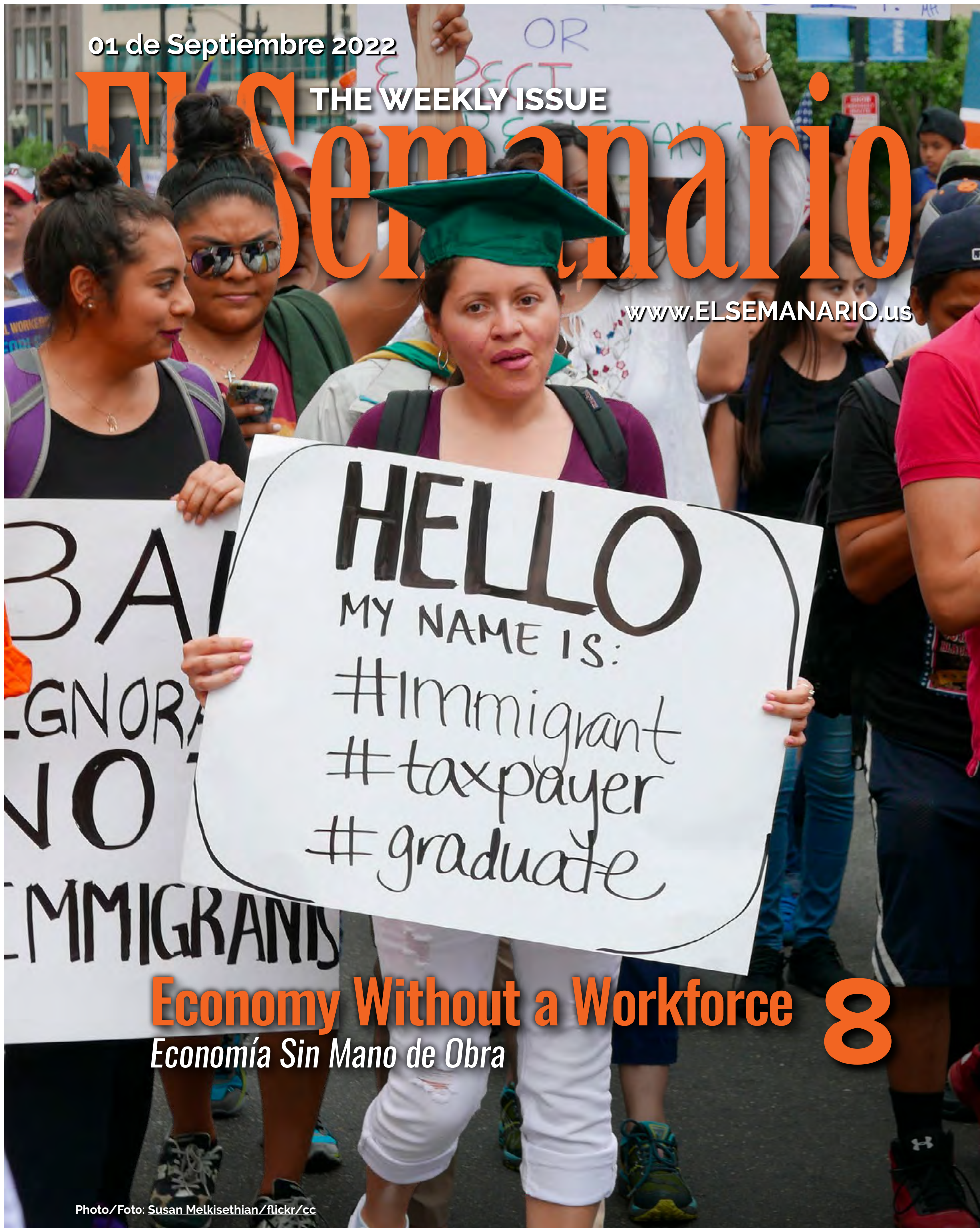


01 de Septiembre 2022

THE WEEKLY ISSUE

El Semanario

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Economy Without a Workforce 8
Economía Sin Mano de Obra

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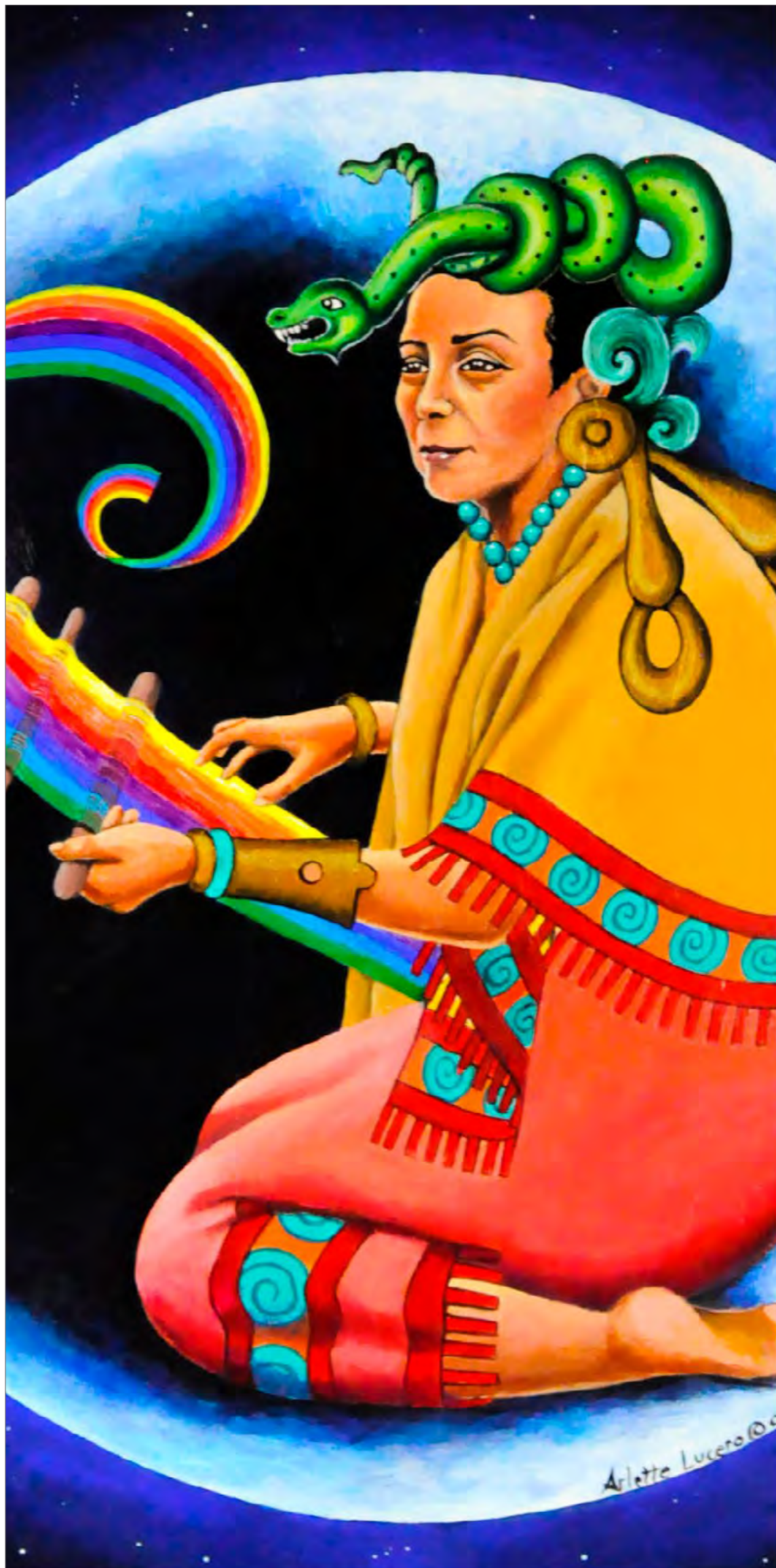


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Commentary/Comentario

Republican Lies Are Making News

Maribel Hastings and David Torres

As the countdown to the November 8, 2022 mid-term elections begins, disinformation campaigns on social platforms—and even traditional media—are spreading like weeds, as they have since 2016. And now they have an unapologetic ally in the Republican Party, which not only reproduces disinformation, but has normalized the extremist rhetoric of white supremacist groups.

It's a strategy to which they have resorted due to the fear of losing privilege and out of hypocrisy, more than a vision of a State and a

government working for the common good, knowing that the United States changed a while ago, displacing—by democratic means

“The Republican Party—principal promoter of falsehoods—is blurring the line between what is real and what is a lie, for political convenience.”

and through inclusion—the idea of a white nation for white people, alone.

And it is a lethal cocktail, because the falsehoods that they use to agitate their political base, intimidate opponents, and generate confusion among the population with political-electoral ends are fused with the racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric that is an integral part of this party's campaign messaging.

We must not forget that this anti-immigrant step gained strength precisely in the “Trump era,” when he won not only the presidential nomination of a Republican Party beholden to his ideas, but managed to gain the White House through the most racist and xenophobic campaign, which succeeded in capturing the minds of



Photo/Foto: América's Voice



Photo/Foto: América's Voice

millions of white people, blaming immigrants and diverse minorities of color for all the country's ills.

In fact, conspiracy theories about the “invasion” of migrants at the southern border and the “replacement theory” are openly used by Republican legislators

and candidates. And Republican leaders in Congress know it but are playing the long game, legitimizing those concepts that used to be ascribed only to fringe extremist and white supremacist groups.

See Hastings & Torres on page 17

La Falsedad Republicana Se Hace Noticia

Maribel Hastings y David Torres

Al iniciarse el conteo regresivo para las elecciones intermedias del 8 de noviembre de 2022, las campañas de desinformación en plataformas sociales —e incluso en medios tradicionales— florecen como hier-

ba silvestre, como lo hacen desde 2016. Y ahora tienen un aliado en un Partido Republicano sin pudor que no solo reproduce la desinformación, sino que ha normalizado la retórica extremista de grupos supremacistas blancos.

Es una estrategia a la que han tenido que recurrir con base en el temor a perder privilegios y en la

hipocresía, más que en una visión de Estado y de gobierno para el bien común, a sabiendas de que Estados Unidos cambió hace mucho tiempo, desplazando, por la vía democrática y de la inclusión, la idea de un país blanco solo para blancos.

Se trata de un cóctel letal porque las falsedades que buscan

agitar a su base política, amedrentar opositores y generar confusión entre la población con fines político-electorales se fusionan con la retórica racista y antiinmigrante que es parte integral de los mensajes de campaña de este partido.

No hay que olvidar que esta etapa antiinmigrante cobró fuerza precisamente en la “era de Trump”, quien ganó no solo la candidatura presidencial de un Partido Republicano secuestrado por sus ideas, sino que logró llegar a la Casa Blanca a partir de una campaña por demás racista y xenófoba que logró captar la mente de millones de blancos, al culpar a los inmigrantes y diversas minorías de color de todos los males del país.

Así, las teorías conspiratorias sobre la “invasión” de migrantes en la frontera sur y la “teoría del reemplazo” son utilizadas abiertamente por legisladores y candidatos republicanos. Y los líderes republicanos del Congreso lo saben, pero se hacen de la vista larga legitimando estos conceptos, que se circunscribían solo a grupos extremistas y supremacistas blancos.

Esta desinformación desestabilizadora tiene consecuencias serias en el mundo real. Los responsables de masacres en diversas partes del país donde el objetivo han sido minorías han citado algunas de estas teorías como la razón para perpetrar los ataques.

