



***U.S. Representative Raul Ruiz, M.D.,***

After graduating from Coachella Valley High School, Dr. Ruiz graduated magna cum laude from UCLA. He went on to Harvard University, where he earned his Medical Degree, as well as a Masters's of Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government and a Masters's of Public Health from the School of Public Health, becoming the first Latino to earn three graduate degrees from Harvard University. He completed his Residency in Emergency Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh and a Fellowship in International Emergency Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital. During his training, Dr. Ruiz served as a consultant to the Ministries of Health of both Serbia and El Salvador.

Dr. Ruiz returned home after completing his medical training and began working as an Emergency Room doctor at Eisenhower Medical Center. Recognizing the physician shortage crisis in the Coachella Valley, Dr. Ruiz started a pre-medical mentorship program for young aspiring doctors, which has grown to include over 100 local students. The program became part of the University of California, Riverside School of Medicine, where Dr. Ruiz served as a Senior Associate Dean. Through the group Volunteers in Medicine, he helped to open a free clinic to help underserved communities in the Coachella Valley. In 2010, Dr. Ruiz started the Coachella Valley Healthcare Initiative, which brought together stakeholders from across the region to address the local healthcare crisis. He has also worked internationally in the medical community. In 2010, Dr. Ruiz flew to Haiti immediately following the 2010 earthquake and served as the Medical Director for the J/P Haitian Relief Organization. The U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne awarded him the Commanders Award for Public Service for his work. Dr. Ruiz continued his work as an Emergency Room Doctor until he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2012. He represents California's 36th District, which includes the entire Coachella Valley, as well as the cities of Banning, Beaumont, Blythe, Hemet, and San Jacinto. He resides in Palm Desert, CA. Dr. Ruiz currently serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee.



***Elena V. Rios, M.D., M.S.P.H., F.A.C.P.***

serves as President & CEO of the National Hispanic Medical Association, (NHMA), representing 50,000 Hispanic physicians in the United States. The mission of the organization is to improve the health of Hispanics. Dr. Rios also serves as President of NHMA's National Hispanic Health Foundation to direct educational and research activities. Dr. Rios also serves on the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda Boards of Directors, Centene Health Policy Advisory

Committee, Centene Health Equity Committee, Morehouse Health Equity Committee, Office of Research on Women's Health Advisory Committee, NIH, US Department of Health and Human Services, and the VA National Academic Affiliations Council. Dr. Rios has lectured, published articles, and has received several leadership awards, including awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Congressional Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American Caucuses, American Public Health Association Latino Caucus, Association of Hispanic Health Executives, Minority Health Month, Inc., Hispanic Magazine, Verizon's First Pollin Community Service Award, and Amerigroup. Prior to her current positions, Dr. Rios served as the Advisor for Regional and Minority Women's Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health from November 1994 to October 1998. In 1998-2004, Dr. Rios served as Executive Director, Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools. In 1993, Dr. Rios was appointed to the National Health Care Reform Task Force as Coordinator of Outreach Groups for the White House. From 1992-94, Dr. Rios worked for the State of California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development as a policy researcher. Dr. Rios earned her BA in Human Biology/Public Administration at Stanford University in 1977, MSPH at the UCLA School of Public Health in 1980, MD at the UCLA School of Medicine in 1987, and completed her Internal Medicine residency at the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center in San Jose and the White Memorial Medical Center in East Los Angeles in 1990, and her NRSA Primary Care Research Fellowship at UCLA Division of General Internal Medicine in 1992.



***Gina Adams***

is a senior fellow in the Center on Labor, Human Resources, and Population and directs the Urban Institute's Low-Income Working Families and Kids in Context initiatives. Her research spans a range of issues that affect the well-being of children and families. She is a national expert on child care and early education, focusing on the broad range of policies and programs affecting the affordability, quality, and supply of child care and early education, and factors affecting the ability of families with lower incomes to access and participate in these services. Adams led seminal work on how parents, providers, and caseworkers experience these programs, which helped inform the "family-friendly" and "provider friendly" provisions of the 2014 Reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Fund. In recent years, she has broadened her focus to encompass a wider range of policies, including breaking down siloes between child care and early childhood policies and other systems that support child and family well-being, as well as understanding the range of supports needed to stabilize children and families. Adams has

worked closely with a wide range of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders. She has published extensively and presented to audiences ranging from child care providers and parents to Congress. Before joining Urban, she directed child care research at the Children's Defense Fund, analyzed children's issues at the Congressional Budget Office, taught infants and toddlers in a child care center, and conducted home visits with Latino families with low incomes.



*Noel Candelaria*

a special education teacher and former teacher's aide from El Paso, Texas, is secretary-treasurer of the National Education Association, the nation's largest professional organization. Noel ranks third among the Association's leadership team. His primary responsibility is managing and maintaining the Association's multimillion-dollar budget. Noel is the first-generation son of Mexican immigrants who instilled within him the value of quality public education. As a result, Noel learned firsthand about the transformative power of public education, how the influence of one educator knows no limits, and that when woven together the

two form a direct pathway toward the American Dream.

Elected amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis that it created, Noel is the former president of the Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA). Before that, Noel served three years as TSTA vice president, which followed a distinguished tenure as president of the Ysleta Teachers Association (YTA) in El Paso, Texas, where he worked in the Ysleta Independent School District (YISD), teaching subjects ranging from Algebra to World History.

Noel has also held leadership positions at the National Council of State Education Associations, NEA Member Benefits, and the National Teacher Hall of Fame (NTHF). During Noel's leadership as chair of the Memorial to Fallen Educators, located in Emporia, Kansas, legislation was passed to designate the monument as a national memorial site. Noel has also served on numerous national committees and task forces, including the NEA Human and Civil Rights Committee.

A tireless advocate for educators and students—who is often joined in his activist work by his wife Patty, a National Board Certified Teacher—Noel believes in the value and power of relationships that are based on trust, whether they are formed in the classroom, the community or the halls of political power. Noel relies on those relationships—at the local, state, and national levels—to keep the doors of success open and accessible to all students.

Noel is a dynamic and energetic speaker who is frequently asked to speak about racial and social justice, classroom management, and creating high-quality Association leaders. He holds a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies and education from the University of Texas at El Paso.



***Lydia Cardona***

is the Climate & Clean Air Program Manager at GreenLatinos. Through research, facilitation, and coalition building she works to amplify the Latino voice in national climate policy dialogues while seeking change for communities facing the greatest vulnerability to the climate crisis. Lydia's expertise centers on building equity into programs and translating complex standards into actionable practices that support a vision of sustainability that benefits both people and the planet. Previously, Lydia managed Conservation International's Environmental Peacebuilding Program, advising global programs on conflict sensitivity and gender equity and advancing the integration of rights-based programming into conservation efforts. The intersectoral nature of this work inspired her deep belief that social and environmental challenges are inextricable and must be addressed in tandem. Lydia holds a master's degree in International Peace Studies from Trinity College Dublin, with a focus on women, peace, and security, and a B.A. in International Affairs from the University of Georgia.