote dilution and suppression, preclearance requirements, expanded language access mandates, a statewide elections database, protections against voter intimidation and deception, and a democracy canon to guide courts in favor of broad participation.

Status: The model legislation draft is largely complete and the coalition is soliciting feedback on the various provisions.

Project – Multiracial Democracy Project

LatinoJustice is participating in the Multiracial Democracy Project, based at George Washington University Law School, which brings together scholars, litigators, organizers, and advocates to explore electoral reforms that can create a more inclusive democracy.

In June 2025, LatinoJustice participated in the Alternative Election Structures Convening in Washington, DC, alongside experts from the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Protect Democracy, and the Data and Democracy Lab.

At the convening, participants examined alternative election systems as tools to reduce polarization and ensure that communities of color have a meaningful voice in the political process. The project builds on foundational scholarship by leaders such as Spencer Overton and Lani Guinier to explore how electoral systems shape who holds power and whose perspectives are reflected in public decision-making.

LatinoJustice’s involvement in this work is guided by the conviction that reforms must center racial equity and address the specific barriers Latino voters and other historically marginalized communities continue to face.

Advocacy and Public Education – Latino Civic Engagement Coalition

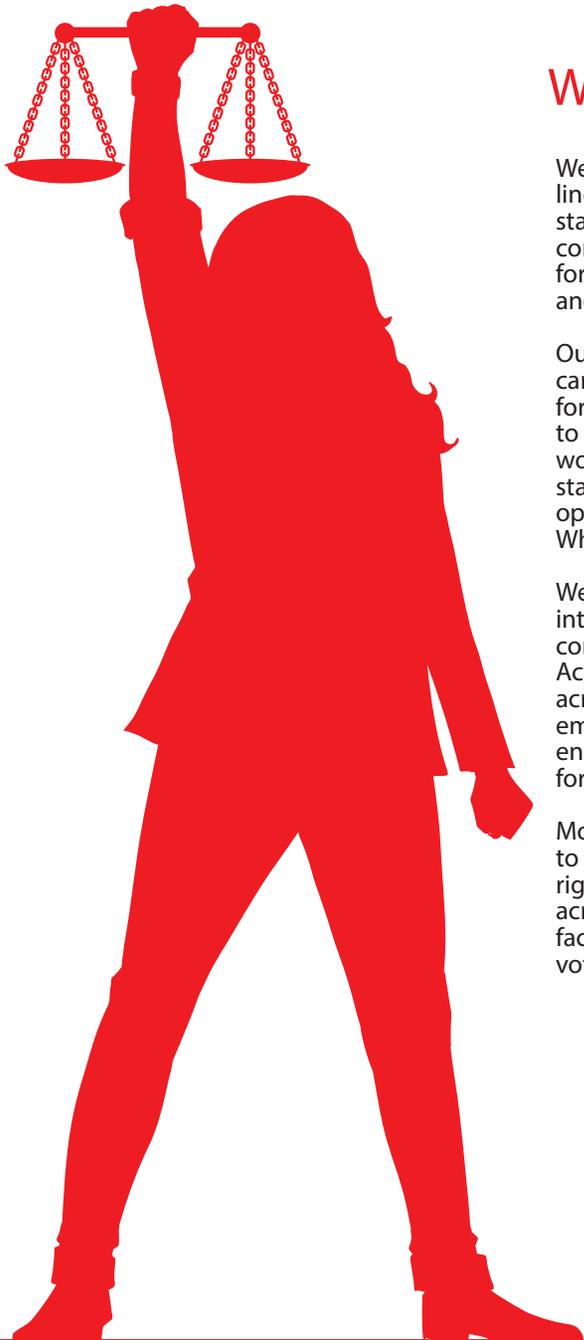
LatinoJustice is a member of the Latino Civic Engagement Coalition, working alongside other Latino-led civic engagement and advocacy organizations to protect and expand voting rights for Latino communities across New York.

This coalition came together to ensure that the growing Latino electorate, more than 2.1 million strong statewide, has a collective voice in shaping democracy reforms and holding policymakers accountable.

In 2025, the coalition prioritized advocacy for the Student Voter Empowerment Act, which would require SUNY and CUNY campuses to provide comprehensive voter registration resources to students. Nearly one in five Latino New Yorkers is between the ages of 18 and 29, making this legislation especially important for empowering young Latino voters.

Additionally, LatinoJustice joined the Let NY Vote advocacy day in Albany along with partners from the Latino Civic Engagement Coalition, participating in meetings with legislators to advance the Student Voter Empowerment Act and other democracy reforms.

Status: While the Student Voter Empowerment Act did not pass this session, the coalition’s advocacy secured additional co-sponsors and laid the groundwork for future progress.



Where We Go Next

We will continue holding the line in the conservative-majority states of Florida and Texas, while continuing to seize opportunities for progress in New York, California and other states.

Our incrementalist approach is carefully building the foundation for full scale reforms in the years to come, when we have a more workable Congress and regulated state governments that are not operating under threat from the White House Administration.

We will continue to draft and introduce progressive and comprehensive state Voting Rights Acts in favorable jurisdictions across the country, with a special emphasis on protecting and enhancing language access rights for all.

Most importantly, we will continue to prioritize the civil and human rights of Latinx demographics across the country and across all facets of life (immigrant rights, voting rights, criminal justice,

economic justice and more) and build stronger and deeper relationships with our partner communities, policymakers and advocates to ensure we are taking advantage of every opportunity to build people power for the future and beyond.



Advocacy Partners

AALDEF

AAJC

ACLU of NY, FL, PA, NJ, MD, TX, MI

All Voting is Local

Anti Recidivism Coalition

Brennan Center

California Grocers Association

Campaign Legal Center

Floridians Against the Death Penalty

ILRC

LDF

League of Women Voters

NYCET

PA Voice

Responsible Business Initiative for Justice

Texas Civil Rights Project

Texas Coalition for Parole Reform

Unlock the Box

Worth Rises

(This is not an exhaustive list)



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