Por otro lado, las audiencias de habla hispana son uno de los objetivos favoritos de muchas de estas campañas de desinformación. En Florida, en las elecciones de 2020, se regó como pólvora a través de diversas plataformas sociales y algunos medios radi-

ales en español, que el aspirante presidencial Joe Biden era “comunista” y que sus políticas eran de corte “socialista”, similares a las del presidente de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro. En este estado que concentra cubanos, cubanoamericanos, venezolanos, nicaragüenses y hondureños, entre otros, decir comunismo es invocar al mismo diablo, de manera que la intención de lastimar a Biden y beneficiar a Trump tuvo una audiencia muy receptiva, aunque haya sido una mentira.

“El Partido Republicano, principal promotor de falsedades, borra la línea entre lo que es real y lo que es mentira, para su conveniencia política.”

Florida, en efecto, es terreno fértil para las campañas de desinformación y es también laboratorio del uso de retórica antiinmigrante, incluso por funcionarios latinos. Esta semana la vicegobernadora de Florida, Jeannette Núñez, cubanoamericana, hizo noticia al responder durante una entrevista de radio sobre la gran cantidad de cubanos que llegan a ese estado que el gobernador republicano Ron DeSantis debería enviar a los migrantes en autobuses hacia Delaware, el estado del presidente Biden, tal como lo ha hecho el gobernador de Texas, Greg Abbott, hacia Nueva York y Washington, DC.

Vea Hastings & Torres/Esp, página 17

Want to End the Teacher Shortage? Start Valuing Education

Rebekah Entralgo and Bella DeVaan

As students return to the classroom, school districts across the country are facing a historic number of teacher vacancies – an estimated 300,000, according to the National Education Association (NEA), the largest U.S. teachers union.

Some states are particularly hard hit, with approximately 2,000 empty positions in Illinois and Arizona, 3,000 in Nevada, and 9,000 in Florida.

How are political leaders responding? A number of rural Texas districts have moved to a four-day school schedule, creating major hassles for working parents. A new Arizona law will no longer require a bachelor's degree for full-time teachers. Florida is allowing military veterans to temporarily teach without prior certification. Florida's Broward County recruited over 100 teachers from the Philippines.

These band-aid actions ignore the root causes of the teacher crisis: low pay and burnout.

A new Economic Policy Institute report finds that teachers made 23.5 percent less than comparable college graduates in 2021. That's the widest gap ever – despite the extraordinary challenges teachers have faced during the pandemic. The gap is even wider in some of the states with the largest teacher shortages. In Arizona, for example, teachers earned 32 percent less than non-teacher college grads in the state last year. Across the country, real wages for public school teachers have essentially flatlined since 1996.

When the NEA surveyed teachers earlier this year, 55 percent reported they plan to leave the profession sooner than planned. That number is even higher among Black (62 percent) and Hispanic/Latino (59 percent) educators, who are already underrepresented in the teaching profession. In the same survey, 91 percent of teachers point to burnout as their biggest concern, with 96 percent sup-

We cannot continue to skimp on education while squandering our resources on the wealthy.

porting raising educator salaries as a means to address burnout.

Some states are getting the message: In New México, lawmakers have instituted minimum teacher salary tiers based on experience – beginning at \$50,000 and maintaining a \$64,000 median wage. They're also aiming to codify annual 7 percent raises so that teachers don't lose ground to inflation.

"These raises represent the difference of being on Medicaid with your family, the difference of having to have a second or third job or doing tutoring work on the side, the difference of driving the bus during the day and having to take extra routes for extracurriculars just to make ends meet," said New México teacher John Dyrz in a recent interview with More Perfect Union. "Having this increased compensa-

tion flow down to the workers gives people dignity. It shows that their work is being respected."

In other areas, teachers are harnessing their collective bargaining power to make their demands heard. Thousands of teachers in Ohio, Washington state, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. have gone on strike during the first weeks of the academic year.

The educators' union in Columbus, Ohio demands a simple, public "commitment to modern schools": not only pay raises but also smaller class sizes, decent air conditioning, adequate funding for the arts and physical education, and caps on numbers of periods taught in a row. Read one picketer's sign: "You think we give up easy? Ask how long we wait to PEE!"

Meeting such demands requires public investment. And unfortunately, too many lawmakers favor lining the coffers of the wealthy instead of funding our school systems.

In 2021, the Columbus Dispatch estimates schools in the city lost out on \$51 million to local real estate developers. In New York, an over \$200 million reduction



Photo: Inequality.org



Photo: Inequality.org

in school budgets has provoked public outcry in a city where luxury builders have pocketed well over \$1 billion in tax breaks each year.

New York City Comptroller Brad Lander told council members their cuts were particularly puzzling, given that the city boasts \$4.4 billion in remaining federal stimulus funds that must be spent by 2025. "Making cuts to individual school budgets at this moment is wrong for our students, for our teachers, and stands in the way of the equitable recovery our city needs," Lander said.

On August 25, the Columbus teachers union came to a "con-

ceptual agreement" with the city's schools, ending their strike. Let's hope this is a sign of a turning tide. Through a relentless pandemic, vi-
cious censorship of curricula, and surging inequality, we cannot continue to skimp on education while squandering our resources on the wealthy.

Rebekah Entralgo is the Managing Editor of Inequality.org. Bella DeVaan is the Research and Editorial Assistant for Inequality.org.

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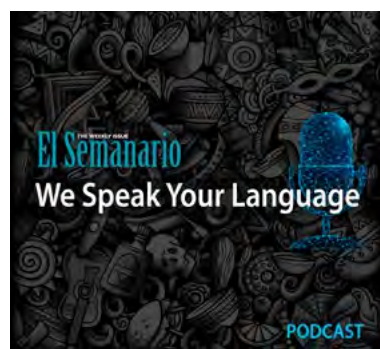
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Commentary / Comentario

Tuition-Free College Isn't Free When It's Funded by Oil and Gas

Jonathan Juárez-Alonzo

As thousands of students head back to their classrooms, those enrolled in higher education will begin to reap the benefits of tuition-free public college in New México.

On one hand, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's Opportunity Scholarship gives thousands of students the chance to pursue higher education without the financial barriers previously standing in their way.

But on the other, by funding these scholarships with volatile oil revenues, students like myself feel our futures are being held hostage: Do we invest in ourselves and take advantage of free higher education? Or should we even be

wasting these last fleeting years of our youth in a classroom when our elected leaders are leading us down a path toward total climate collapse?

The question is even harder for those of us with family in communities impacted by extraction. How do we feel good about using funds that have been generated from exploiting our homelands and sacrificing our people's health? My name is Jonathan Juárez-Alonzo, I'm 20 years old, from the Pueblos of Laguna and Isleta and I'm currently on an indefinite leave of absence from the University of New Mexico. As a first-generation college student, I started college eager for my future and the positive impacts an education would

“We're lacking the political willpower to dismantle and transform an industry that holds every aspect of our state in economic hostage.”

bring to me and my family long-term. I started classes in the fall of 2020 during the height of the COVID pandemic, and on the heels of the largest anti-police uprisings since the Civil Rights movement.

The police killings of people of color across the country — George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, as well as local victims of police brutality

like Abba James Boyd and Vicente Villela — had a significant impact on the direction I wanted to take my career.

Criminology and social work were never career paths that I envisioned myself taking. Growing up surrounded by one of the most violent police forces in the nation, I felt called to make my career about getting resources to those in our communities who need them the most.

But as I started paying attention to climate policy and actions, or lack thereof, on a local and state level, all my ambitions for a higher education were eclipsed. I don't consider myself a college dropout, but for the foreseeable future, I have no intentions of returning to



Photo: Climate Reality Project

the classroom. I enjoyed the rigor of academia, but I knew I couldn't spend the best years of my youth in the classroom while those in power chose to gamble with my future,

See Juárez-Alonzo on page 19

Placing Value on President Biden's Accomplishments

James E. García

President Biden has announced he will be cutting or eliminating student loan debt for millions of Americans. It's the latest in a growing list of tangible, beneficial achievements by his administration.

One of the best ways to assess what President Biden has accomplished since taking office is to put his administration's achievements into context — and, while we're at it, to talk about what he has *not* done.

The context: The global pandemic.

When Biden took office in January 2021, the world was still reeling from a once-in-a-century global pandemic that was killing more than 3,000 people in the U.S. a day and climbing.

On the day of his inauguration, Biden told the country his strategy for combating the virus would be

"based on science, not politics" and "truth, not denial," while pledging to administer 100 million shots of the COVID-19 vaccine in his first 100 days in office.

By late April 2021, the Biden administration had doled out 200 million shots of the vaccine. Nineteen months later, just over two-thirds of all Americans have been vaccinated and the nation's COVID-19 death toll has dropped precipitously — though the pandemic is still not over.

What Biden *did not* do is downplay or outright deny the deadly nature of the virus, unlike Donald Trump and his allies, who've done all they can to convince the public, without evidence, that the threat from COVID-19 was always overblown and/or part of a secret plot by the Democrats to make Trump look bad.

Let's be clear: More than 1 million Americans in the U.S. have died of COVID-19 and hundreds of thousands of them would likely be alive today if more people had gotten vaccinated and Trump and company had not spent most of 2020 saying, "It's going to disappear. [the virus] is disappearing" — a claim he repeated dozens of times, including the day after checking out of the hospital where he was being treated for, you got it, COVID-19.

The context: When Biden took office our economy was still reeling from the devastating impact of the pandemic, which, let's not forget, had all but paralyzed the richest economies around the world.

What President Biden did was get to work immediately working with Democrats in Congress — be-



Photo: James E. García

cause Republicans opposed the entire effort — to pass the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act. By early March 2021, Biden had signed the bill into law.

Critics blame Biden's mass infusion of federal dollars into our economy triggered today's high inflation. Really? How about the fact that some 20 million Americans were thrown out of work practically in one fell swoop at the peak

“Plain and simple, if the American Rescue Plan had not been passed by Democrats, the U.S. economy would have tumbled into recession — or far worse.”

of the shutdown in 2020 because of the pandemic — the effects of which were exacerbated by the Trump administration's disinformation campaign, incompetency, lack of leadership, and petty attacks on his political enemies.

See García on page 19

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'Commercializing' Covid-19 Response is Bad News on All Fronts

By Edward Kissam

Recent comments by White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Dr. Ashish Jha point to a major shift in the administration's approach to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Described by Jha as "commercialization," the shift in strategy portends serious consequences when it comes to equitable health access for the nation's most vulnerable.

Not much is yet known about what commercialization might entail except that if you need a vaccine or an antiviral treatment, you'd get it from your doctor or from a hospital—if you're lucky.

Speaking to CNN, Jha notes the shift aims to phase out federal funding that has, so far, helped assure free COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and treatment. This new approach is framed by the White House as long-anticipated and progressing well, but does it actually reflect improved public health strategy, or is it a surrender to political reality?

Dr. Jha's announcement came after months of unsuccessful political negotiations with Republicans, among them some, such as Florida Governor Ron De Santis, cynically opposed to COVID-19 vaccination as a public health strategy, and others, such as Marjorie Taylor Greene, promulgating conspiracy theories.

“This is not the right time to abandon the federal government's efforts to make free and easily accessible vaccination, testing, and treatment available to everyone.”

The Biden administration had initially sought at least \$22.5 billion in FY23 funding for pandemic response, warning about the consequences of inadequate funding if, as some models suggest,

there were to be another wave of COVID-19 this winter.

And what would those consequences be for communities?

