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LATINA LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST PROP. 4

“Parental Notification Will Harm California's Latinas”

Leaders Urge Latino Communities to Break the Silence and Vote NO on Proposition 4

LOS ANGELES, OAKLAND and BAKERSFIELD, CA — The leaders of three statewide organizations working directly to advance the health, safety and human rights of Latina women and their families joined together to denounce Proposition 4 as a misguided initiative that will place the health and safety of the most vulnerable young women at risk. Rocio Córdoba, Executive Director of California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, based in Los Angeles; Destiny Lopez, Executive Director of ACCESS/Women's Health Rights Coalition, based in Oakland; and Camila Chavez, Executive Director of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, based in Bakersfield; issued the following statement:

“As Latino voters prepare to cast their ballots in one of the most critical elections this November 4th, we have joined together to highlight the urgent need to break the silence about Proposition 4 and the grave harm it would cause to young Latinas in California.

“The reality is: Proposition 4 would endanger the health and safety of the Latino community by limiting our daughters' access to caring counseling and professional medical care. While this initiative will place all California teens in danger, it would have a uniquely detrimental effect on the health and well-being of the state's Latino community.

“Latino families already face significant barriers and have the least access to basic health services. California's Latinas continue to have the highest uninsured rates among all racial and ethnic groups: Nearly one quarter of Latina women of all ages are uninsured, totaling over 1 million women. At a time when our economy has reached crisis proportions, preserving access to safe and professional medical care is essential for Latino families.

“In our community, our families are our strength. We know that our greatest responsibility is to protect the health and safety of our youth. Our daughters need access to caring counseling and professional medical care without delay when faced with a key life decision like a pregnancy.

“We want our daughters to come to us, and most do. If they are afraid of talking to us about a pregnancy, for whatever reason, they might take matters into their own hands without the support of family members or other trusted adults. Their lives and safety are too important to take that risk.

“In our work with young Latinas and parents across the state, it is clear that they want and need real solutions to promote their families' health and safety. Latino families need information about reproductive health and better tools to share this information with their children honestly and openly. Latino communities need comprehensive sexuality education in the schools to teach young people how to grow up healthy and programs to provide youth with future opportunities. Proposition 4 does nothing to provide real support or access to health care for Latino families.

“Latino families do not need a law that would intrude into private family matters. The courts and the government have no place in private family discussions. Latina women, communities of color and poor women have historically experienced governmental attempts to regulate their reproductive lives. We cannot let this type of oppression take place in California. We must resist forces that seek to deny women, families and communities the right to make informed choices about their reproductive health.

“Public perceptions of Latino families will no longer be used to keep us silent. We urge Latino families to seriously consider the negative effects Proposition 4 would have in our communities. We must demand that California’s laws promote the health and well-being of families, not place our most vulnerable young women in danger. We must stand in solidarity as Latino families and vote no on Proposition 4.”

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Note to editors/producers: Dolores Huerta Foundation artwork by Barbara Carrasco.