



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATEMENT FROM UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF
ALEX PADILLA TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE**

Statement from Sonja Diaz, founding director of the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative on Governor Gavin Newsom’s nomination of California Secretary of State Alex Padilla to the United States Senate:

“Secretary of State Alex Padilla is the quintessential California story: a child of immigrants who has been a trailblazer in opening doors to the halls of power, from Los Angeles City Hall to the California Capitol, to advance data-backed solutions for all Americans to thrive. In an election year with rampant voter suppression, Padilla leveraged the prowess of the nation’s most populous state to achieve a historic turnout amidst a global pandemic and misinformation. Padilla did this by ensuring full inclusion so that the chorus of democracy included all voices, whether young or old, native English speaking or multi-lingual, and rural or urban. We need Padilla’s perspective in the U.S. Senate as we tackle existential crises and chart an inclusive recovery. I applaud Governor Gavin Newsom for making California a model for the country in how to remedy the willful neglect and invisibility of Latinos from key decision-making positions across our most fundamental institutions by sending the first Latino from California to the United States Senate.

As the nation confronts the third wave of a devastating pandemic that has infected and killed Blacks and Latinos at disproportionate rates, Padilla will provide a crucial lens on the importance of centering future policies on the frontline communities that are critical to

economic recovery. On the heels of a historic election whereby a coalition of Black and Brown voters sent President-elect Biden to the White House, the nation's most important legislative body will have an important voice in Padilla to accelerate substantive representation so that Americans not only survive, but thrive.

California's leaders often move on to bigger national stages, and Padilla's appointment joins Vice President elect Kamala Harris in a new chapter of American politics. California will need to continue to take its responsibility seriously to swing the door open for all its underserved and underrepresented communities and demonstrate that diversity is our greatest strength. The 2022 Midterm Elections will be the next chapter in the power of the Black and Brown vote, and this time they will have two national figureheads from California mobilizing Black and Latino coalitions from Phoenix to Milwaukee."

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ABOUT UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE

The UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative addresses the most critical domestic policy challenges facing Latinos and other communities of color through research, advocacy, mobilization, and leadership development to expand genuine opportunity for all Americans.