In 2019, almost 30 million working-age people and children in the U.S. lacked health insurance. The initial investment in COVID-19 response under the American Recovery Act added health insurance coverage for slightly more than 5 million people—although coverage was surely lower among some vulnerable populations such as undocumented farmworkers, where only 22% have health insurance (although, at least in California, many may eventually benefit by 2024 from eligibility for state-subsidized health insurance).

If “commercialization” means reverting to the complex and paper-intensive patchwork quilt of the mainstream health care delivery system, it will inevitably amplify pre-existing chronic inequities. Whether “the system” works well for you or not depends on who you are and where you are in the health care ecosystem.



Only 22% of undocumented farmworkers are insured, making them among the most vulnerable population when it comes to healthcare access and treatment for Covid.
/ Sólo el 22% de los trabajadores agrícolas indocumentados están asegurados, lo que los convierte en la población más vulnerable en lo que respecta al acceso a la asistencia sanitaria y al tratamiento de Covid.

Vaccination is a case in point. Leaving aside for the moment the question about the extent to which COVID-19 “vaccine hesitancy” actually stems from cynical and politicized anti-vaxer messaging or from individual decisions, socioeconomic disparities in COVID-19 vaccine access will erect higher barriers to vaccination and treatment for racial/ethnic minorities and households in socially-disad-

vantaged communities, reversing progress made in the first three years of fighting the pandemic.

Cost barriers are real. To assess the likely impact of socioeconomic disparities if commercialization goes forward, one need only read an article in the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) that came out three

See Covid-19 on page 25

La 'Comercialización' de la Respuesta al Covid-19 es Una Mala Noticia

Por Edward Kissam

Los recientes comentarios del Dr. Ashish Jha, coordinador de la respuesta al COVID-19 en la Casa Blanca, apuntan a un importante cambio en el enfoque de la administración para luchar contra la pandemia del COVID-19. Descrito por Jha como

“

Este no es el momento de abandonar los esfuerzos del gobierno federal para que la vacunación, las pruebas y el tratamiento sean gratuitos y de fácil acceso para todos.

“comercialización”, el cambio de estrategia presagia graves consecuencias en lo que respecta al acceso equitativo a la salud de los más vulnerables de la nación.

Todavía no se sabe mucho sobre lo que podría suponer la comercialización, salvo que si se necesita una vacuna o un tratamiento antiviral, habrá que obtenerlos a través de su médico o de un hospital, si se tiene suerte.

En declaraciones a la CNN, Jha señala que el cambio pretende eliminar gradualmente los fondos federales que, hasta ahora, han contribuido a garantizar la gratuidad de las pruebas, la vacunación y el tratamiento del COVID-19. La Casa Blanca considera que este nuevo enfoque se esperaba desde hace tiempo y que está progresando bien, pero ¿refleja realmente una mejor estrategia de salud pública o es una rendición a la realidad política?

El anuncio del Dr. Jha se produjo tras meses de infructuosas negociaciones políticas con los republicanos, entre los que se encontraban algunos, como el gobernador de Florida Ron De Santis, que se oponían cínicamente a la vacu-

nación contra el COVID-19 como estrategia de salud pública, y otros, como Marjorie Taylor Greene, que promulgan teorías de conspiración.

La administración Biden había buscado inicialmente al menos 22,500 millones de dólares en fondos del año fiscal 23 para la respuesta a la pandemia, advirtiendo sobre las consecuencias de una financiación inadecuada si, como sugieren algunos modelos, se produjera otra ola de COVID-19 este invierno.

¿Y cuáles serían esas consecuencias para las comunidades?

En 2019, casi 30 millones de personas en edad de trabajar y niños en Estados Unidos carecían de seguro médico. La inversión inicial en la respuesta de COVID-19 bajo la Ley de Recuperación de Estados Unidos (American Recovery Act) agregó cobertura de seguro médico para un poco más de 5 millones de personas, aunque la cobertura fue seguramente menor entre algunas poblaciones vulnerables,

como los trabajadores agrícolas indocumentados, donde solo el 22% tiene seguro médico (aunque, al menos en California, muchos pueden eventualmente beneficiarse en 2024 de calificar para el seguro médico subsidiado por el estado).

Si la “comercialización” significa volver al complejo papeleo del sistema de prestación de servicios de atención médica convencional, lo cual inevitablemente amplificará las desigualdades crónicas preexistentes. El hecho de que “el sistema” funcione bien para usted, o no, dependa de quién sea y de dónde se encuentre en el ecosistema de atención médica.

La vacunación es un ejemplo de ello. Dejando de lado por el momento la cuestión de hasta qué punto la “renuencia a vacunarse” contra COVID-19 se debe realmente a los mensajes anti-vacunas cínicos y politizados de esta decisión. Las disparidades socioeconómicas en el acceso

a la vacuna contra COVID-19 erigirán mayores barreras para la vacunación y el tratamiento de las minorías raciales/étnicas y los hogares en las comunidades socialmente desfavorecidas, revirtiendo los progresos realizados en los tres primeros años de lucha contra la pandemia.

Las barreras de los costos son reales. Para evaluar el probable impacto de las disparidades socioeconómicas si la comercialización sigue adelante, basta con leer un artículo del prestigioso Diario de la asociación norteamericana de medicina (JAMA por sus siglas en inglés) que se publicó tres días después de que la administración anunciara la nueva fase de la estrategia federal de COVID. Los investigadores informan que, a principios de 2022, sólo el 16,1% de las personas sin seguro médico había recibido un refuerzo de la vacuna COVID-19, menos de la mitad de la

Vea Covid-19/Esp, página 23

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Loss of 1.7 Million Immigrants Fuels U.S. Labor Shortages and Inflation

By Jenny Manrique

Close to 15% of job openings that employ immigrant or foreign-born workers in the U.S. are still vacant, while the legal immigration system is in dire straits. From meat packing to home building to STEM professionals to nurses, the post-pandemic economy is reeling from a labor force decimated by restrictive immigration policies, which worsened under Donald Trump's administration.

The Halting of Immigration

"From the middle of 2019 until the end of 2021, there has been essentially zero net immigration to the U.S.," said Giovanni Peri, Ph.D. Professor of Economics and Founder and Director of the UC Davis Global Migration Center, citing US Bureau census data.

"Although in late 2021 and early 2022 these numbers started growing again, the fact that the inflow of immigrants stopped made the country lose more than 1.7 million (immigrants)," added Peri, noting that 900,000 of them would have been college educated who work in the STEM sector

— doctors, computer scientists, biomedical engineers, bio experts — and 800,000 would have been non-college educated concentrated in sectors such as food, hospitality, elderly and child care. "We are talking about the 1.1% of the US labor force," Peri added.

Peri spoke during a media briefing on August 26, hosted by Ethnic Media Services that sounded the alarm over how the lack of immigrants is hurting the economy. Meanwhile, public discussion focuses on an estimated 2 million border crossings for the fiscal year.

The halting of immigration coincides with more and more US citizens opting to work from home in online jobs, and people in their 50s and 60s opting for early retirement. When companies are struggling to hire people, wages go up and the rising cost of labor translates into inflation, Peri explained.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in July 2022, there were 10 million unfilled jobs in the US. Before COVID, in a similar period, that figure was 6 million.

Experts agree that there should be a government effort to make the H1B visa program (sponsored by employers) stronger and more



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in July 2022, there were 10 million unfilled jobs in the US. / Según la Oficina de Estadísticas Laborales, en julio de 2022 había 10 millones de puestos de trabajo vacantes en EE.UU.

inclusive for all sectors, while addressing the monstrous backlog in green cards and asylum claims.

Backlogs and Delays in the Immigration Processes

"In the past six or seven years we

have seen tremendous delays in the immigration processes across the country, both in the courts and also through the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)," said Gregory Z. Chen, Senior Director of Government Relations at the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Chen noted that when President Barack Obama left office, there were about 500,000 immigration cases in the backlog compared to 1.4 million cases during the Trump administration.

"As of today, we have about 1.6 million cases that are waiting to be heard, (each one) typically takes four to six years now," Chen said. "Many businesses can't wait to be operational."

Meanwhile, the Automated Export System (AES), the agency in charge of processing work permits, has increased its processing times from 180 days to up to seven months.

These backlogs can be fixed through a comprehensive immigration reform. Although almost 70% of Americans are in favor of it, there has been very little effort in a polarized Congress to ease restrictions for even legal immigrants.

Chen highlighted how President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act -recently signed into law- originally included provisions to legalize unauthorized immigrants, a provision that had to be abandoned to gain bipartisan support.

"The concern about the benefits immigration provides to the country and the economy has been subsumed by the idea that it's re-

lated to border national security issues," said Chen, who doesn't see a major immigration reform bill happening even in 2023.

Shortage of Nursing Professionals

For Julie Collins, perfusionist and Program Director Department of Cardiopulmonary Sciences in the College of Health Sciences at Rush University, one field where the absence of immigrants is acutely felt is medical care.

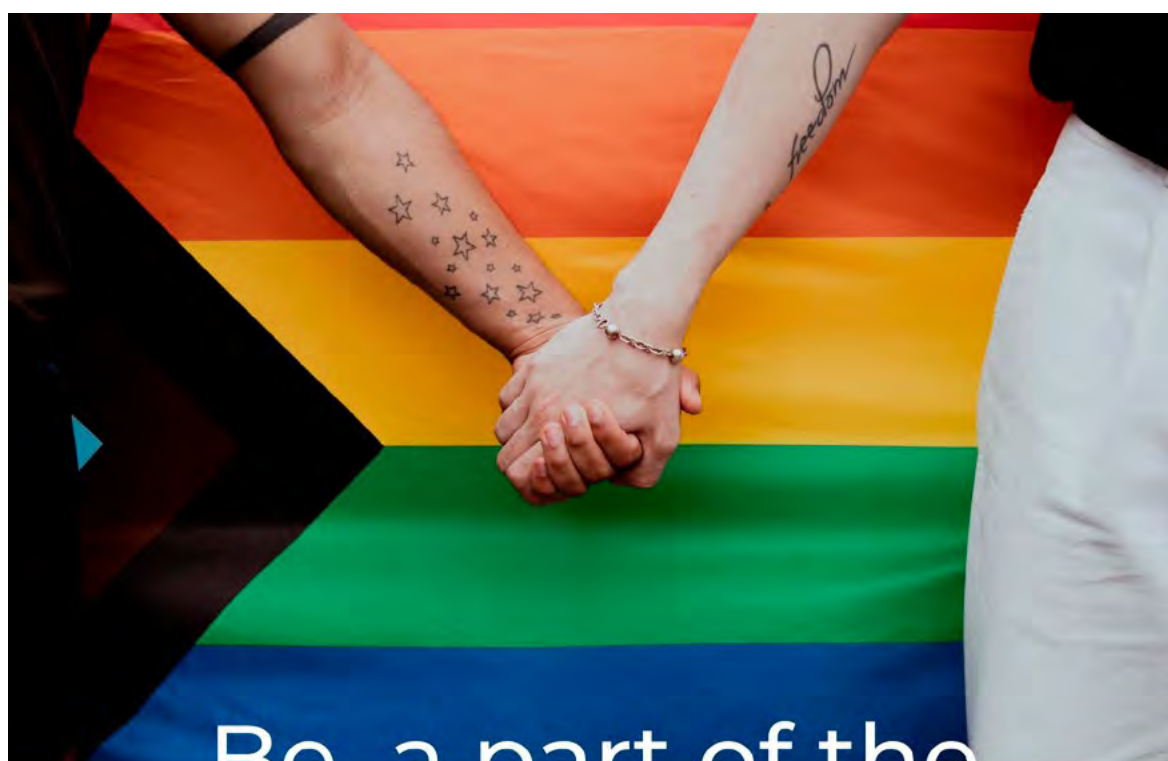
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“As of today, we have about 1.6 million cases that are waiting to be heard, (each one) typically takes four to six years now. Many businesses can't wait to be operational.”

