

Now is the Time for a Progressive Woman of Color to Lead Travis County
August 8, 2020

During this pandemic, we have seen low-income communities of color working on the frontlines as essential workers, getting sick, and losing this battle everyday with disproportionate rates of illness, death and economic peril.

We've seen how across Texas and the nation, COVID-19 is [deadlier for people of color](#). Here in Travis County, recent news reports illustrate that Latinos comprise [52% of new positive COVID-19 cases](#), despite making up just 34% of the Travis County population. And of African-Americans in Austin/Travis County diagnosed with COVID-19, just more than 18 percent were hospitalized and 5.4 percent died, [raising concern for local public health officials](#).

The economic consequences of COVID-19 are devastating to Black and Brown communities. A recent national study found that [59% of Latinos](#) live in households that have experienced pay cuts and job losses due to COVID-19, and another study notes that just [12% of African American and Latino small businesses](#) received the federal relief funds for which they applied. Additionally, studies have shown [essential workers are workers are more likely to be women](#) — and, more specifically, women of color.

In a time of crisis like this, we need a leader who is keenly aware of the needs within our entire community, particularly those of immigrants and communities of color. We need someone who understands and has the lived experiences of those often first impacted by policy decisions, but least likely to be represented by government - working class communities of color. And we need someone with a proven track record for building multi-generational and racially diverse coalitions. That is why we are supporting Dyana Limon-Mercado as our first choice to be our next Travis County Judge.

Dyana is a mother of two who is from the district hardest hit by COVID-19. She knows first-hand what it means to go years without health insurance, and what it means to live paycheck to paycheck. She fought for years to ensure high-quality healthcare access to low-income women, and has worked to make the government more responsive and reflective of our state's rich diversity.

And it is clear that her lived experience is coupled with a dedication to bold, courageous executive leadership. In the face of adversity due to her gender, her age, and her race, Dyana has worked tirelessly to ensure that local, state, and federal policies ultimately serve the needs of working people in our communities.

We are community leaders - largely made up of women of color - who have worked to raise wages, expand educational opportunities, ensure access to quality healthcare for everyone, taught English to newly arrived immigrants, and tackled long-overdue and needed reforms to police and criminal justice systems. We know that when leaders in government are grounded in the experiences of those most impacted, we can transform the lives of ordinary people and make our government work better for all of us. To pull through this moment of incredible crisis and pain, we know we need Dyana Limon-Mercado's creativity, strength and deep appreciation of the struggles of thousands of Central Texans who have no healthcare and who are struggling to make ends meet.

An election decided by the people must reflect the people. Our current election process leaves it to 136 individuals to decide the outcome on behalf of 1.27 million people. No doubt this puts enormous pressure on those individuals to decide their vote in a manner that takes into account the full and rich diversity of our county. Travis County is 34% Latino, 9% African American and 8% AAPI. We are a diverse community and we deserve leaders that have a deep appreciation of who we are; unfortunately, we do not see ourselves represented in this process. This week, Travis County precinct chairs have an exciting opportunity to make the historic choice of electing Dyana Limon-Mercado as our next Travis County Judge.

Sincerely,

Alice Mingfei Yi

Amanda Lewis

Angela Valenzuela

Ashley Cheng

Briona Jenkins

CJ Zhao

Cristina Tzintzun Ramirez

Diana Gómez

Dionn Schaffner

Emmy Ruiz

Jaclyn Uresti

Jill Ramirez-Coronado

Joi Chevalier

José M.A. Velásquez

Kandace Vallejo

Lesley Varghese

Martha Cortera

Muna Hussaini

Nora de Hoyos Comstock

Olga Campos

Paul Saldaña

Royce Brooks

Saatvik Ahluwalia

Shavonne Henderson

Shenghao Wang

Tory Gavito

Vanessa Downey-Little

Yolanda Davila

Yvonne Massey Davis

Zohaib Ahmad Qadri