Gregory Z. Chen,
American Immigration
Lawyers Association

Working on the COVID floor of her hospital for two years, Collins saw firsthand the impact of the critical shortage of nursing professionals.

"I was helping to cover shifts and I saw how burnt out nurses were becoming taking care of patients in COVID units," she said. "As COVID began slowing down, nurses sought early retirement, some



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La Pérdida de 1,7 Millones de Inmigrantes Alimenta la Escasez de Mano de Obra



Foto/Photo: Adobe Stock

La economía posterior a la pandemia se tambalea por una fuerza laboral diezmada por políticas de inmigración restrictivas. / The post-pandemic economy is reeling from a labor force decimated by restrictive immigration policies.

Por Jenny Manrique

Cerca del 15% de las ofertas de trabajo que emplean a trabajadores inmigrantes o nacidos en el extranjero en los EE. UU. todavía están vacantes, mientras que el sistema de inmigración legal se encuentra en aprietos. Desde el empaque de carne hasta la construcción de viviendas, pasando por los profesionales de STEM y las enfermeras, la economía posterior a la pandemia se tambalea por una fuerza laboral diezmada por políticas de inmigración restrictivas, que empeoraron bajo la administración de Donald Trump.

La reducción de la inmigración

"Desde mediados de 2019 hasta finales de 2021, prácticamente no ha habido inmigración neta en los EE. UU.", dijo Giovanni Peri, Ph.D. profesor de economía y fundador y director del Centro de Migración Global de UC Davis, citando datos del censo de la Oficina de EE. UU.

"Aunque a finales de 2021 y principios de 2022 estas cifras volvieron a crecer, el hecho de que se detuviera la entrada de inmigrantes, hizo que el país perdiera más de 1,7 millones (de inmigrantes)", agregó Peri y señaló que 900.000 de ellos habrían sido universitarios trabajadores del sector STEM -médicos, informáticos, ingenieros biomédicos, bioexpertos-, y 800.000 habrían sido no universitarios concentrados en sectores como alimentación, hostelería, y el cuidado de niños y tercera edad. "Estamos hablando del 1,1% de la fuerza laboral estadounidense", agregó Peri.

Peri habló durante una rueda de prensa el 26/8/22 organizada por Ethnic Media Services que hizo sonar la alarma sobre cómo la falta de inmigrantes está perjudicando la economía. Mientras tanto, la discusión pública se centra en un estimado de 2 millones de cruces fronterizos estimados para el año fiscal.



"Al día de hoy tenemos alrededor de 1,6 millones de casos que esperan ser escuchados, (cada uno) por lo general toma de cuatro a seis años. Muchas empresas están ansiosas por operar".

Gregory Z. Chen,
Asociación
Estadounidense de
Abogados de Inmigración

La reducción de la inmigración coincide con más y más ciudadanos estadounidenses que optan por trabajar desde casa en trabajos en línea, y personas de 50 y 60 años que optan por la jubilación anticipada. Cuando las empresas luchan por contratar personal, los salarios suben y el aumento del costo de la mano de obra se traduce en inflación, explicó Peri.

Según la Oficina de Estadísticas Laborales, en julio de 2022 había 10 millones de puestos de trabajo vacantes en EE.UU. Antes del COVID, en un periodo similar, esa cifra era de 6 millones.

Los expertos están de acuerdo en que debe haber un esfuerzo del gobierno para hacer que el programa de visas H1B (patrocinado por los empleadores) sea más fuerte e inclusivo para todos los sectores, al mismo tiempo que se aborda la monstruosa acumulación de solicitud de tarjetas verdes y de asilo.

Atrasos y Retrasos en los procesos migratorios

"En los últimos seis o siete años hemos visto tremendos retrasos en los procesos de inmigración en todo el país, tanto en los tribunales como a través de los Servicios de Ciudadanía e Inmigración de los Estados Unidos (USCIS)", dijo Gregory Z. Chen, director sénior de relaciones gubernamentales en la Asociación Estadounidense de Abogados de Inmigración. Chen señaló que cuando el presidente Barack Obama dejó el cargo, había alrededor de 500.000 casos de inmigración atrasados en comparación con 1,4 millones de casos durante la administración Trump.

"Al día de hoy tenemos alrededor de 1,6 millones de casos que esperan ser escuchados, (cada uno) por lo general toma de cuatro a seis años", agregó Chen. "Muchas empresas están ansiosas por operar".

En tanto, el Sistema Automatizado de Exportaciones (AES), organismo encargado de tramitar los permisos de trabajo, también incrementó sus tiempos de trámite de 180 días a hasta siete meses.

Estos retrasos pueden solucionarse a través de una reforma migratoria integral. Aunque casi el

70% de los estadounidenses está a favor, no ha habido apetito en un Congreso polarizado para aliviar las restricciones incluso para los inmigrantes legales.

Chen destacó como la Ley de Reducción de la Inflación del presidente Joe Biden -recientemente promulgada- originalmente incluía disposiciones para legalizar a los inmigrantes no autorizados, una disposición que tuvo que ser abandonada para obtener el apoyo bipartidista.

"La realidad sobre lo que la inmigración representa como un ben-

eficio para el país y la economía, a menudo se ha invisibilizado por la idea de que está relacionada con problemas de seguridad nacional fronteriza", dijo Chen, quien no ve un proyecto de ley de reforma migratoria venidero ni siquiera en 2023.

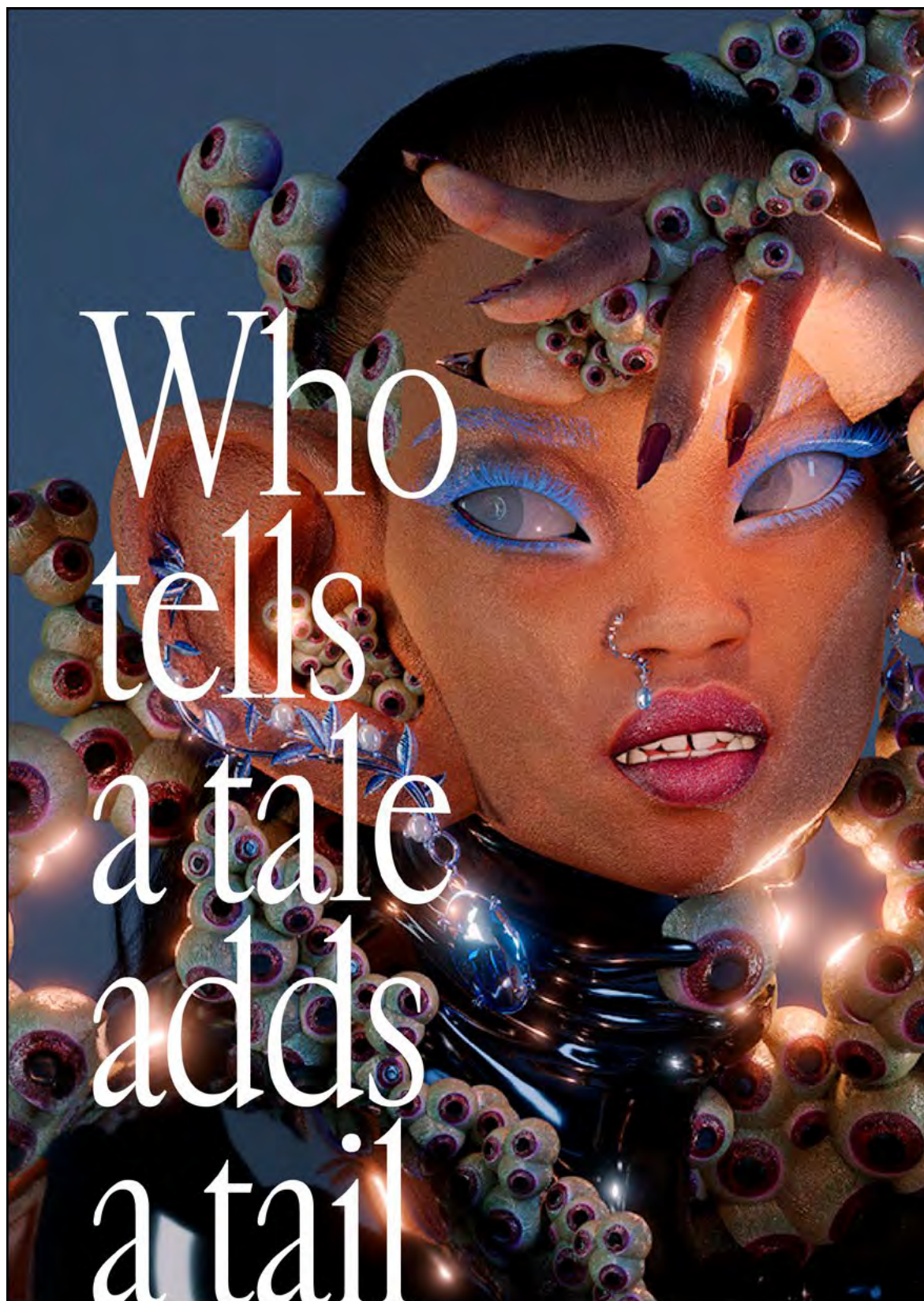
Escasez de profesionales de enfermería

Para Julie Collins, perfusionista y directora del programa del Departamento de Ciencias Cardiopulmonares de la Facultad de

Vea **Inmigrantes**, página 22

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Who tells a tale adds a tail

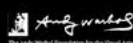
Latin America and
contemporary art



Discover works from 19 cutting-edge Latin American artists.
Now on view

IMAGE: Vitória Cribb, *VIGILANTE, EXTENDED* (video still detail), 2022. Film and digital installation; duration: 8 minutes, 44 seconds. © and courtesy Vitória Cribb

Who tells a tale adds a tail: Latin America and contemporary art is organized by the Denver Art Museum. It is presented with the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional support is provided by the Birnbaum Social Discourse Project, donors to the Annual Fund Leadership Campaign, and the residents who support the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD). Promotional support is provided by *5280 Magazine* and CBS4.



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State News / Noticias del Estado

An 'Invisible Population' in College Face Barriers



Photo by Joe Mahoney / Special to The Colorado Trust

Jada Galissini of Denver attended three different colleges while raising her daughter Gabby, who is now 7 years old. / Jada Galissini de Denver estudió en tres diferentes colegios comunitarios mientras cuidaba a su hija Gabby, quien ahora tiene 7 años.

COLORADO

By Jenna McCoy

Most weeknights, after her 3-year-old daughter A'nyah falls asleep, Molly Clark cracks open her textbooks and studies until her eyes "feel like sandpaper."

"As soon as I feel like it's not any use anymore, I'll backtrack a few pages, put my bookmark in, and I'll go to bed, which is usually around 12 to 2:30," said Clark, a 21-year-old student at Red Rocks Community College pursuing an associate's degree in fire and emergency services.

Clark and A'nyah live with Clark's parents, grandfather and two siblings in Thornton. A'nyah's father is not involved with raising her. Clark can't study when A'nyah is awake since her child has attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and requires constant attention. So Clark saves her schoolwork for the quiet hours of the night, when she finally has space to focus.

"It takes a lot of meticulous planning to go to school and have a child at the same time," said Clark, who finished her GED in 2021 after dropping out of high school in 2017, before she got pregnant.

Clark's struggles as a single parent and college student are not unique. In the U.S., more than one in five college students are parents, according to data from the 2015-16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study. In the Rocky Mountain region specifically—which includes Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming—2012 data revealed there were 205,214 student-parents, representing 27.9% of the overall student population. (More recent data aren't available; more on that below.)

At a time when the number of undergraduate students is decreasing overall, the drop is more significant among student-parents. From 2011-12 to 2015-16, student-parent enrollment at U.S. colleges declined 20% while the overall rate of enrollment fell roughly 6%.



"It takes a lot of meticulous planning to go to school and have a child at the same time."

Molly Clark, Student

This decline is due to "significant barriers that have just been increasing over the years, between costs, accessibility and then a general feeling that college is just not a place for you if you're a parent," said Nicole Lynn Lewis, a former student-parent and founder of the national nonprofit Generation Hope, which helps teen parents pursue college degrees.

The repercussions of decreased student-parent enrollment at colleges are real, as education attainment is strongly correlated with poverty rates. A 2016 analysis by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) found 13% of single mothers with a bachelor's degree live in poverty compared with 41% of single mothers who have only a high school degree.

Student-parents are more likely to be women and also more likely to be people of color than their non-student peers. In the Rocky Mountain region, 50% of Black women, 37.7% of Hispanic women

See [Invisible](#) on page 24

La 'Población Invisible' se Enfrenta a Barreras para Obtener Títulos

COLORADO

Por Jenny McCoy

La mayoría de los fines de semana, después de que su hija A'nyah de 3 años se duerme, Molly Clark abre sus libros de texto y estudia hasta que sus ojos "se sienten como de papel de lija".

"Tan pronto como siento que ya no me sirve de nada, retrocedo un par de páginas, pongo mi marcalibros ahí, y me voy a la cama, lo cual usualmente es alrededor de las 12 a 2:30", dijo Clark, una estudiante de 21 años en Red Rocks Community College que busca obtener su título asociado en servicios de incendios y emergencias.

Clark y A'nyah viven con los padres de Clark, su abuelo y dos hermanos en Thornton. El padre de A'nyah no participa en su crianza. Clark no puede estudiar cuando A'nyah está despierta porque su hija tiene trastorno por déficit de atención con hiperactividad y necesita atención constante. Por eso Clark espera para hacer su tarea en las horas más tranquilas de la noche, cuando finalmente tiene espacio para enfocarse.



"Es necesario planear muy meticulosamente para ir a la escuela y tener un hijo al mismo tiempo".

Molly Clark, Estudiante

"Es necesario planear muy meticulosamente para ir a la escuela y tener un hijo al mismo tiempo", dijo Clark, quien terminó su diploma de equivalencia general (GED, por sus siglas en inglés) en 2021 después de salirse de *high school* en 2017, antes de embarazarse.

Los desafíos de Clark como madre soltera y estudiante universitaria no son singulares. En Estados Unidos, más de uno de cada cinco estudiantes universitarios son padres, según datos del *Estudio Nacional de Asistencia a Estudiantes Postsecundarios* realizado en 2015-16. En la región de las montañas Rocosas específicamente, la cual incluye Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah y Wyoming, *datos de 2012* demostraron que había 205,214 padres-estudiantes, representando un 27.9 por ciento de la población estudiantil en general.

(No hay datos más recientes disponibles; hay más información sobre eso abajo.)

En un momento en el que la cantidad de estudiantes universitarios está disminuyendo en general, la reducción es más marcada entre los padres-estudiantes. Entre 2011-12 y 2015-16, la cantidad de padres-estudiantes inscritos en universidades de EE. UU. disminuyó en un 20 por ciento, mientras que el porcentaje en general disminuyó alrededor de un 6 por ciento.

Esta disminución se debe a "obstáculos importantes que solo han estado aumentando a lo largo de los años, entre costos, accesibilidad y un sentimiento generalizado de que la universidad realmente no es un lugar para ti si eres padre", dijo Nicole Lynn Lewis, exmadre-estudiante y fundadora de la organización nacional no lucrativa *Generation Hope*, la cual ayuda a padres adolescentes a que obtengan un título universitario.

Las consecuencias de menos padres-estudiantes inscritos en universidades son reales, ya que los logros educativos se relacionan fuertemente con las tasas de pobreza. Un *análisis realizado en 2016* por el Instituto para la Investigación de Políticas sobre Mujeres (IWPR, por sus siglas en inglés) encontró que el 13 por ciento de las madres solteras con un título universitario de 4 años viven en la pobreza, en comparación con el 41 por ciento de las madres solteras que solo tienen un diploma de *high school*.

Es más probable que los padres-estudiantes sean mujeres y también más probable que sean de color que sus pares que no estudian. En la región de las montañas Rocosas, 50 por ciento de las mujeres negras, 37.7 por ciento de las mujeres hispanas y 30.2 por ciento de las mujeres blancas en la universidad son madres, según los datos de 2012.

Aunque los padres-estudiantes tienen *promedios generales más altos que los estudiantes sin hijos*, según un análisis realizado por el IWPR del Estudio Nacional de Asistencia a Estudiantes Postsecundario 2015-16, sus probabilidades de graduarse de la universidad son más bajas. Alrededor del 52 por ciento de los padres-estudiantes universitarios dejaron de estudiar sin haber obtenido su título en 6 años, en comparación con el 32 por ciento de los estudiantes sin hijos, según *datos de 2009 del gobierno*, los datos más recientes disponibles.

Hasta con ese porcentaje importante de estudiantes universitarios en EE. UU. que también son padres, existen muy pocos datos (si es que los hay) de investigaciones sobre esa población. Un *documento informativo publicado por el IWPR en 2020* subraya esta falta de información: "A pesar de las grandes cantidades de estudiantes universitarios con hijos y sus necesidades singulares, la mayoría de las universidades, sistemas estatales de datos y conjuntos de datos nacionales sobre la educación superior no cuentan a los estudiantes con hijos ni documentan su progreso hacia la conclusión [de sus estudios]", los autores del documento escribieron.

Una de las razones por las que la universidad es tan desafiante para los padres-estudiantes es que tienen menos recursos para pagar por su educación que los estudiantes sin hijos, según un *informe* de la Oficina de Responsabilidades Gubernamentales de EE. UU. de 2019. Además, tienen *casi dos veces* más deudas por préstamos estudiantiles en comparación con los estudiantes universitarios en general, según los datos de 2015-16.

"Es mucho más costoso para los padres-estudiantes asistir a la universidad que para los estudiantes que no son padres", Lewis dijo. Lewis explica que los padres-estudiantes enfrentan costos por cuidados infantiles, más gastos para vivir y gastos por el transporte; ya que muchos no pueden vivir en los dormitorios universitarios con sus hijos, deben trasladarse a y desde la escuela, a veces por largas distancias. Todo esto se suma antes del costo de la colegiatura, los libros y otros cargos.

Clark, por ejemplo, no cumplió con los requisitos para obtener ayuda financiera federal el semestre pasado y estaba enfrentando dificultades para pagar su colegiatura en el periodo de tiempo establecido por la universidad. Hope House Colorado, una organización religiosa no lucrativa que ofrece apoyo a madres solteras, la ayudó a cubrir los costos de las clases.

"Le debo mucho a Hope House", dijo Clark, quien anteriormente había trabajado como técnica médica de emergencias, pero tuvo que renunciar a su trabajo el semestre pasado para cuidar de parientes enfermos, lo cual redujo sus ingresos.

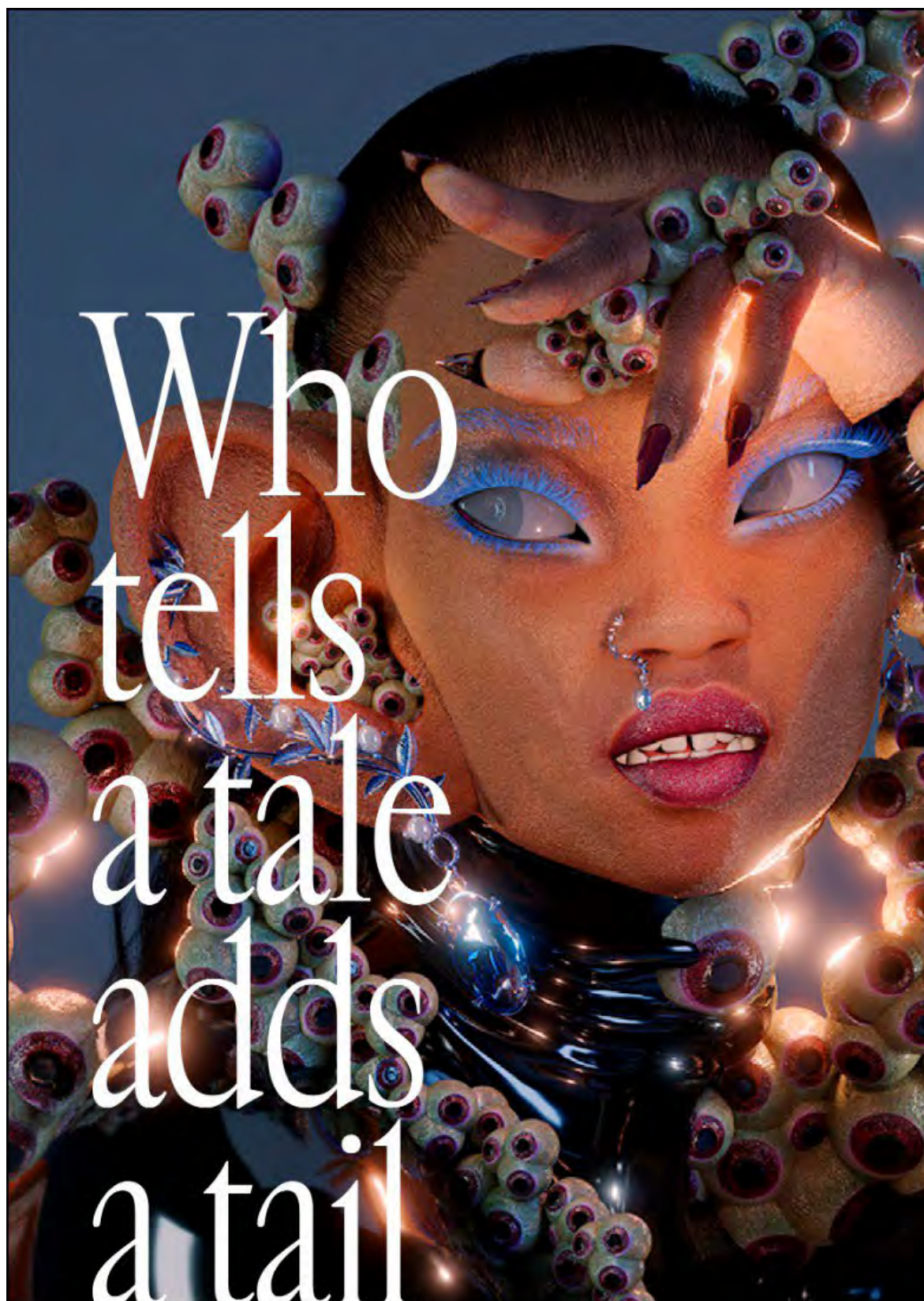
Encontrar cuidados infantiles confiables y económicos es otro desafío para los padres-estudiantes.

Clark no puede pagar por cuidados infantiles, y aunque Red Rocks Community College es *una del 29 por ciento de las instituciones públicas con títulos de 2 años* en Colorado que ofrecen servicios de cuidados infantiles en sus instalaciones, A'nyah no pudo usarlos porque sigue usando pañales. Así que por las 16 horas a la semana que Clark asiste a clases presenciales, depende de su mamá para que cuide a A'nyah. Clark dice que se siente culpable por eso, ya que su mamá padece de dolor crónico y otros problemas médicos.

Hasta cuando los padres-estudiantes encuentran cuidados infantiles de calidad, la coordinación de llevar e ir a buscar a sus hijos con el horario de clases puede presentar un obstáculo más. Leslie Martinez, quien tiene 21 años y vive en Denver, se graduó de Red Rocks en mayo con un título asociado en cosmetología. Martinez tuvo la suerte de encontrar un espacio para su hija Leyza de 3 años en el programa de cuidados infantiles de la escuela. Pero por dos

Vea *Invisible/Esp*, página 21





Who tells a tale adds a tail

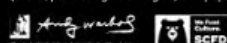
Latin America and contemporary art



Descubre obras de 19 artistas de vanguardia procedentes de América Latina.
En exhibición

IMAGEN: Vitoria Cribb, VIGILANTE, EXTENDED (detalle de fotograma de video), 2022. Película e instalación digital; duración: 8 minutos, 44 segundos. © y cortesía de Vitoria Cribb

Quien cuenta un cuento, añade un poco: América Latina y el arte contemporáneo está organizada por el Denver Art Museum. La exposición se presenta con el generoso apoyo de la fundación Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Asimismo, recibe el apoyo de Bimbeum Social Discourse Project, de los donantes a la campaña benéfica Annual Fund Leadership Campaign y de los residentes que brindan su apoyo al Distrito de Organizaciones Científicas y Culturales (SCFD, por sus siglas en inglés). El apoyo promocional lo proporciona 5280 Magazine y CBS4.



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State News / Noticias del Estado

Schools, Child Care Centers Must Test Water for Lead



Colorado schools and child care facilities will have to test their drinking water for lead by June 2023.

COLORADO

By Ann Schimke

A new state law will require about 5,800 Colorado elementary schools and child care centers to test their drinking water for lead and install filters or do repairs if they find elevated levels.

Schools and child care facilities will have until May 31 to test their water and will have to make fixes if lead levels are 5 parts per billion or higher. That threshold is the same as the limit set by the federal government for bottled water but lower than what most Colorado school districts previously used.

The law, which comes with \$21 million for testing and repairs, represents the first time Colorado has established regulations governing lead levels in school and child care drinking water. It comes as a growing number of states have passed laws to address childhood lead exposure following the 2014 water crisis in Flint, Michigan.

Lead is a harmful neurotoxin that can cause learning disabilities and behavior problems, with even low levels of exposure impacting a child's IQ. Lead levels in American children have decreased dramatically since the 1970s, but studies show many children still have detectable levels.

A 2021 study published in the peer-reviewed journal JAMA Pediatrics found that 72% of Colorado children under 6 who were tested had detectable levels of lead in their blood — though many young children in the state are never tested at all.

Generally, Colorado lawmakers, school officials, and advocates praised the new law for taking steps toward ensuring students have safe drinking water at school or child care, though for some, it didn't go as far as they'd hoped.

Jaquieyah Fields, communications director at the Colorado People's Alliance, a racial justice group that helped shape the bill, described the law as a big accomplishment that could serve as a stepping stone to future legislation on the topic.

"I think that the goal was to do more with it," she said, but it's "still pretty solid."



"There is a clear threat to Colorado Department of State (CDOS) staff, including the Secretary of State. We are, simply stated, facing a threat environment that is unprecedented for election officials and staff."

Christopher Beall,
Colorado Deputy
Secretary of State

Bob Lawson, executive director for facilities management and construction in the 15,000-student Pueblo School District 60, said he's pleased the law establishes a clear lead threshold for school water.

"At least they've done something to create a standard for us to use," he said. "That's the big thing because Colorado didn't have anything."

Elin Betanzo, a water scientist who helped uncover the Flint crisis, said legislation to ensure safer drinking water in schools is a good thing, but that installing filters right away is a better strategy than testing water sources and then making fixes. She said it's well known that school drinking water often contains detectable levels of lead.

See **Lead** on page 25

Pruebas de Plomo en Agua son Requisito Ahora para Escuelas

COLORADO

Por Ann Schimke

Una ley estatal nueva requerirá que aproximadamente 5,800 escuelas primarias y centros para cuidado de niños en Colorado hagan pruebas de plomo en el agua e instalen filtros, o que hagan las reparaciones correspondientes si encuentran niveles altos de plomo.

Las escuelas y los centros para cuidado de niños tendrán hasta el 31 de mayo para hacerle pruebas al agua, y tendrán que hacer reparaciones si el nivel de plomo es más de 5 partes por mil millones. Ese límite es el mismo límite establecido por el gobierno federal para el agua embotellada, pero menos que el usado previamente por la mayoría de los distritos escolares de Colorado.

Esta ley, que incluye unos \$21 millones para pruebas y reparaciones, representa la primera vez que Colorado ha establecido regulaciones para los niveles de plomo en el agua potable de las escuelas y los centros para cuidado de niños. Fue aprobada a la misma vez que un número creciente de estados han aprobado leyes para resolver el problema de exposición a plomo en los niños después de la crisis de agua potable que ocurrió en el 2014 en Flint, Michigan.

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la crisis de agua potable que ocurrió en el 2014 en Flint, Michigan.

El plomo es una neurotoxina dañina que puede causar discapacidades de aprendizaje y problemas de comportamiento, y hasta un nivel bajo de exposición puede afectar el coeficiente de inteligencia (IQ) de un niño. Los niveles de plomo en los niños de Estados Unidos han bajado drásticamente desde la década de 1970, pero hay estudios que han demostrado que en muchos niños todavía se puede detectar la presencia de plomo.

Un estudio de 2021 publicado en la revista médica JAMA Pediatrics encontró que un 72% de los niños menores de 6 años en Colorado que pasaron por pruebas tenían niveles detectables de plomo en la sangre — pero a muchos niños del estado nunca se les hacen pruebas.

Generalmente, los legisladores, funcionarios escolares y defensores de Colorado alabaron la ley nueva por tomar medidas para asegurar que los estudiantes tengan agua potable segura en la escuela o el centro de cuidado, pero para algunas personas la ley no llegó tan lejos como ellas esperaban.

Jaquieyah Fields, directora de comunicaciones en Colorado People's Alliance (un grupo de justicia racial que ayudó a darle forma al proyecto de ley), describió la ley como un gran logro que puede servir como puerta a otras leyes futuras sobre el mismo tema.

"Pienso que el objetivo era lograr más", dijo ella, pero de todos modos "es bastante buena".

Bob Lawson, director ejecutivo de manejo de instalaciones y construcción en el Distrito Escolar Pueblo 60 (de 15,000 estudiantes), dijo que está complacido porque la ley establece un límite claro de plomo para agua en las escuelas.

"Al menos han hecho algo para establecer la norma que debemos seguir", dijo él. "Eso es grande porque Colorado no tenía nada".

Elin Betanzo, especialista en agua que ayudó a descubrir la crisis en Flint, dijo que es bueno tener legislación para asegurar que las escuelas tengan agua potable segura, pero que instalar filtros inmediatamente es mejor estrategia que hacerle pruebas a las fuentes de agua para luego corregir cualquier problema. Ella dijo que es de amplio conocimiento que el agua potable de las escuelas a menudo contiene niveles de plomo detectables.

Eso se debe en parte a que las plomerías vendidas como "libres de plomo" todavía tienen permitido contener una pequeña cantidad de plomo.

"El agua es un solvente universal. Cuando tiene contacto con plomo, ese plomo entra al agua", dijo Betanzo, fundadora de la empresa consultora Safe Water Engineering, de Detroit.

"Quizás no sea hoy ni mañana... pero si hay plomo presente, tarde o temprano estará en el agua".

Leyes en evolución

La nueva ley sobre plomo de Colorado cambió bastante desde que fue introducida, en parte por la resistencia de algunos líderes de escuelas y educación temprana. La versión final tiene menos requisitos, tanto en cantidad como en rigurosidad, que las primeras versiones.

El proyecto de ley original hubiese requerido que las escuelas y los programas de cuidado de niños instalaran filtro en todas las fuentes de agua potable, instalaran una estación para llenar botellas de agua filtrada por cada 100 estudiantes, y condujeran pruebas de plomo anuales en el agua potable. Todas las fuentes de agua con un nivel de plomo más alto de 1 parte por mil millones tendrían que ser corregidas, y se hubiesen requerido letreros nuevos y otras notificaciones.

El límite de 1 parte por cada mil millones es el recomendado por la Academia Americana de Pediatría para las fuentes de agua, pero pocos estados lo han adoptado. En vez de eso, la mayoría que ha aprobado leyes recientes ha establecido el límite en 5 o 10 partes por mil millones. El límite de Maine es 4 partes por cada mil millones.

Los grupos que representan a proveedores de cuidado de niños opusieron el proyecto de ley, diciendo que las reglas propuestas serían onerosas y demasiado costosas.

Dawn Alexander, directora ejecutiva de Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado, dijo que sería injusto imponerle estándares estrictos a los establecimientos de cuidado de niños, porque muchos casos de envenenamiento con plomo se originan en los hogares de los niños, que no están sujetos a esas reglas. Durante su trabajo anterior en el departamento de salud del condado de Weld, ella encontró que los investigadores usualmente

descubrían que los altos niveles de plomo eran causados por pintura de plomo en la residencia de los niños.

"Simplemente no tiene sentido tener estas... imposiciones en negocios que ya están teniendo dificultades, ya que realmente no son la fuente que está generando esos problemas extremos de salud en los niños de nuestro estado".

Alexander dijo que está complacida con la versión final de la ley: "Realmente es una ley mucho más razonable".

Los proveedores de cuidado de niños en el hogar con licencia podrán optar por no cumplir los requisitos nuevos.

Mark Anderson, pediatra en Denver Health, piensa que la ley es buena, especialmente cuando se trata de los fondos para ayudar a las escuelas y a los centros de cuidado a cubrir el costo de las pruebas y las reparaciones.

"Si el costo ya no es una inquietud, no veo ninguna razón para no eliminar el plomo del agua", dijo.

Vea **Plomo**, página 18



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State News / Noticias del Estado

New México to Receive \$25 Million to Clean Up 200 Orphaned Wells

NEW MEXICO

By Hannah Grover

While standing at the future site of the San Juan Solar project, with the coal-fired San Juan Generating Station and an old pump jack in the background, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy David Turk said the country's energy transition could be visualized.

Turk and Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland joined solar developers, the director of the National Economic Council Brian Deese and New México officials to tout the funding and incentives made possible through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act



Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland attends a press conference at the future San Juan Solar site in New México. / La Secretaria del Interior, Deb Haaland, asiste a una conferencia de prensa en las futuras instalaciones de San Juan Solar en Nuevo México.

that passed in November and the Inflation Reduction Act that President Joe Biden signed last week.

The San Juan Solar project will someday replace the electricity that the Public Service Company

of New México receives from the coal-fired San Juan Generating Station.

Deese said that the Inflation Reduction Act provides incentives for companies to build solar arrays in communities like San Juan County that are being hit hard economically by the transition to cleaner energy sources.

During the visit, Haaland said that 24 states, including New México, will be receiving a total of \$560 million to cap, reclaim and remediate about 10,000 orphaned oil and gas well sites across the country.

New México will receive \$25 million beginning Oct. 1 to address 200 sites in the San Juan and Permian basins.

“

“Those of us from New México are all too familiar with legacy pollution.”

U.S. Secretary of Interior
Deb Haaland

“Those of us from New México are all too familiar with legacy pollution,” she said while announcing the funding.

She said millions of Americans live within one mile of an orphaned oil or gas well.

See Wells on page 20

Nuevo México Recibirá 25 Millones de Dólares para Limpiar 200 Pozos Olvidados

NEW MEXICO

Por Hannah Grover

De pie en el futuro emplazamiento del proyecto San Juan Solar, con la central eléctrica de carbón de San Juan y un viejo gato de bombeo al fondo, el subsecretario de Energía de EE.UU., David Turk, dijo que se podía visualizar la transición energética del país.

Turk y la secretaria de Interior, Deb Haaland, se unieron a los promotores de energía solar, al director del Consejo Económico Nacional, Brian Deese, y a funcionarios de Nuevo México para hablar de la financiación y los incentivos que han sido posibles gracias a la Ley de Inversión en Infraestructuras y Empleos que se aprobó en noviembre y a la Ley de Reducción de la Inflación que el presidente Joe Biden firmó la semana pasada.

El proyecto San Juan Solar sustituirá algún día la electricidad que la Compañía de Servicios Públicos de Nuevo México recibe de la Estación Generadora de San Juan, que funciona con carbón.

Deese dijo que la Ley de Reducción de la Inflación ofrece incentivos para que las empresas construyan matrices solares en comunidades como el condado de San Juan, que están siendo muy afectadas económicamente por

“

“Los habitantes de Nuevo México estamos demasiado familiarizados con la contaminación heredada.”

Secretaria de Interior,
Deb Haaland

la transición a fuentes de energía más limpias.

Durante la visita, Haaland dijo que 24 estados, incluido Nuevo México, recibirán un total de 560 millones de dólares para tapar, recuperar y remediar unos 10.000 pozos de petróleo y gas sin ocupar en todo el país.

Nuevo México recibirá 25 millones de dólares a partir del 1 de octubre para tratar 200 emplazamientos en las cuencas de San Juan y del Pérmico.

“Los habitantes de Nuevo México estamos demasiado familiarizados con la contaminación heredada”, dijo al anunciar la financiación.

Dijo que millones de estadounidenses viven a menos de una milla de un pozo de petróleo o gas huérfano.

“Se trata de peligros ambientales que contaminan las aguas subterráneas, ensucian el paisaje con equipos oxidados y peligrosos, dañan la vida silvestre y filtran metano, un grave peligro para la seguridad y una causa importante del cambio climático”, dijo.

Haaland dijo que la financiación anunciada el 25 de agosto es sólo el comienzo, y que más adelante habrá más fondos disponibles.

Mientras tanto, Turk anunció el inicio de un Equipo de Respuesta Rápida para ayudar a la transición energética en zonas como el condado de San Juan, que se enfrenta al cierre de centrales eléctricas de carbón.

“Es raro tener un anuncio en un día en el que confluyen tantos hilos del trabajo que se hace y los

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New México Governor and Thousands of New Mexicans Have COVID

NEW MEXICO

By Austin Fisher

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham last Thursday morning tested positive for COVID-19.

The New México chapter of the survivors' group Marked by COVID the next day wished Lujan Grisham a speedy recovery and said her infection "underscores the uncontrolled high community spread of the virus in New México and the fact that no one is safe from this potentially deadly and disabling disease."

The group wrote Lujan Grisham and her acting Health Secretary Dr. David Scrase a letter calling for the return of public health measures like masking that are proven to slow the spread of the virus. As of Monday, the Governor's Office had not replied to the letter, according to her Press Secretary Nora Meyers Sackett.

"The governor is vaccinated and boosted, with access to high quality health care and the ability to self-isolate and work remotely," Marked by COVID wrote. "As decision-makers continue to roll back mitigation measures and urge a 'return to normal,' they must remember their experience is far from typical for the average New Mexican."

In the 10 days leading up to the governor's positive test, at least 5,730 New Mexicans also tested positive, according to state Department of Health data. Official case statistics are likely a significant undercount, and the true number could be many times higher, according to DOH.

Many of those people are not going to be able to stay home from work to isolate themselves because there is no Occupational Safety and Health Administration standard for COVID in any workplace in the U.S.

And many might not have an established relationship with a medical provider, including about 215,000 New Mexicans who are uninsured and often work frontline jobs, which put them at higher risk of catching the virus, according to Health Action New Mexico.

That means they might be less likely to get testing or antiviral medication that can shorten and lessen illness, and potentially decrease her chances of long-COVID effects. Without such access, they are at a higher risk of severe illness and death.

The governor's statement announcing her infection points out that she is fully vaccinated and boosted, and taking Paxlovid to reduce her risk of severe illness. She encouraged New Mexicans to get the shot.

As of Monday, the governor was still isolating and dealing with congestion and a scratchy throat, Meyers Sackett said.

She said the governor "is very grateful for the robust protections offered to her and others by vaccines and boosters, and for the ready availability of additional effective treatment like Paxlovid."

"The governor testing positive is also an opportunity to remind New Mexicans of the efficacy and availability of early antiviral treatment, which is available whether or not someone has a primary care provider due to the Test to Treat program," Meyers Sackett said in a written statement.

“Those who are systematically disadvantaged both in our state and throughout the country will continue to be the ones that bear the highest cost of COVID. The burden will fall on them the most heavily, as it always has.”

Hunter Marshall, Nurse

She said New Mexicans who test positive for COVID-19 can find providers, Test-to-Treat clinics and nearby pharmacies at this [website](#). She said doing so provides "easy and effective treatment that is also free of cost to all New Mexicans."

The first thing Hunter Marshall, a registered nurse in Albuquerque, thought when they heard the news was that the governor has access to Paxlovid, and she can use it safely because she has a provider to consult with about whether she is taking any medications that interact with Paxlovid.

"Those who are systematically disadvantaged both in our state and throughout the country will continue to be the ones that bear the highest cost of COVID," Marshall said. "The burden will fall on them the most heavily, as it always has."

Marshall runs into many people who — even if they are lucky enough to have access to testing

resources and are aware they have COVID — don't know how to go about getting Paxlovid.

Even if someone nominally has access to Paxlovid or other antivirals, there is still not much known about whether they prevent long COVID, Marshall said.

Asked to comment on the letter, DOH Spokesperson Jodi McGinnis Porter did not address Marked by COVID's request to reinstate universal masking.

"Fortunately, we are in a completely different place in the COVID-19 pandemic than we were in March of 2020," McGinnis Porter said. "Today, thanks to vaccines and boosters, tests (PCR and home tests), widely available masks, oral treatments and education, we have a lot of tools at our fingertips to safeguard ourselves and loved ones to help prevent serious illness and death from the virus — and our death and hospitalization numbers bear that out."

But there are metrics that matter aside from death and hospitalizations, such as long-term disability, Marshall said. And controlling the spread of COVID in the first place is critically important to preventing Long COVID, Marked by COVID wrote.

It's nice for a public figure to tell the public to get vaccinated, get boosted, and get an antiviral therapeutic, Marshall said, "but for a variety of reasons, that isn't an option for everybody, and it's incumbent upon the state to provide as many opportunities and as many options for people to keep themselves safe."

Survivors group asks to bring back protections

Marshall said they are saddened that the desire to return to some sort of "normal" has meant abandoning evidence-based harm reduction measures like masking when transmission is high, at the expense of some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Marked by COVID implored Lujan Grisham and Scrase to immediately reinstate indoor mask requirements, provide free high-quality masks in public places, and develop and implement clear, data-informed benchmarks for reintroduction of mitigation measures like testing, masking and contact tracing.

Masking is essential to providing freedom of movement to the most vulnerable, Marked by COVID wrote, including seniors, people with disabilities or chron-



In the 10 days leading up to the governor's positive test, at least 5,730 New Mexicans also tested positive, according to state Department of Health data.

ic illnesses, those with long Covid, people of color, LGBTQ+ folks, immigrants and people with low incomes.

It would allow those groups to participate in society and access essential services, they wrote, including seeing a doctor, going to a hospital, picking up prescriptions, getting groceries or renewing a vehicle registration.

These "should not be activities only available to the rich," who know if they fall sick they have access to fast treatment, paid time off, ample space for isolation, delivery services, child care, and housing, Marked by COVID wrote.

"Many New Mexicans have been shut out of public life because they might not survive a COVID infection," they wrote. "Many of us are avoiding necessary medical care, and being forced to drastically limit our social, volunteer and professional lives."

New México and the U.S. as a whole still have an underfunded and understaffed public health system, Marshall said, which limits our ability to have a good sense of the amount of COVID transmitted

in the community at any given time and leaves many people on their own when it comes to navigating the risk of catching the virus.

"We understand that the White House is erroneously promoting a victory over COVID-19 in the lead-up to elections and that the CDC has put local leaders in a bind," Marked by COVID wrote, "but we expect better from New México. It's why we're proud to call this state home."

Resources

DOH has made a COVID-19 support and guidance toolkit in English and Spanish [here](#) (scroll down to "COVID-19 Toolkit"). Enter your ZIP code to find a testing provider [here](#). Find a vaccine provider and schedule an appointment [here](#). Find an antiviral treatment provider [here](#).

Austin Fisher is a reporter with Source New Mexico. This article is republished from Source New Mexico under a Creative Commons license.

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State News / Noticias del Estado

'Pandemic Is Far From Over': People's CDC Tells Congress to Fund Covid Response

NEW MEXICO

By Kenny Stancil

A progressive coalition called the People's CDC on Tuesday criticized the federal government for releasing a "horrifying set" of relaxed public health guidelines earlier this month and urged lawmakers to allocate sufficient funding to ensure that everyone has free access to masks, tests, treatments, vaccines, and other resources needed to defeat Covid-19.

"The pandemic is far from over," the People's CDC said in a statement, pointing to hundreds of Covid deaths per day in the U.S. alone, rising child hospitalizations, and a report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing that roughly 20% of adults develop longterm symptoms or complications after being infected, often called Long Covid.

"At the People's CDC, we know that we can keep each other safe. We know that we can do better—

and that together, we can fight for a just and equitable pandemic response," the coalition added, urging people to sign a letter calling on President Joe Biden and members of Congress to "use all the tools available to keep us all safe."

The letter denounces "the disgraceful new CDC Covid guidelines" published on August 11. "Four hundred people are dying daily in the U.S. alone. Thousands are becoming severely and chronically ill from a preventable disease. Due to the constant evolution of new Covid variants, the U.S. has been in a surge—currently seeing high or substantial transmission in 99% of U.S. counties—since early June."

"The guidelines place the responsibility of public health onto individuals [with] proper resources or support," says the letter. "This is unacceptable. We need responsible, clear CDC guidelines that will keep our communities and our loved ones safe."

The letter implores the White House and Congress "to act to stop

the unchecked spread of Covid-19, immediately," by providing:

- Free access to N95-grade masks for all;
- Free access to PCR and rapid testing;
- Robust, universal, paid sick leave;
- Mask mandates in public places, including schools, public transport and medical facilities;
- Federal funding and guidance for ventilation and filtration updates, coupled with meaningful regulation;
- Universal access to healthcare including continued Covid treatment and testing for uninsured people; and
- Updated vaccines and universal access to them globally.

"You must choose a healthier, more equitable pandemic response," the letter concludes. "We all deserve better."

The letter comes just days after the Biden administration announced that it plans to suspend the distribution of free at-home diagnostic tools on Friday, September 2 "because Congress hasn't provided additional funding to replenish the nation's stockpile of tests."

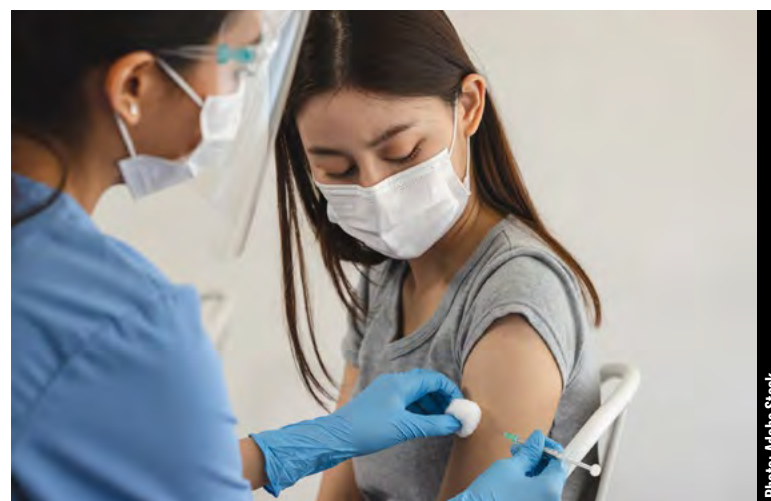
Just over a week ago, it was revealed that the Biden administration is taking steps to stop purchasing Covid-19 vaccines and treatments in the coming months.

Tahir Amin, an intellectual property lawyer and co-executive director of the Initiative for Medicines, Access, and Knowledge (I-MAK), called the plan a "recipe for disaster, unless you are a pharmaceutical company or other profit center in the healthcare market."

Shifting the acquisition of Covid-19 jabs and therapeutics from the federal government to the commercial market is also the result of congressional inaction—specifically right-wing obstructionism.

Funding for the pandemic response is quickly disappearing. Although the White House in February asked Congress to provide \$30 billion to fight the public health emergency at home and abroad, opposition from Republicans has prevented a much smaller package from moving forward.

GOP lawmakers want to repurpose aid allocated to states under the American Rescue Plan, insisting that no new relief money should be greenlit until existing finances are depleted, and they are opposed to any amount of new spending aimed at strengthen-



Experts have warned that a coronavirus surge this fall and winter could infect up to 100 million people in the U.S. alone.

ing international efforts to defeat Covid-19—a disease that has been made far deadlier by global vaccine apartheid.

Republicans' refusal to provide more funding has led to what Adam Gaffney, an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard University and a pulmonary and intensive care unit doctor, earlier this year characterized as "the rationing of Covid-care by ability to pay."

Gaffney said that in March, after a federal health agency tasked with covering coronavirus testing and treatment for uninsured people in the U.S. ran out of funds and stopped accepting claims, a move that has led to patients being charged \$125 for a single PCR test.

In May, the Biden administration announced that it is preparing to ration vaccines due to Senate Republicans' persistent stonewalling of new pandemic spending.

In addition, the White House earlier this month stopped buying monoclonal antibody treatments, transferring that responsibility to states and hospitals.

Gaffney, the past president of Physicians for a National Health Program, called the proposal to commercialize the procurement and provision of Covid-19 vaccines and treatments a "terrible idea."

"We must push back," Gaffney wrote recently on social media. "Free provision of vaccinations, Paxlovid, and monoclonals has been critically important—even if disparities persisted."

The ongoing pandemic has already caused more than one million deaths in the U.S. and 15 million globally.

Experts have warned that a coronavirus surge this fall and winter could infect up to 100 million people in the U.S. alone, leading to one million hospitalizations and almost 200,000 deaths in a worst-case scenario.

People in the U.S. have died from Covid-19 at a significantly higher rate than their counterparts in other wealthy nations—and poor counties in the U.S. have suffered twice as many deaths as rich ones.

The country's pandemic death toll, progressives argue, reflects its deeply unequal socio-economic

“

"Four hundred people are dying daily in the U.S. alone. Thousands are becoming severely and chronically ill from a preventable disease. Due to the constant evolution of new Covid variants, the U.S. has been in a surge—currently seeing high or substantial transmission in 99% of U.S. counties—since early June."

People's CDC

order, which lacks lifesaving rights like universal healthcare, paid sick leave, and other benefits enjoyed in places where union density is higher.

A single-payer healthcare system such as Medicare for All could have prevented more than 338,000 Covid-19 deaths nationwide, a recent analysis found.

Kenny Stancil is a staff writer with Common Dreams.

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OneCO's 2022 LGBTQ+ Equality Legislative Scorecard



How do your state legislators score when it comes to guaranteeing a fair and just state for LGBTQ+ Coloradans and their families?



Hastings & Torres

This destabilizing disinformation has serious consequences in the real world. The people responsible for massacres targeting minorities in different parts of the country have cited some of these theories as the reason for carrying out their attacks.

On the other hand, Spanish-speaking audiences are one of the favorite targets of many of these disinformation campaigns. In Florida, in the 2020 elections, diverse social platforms and some radio shows in Spanish spread the lie that then presidential hopeful Joe Biden was a "communist" and his policies were "socialist" in nature, similar to those of Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro. In that state where Cubans, Cuban Americans, Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, and Hondurans—among others—are concentrated, the word "communism" is the same as invoking the devil, such that the intention of harming Biden and benefiting Trump had a very receptive audience, even though it was a lie.

Florida, essentially, is fertile ground for disinformation campaigns and also a laboratory for the use of anti-immigrant rhetoric, even by Latino officials. Florida's Lieutenant Governor, Jeannette Núñez, a Cuban American, made news talking about the large number of Cubans who are arriving in this state in a radio interview, saying that Governor Ron DeSantis should send migrants to Delaware, Biden's state, in buses, just like Texas Governor Greg Abbott has done to New York and Washington, DC.

And although DeSantis' campaign team later tried to amend the foolish comment of the Lieutenant Governor, saying she was not referring to Cubans but rather, other migrants, the damage was done, as the interviewer's question was specifically about the Cuban community, the one with the largest presence in their state. In fact, Núñez said in this interview that "this is going to be worse than Mariel, worse than everything that happened when we saw the impact of the 80s and to do nothing is not an option."

Really? That a Cuban American, daughter of Cuban refugees, would say that other Cubans seeking asylum in the United States should be sent to Delaware in buses would be news anywhere. It's also evidence of Republicans'

double talk, especially Hispanic Republicans who want to sell the false idea of an inclusive party to attract Latino voters, while they repeat an anti-immigrant and offensive narrative about their own community.

And they do it willingly because their loyalty is with the party and with Trump, not their community. But we cannot ascribe this phenomenon to the Cuban community exclusively, as in each and every one of the Latin American groupings that converge in the United States there are some who prefer to reject the advancement of the social plurality that we are living in and embrace an offensive discourse, even though at bottom they will never be completely welcomed among the supremacists they promote.

Spanish news, particularly the main television channels Univision (El Detector de Mentiras) and Telemundo (TVerifica), among others, as well as diverse independent organizations, monitor the information in order to keep their audiences informed about what is real and what is false. It's a big step in the right direction, but at the same time it's a symptom of these times in which fake news destroys the truth.

It's a titanic undertaking, especially in the face of the proliferation of social platforms where Latinos get information, particularly YouTube and WhatsApp. Although platforms like Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and others say they are implementing measures regarding the information that is circulated, how they will control falsehoods—especially in Spanish—is neither clear nor a given. Just listen or read certain comments from users regarding specific topics and you will realize that, essentially, the propagation of lies finds fertile ground in a lack of arguments.

Worst of all, the Republican Party—principal promoter of falsehoods—is blurring the line between what is real and what is a lie, for political convenience.

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Hastings & Torres/Esp

Y aunque el equipo de campaña de DeSantis trató después de enmendar el desatinado comentario de la vicegobernadora al decir que ella no se refería a los cubanos, sino a otros migrantes, el daño ya estaba hecho, pues la pregunta del entrevistador fue específicamente sobre la comunidad cubana, la de mayor presencia en su estado. De hecho, Núñez dijo en esa entrevista que "esto va a ser peor que Mariel, peor que todo lo que pasó en la década de 1980, y no hacer nada no es una opción".

¿En serio? Que una cubano-americana, hija de refugiados cubanos, diga que otros cubanos que buscan asilo en Estados Unidos deben ser enviados en autobuses a Delaware es noticia en cualquier liga. También es evidencia del doble discurso de los republicanos, sobre todo de hispanos republicanos que quieren vender la falsa idea de un partido incluyente para atraer votantes latinos, mientras repiten una narrativa antiinmi-

Y lo hacen sin chistar porque su lealtad está con el partido y con Trump, no con su comunidad. Pero no podemos circunscribir este fenómeno exclusivamente a la comunidad cubana, pues en todos y cada uno de los conglomerados latinoamericanos que confluyen en Estados Unidos hay quienes prefieren rechazar el avance de esta pluralidad social que nos tocó vivir y abrazar un discurso ofensivo, aunque en el fondo nunca serán totalmente bienvenidos entre los supremacistas que lo promueven.

Los medios en español, en particular las principales cadenas televisivas Univision (El Detector) y Telemundo (TVerifica), entre otros, así como diversos organismos independientes, monitorean la información para mantener a sus audiencias al tanto de lo que es real y lo que es falso. Es un gran paso en la dirección correcta, pero a la vez es un síntoma de estos tiempos en que las noticias falsas arrasan con la verdad.

formas sociales donde los latinos se informan, particularmente YouTube y WhatsApp. Aunque plataformas como Twitter, Facebook y TikTok y otras dicen estar implementando controles en torno a la información que circulan, no queda claro ni seguro cómo controlarán las falsedades, sobre todo en español. Basta escuchar o leer ciertos comentarios de los usuarios en torno a temas específicos para darnos cuenta de que, en efecto, la propagación de mentiras encuentra terreno fértil en la falta de argumentos.

Lo peor del caso es que el Partido Republicano, principal promotor de falsedades, borra la línea entre lo que es real y lo que es mentira para su conveniencia política.

Maribel Hastings es Asesora Ejecutiva de América's Voice.

David Torres es Asesor en Español de América's Voice.

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grante y ofensiva contra su propia comunidad.

Pero es una labor titánica, sobre todo ante la proliferación de plata-

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Por otro lado, Anderson señaló que el agua no es la fuente principal del alto nivel de plomo en los niños de Colorado.

"Uno tendría que tomar muchísima agua para exponerse si la concentración es 15 [partes por mil millones] o menos", él dijo.

Anderson, que es parte de una red regional de expertos en salud ambiental de los niños, dijo que en su mayoría, los niveles altos de plomo en niños surgen de exposición a pintura con plomo, polvo de pinturas con plomo, o una categoría que él llama "productos importados" y que incluye ollas y artículos para cocinar, especias o dulces de otros países.

Los investigadores han encontrado que los niños que viven en códigos postales con poblaciones predominantemente negras o hispanas tienen más probabilidad de tener un nivel de plomo alto que los niños que viven en códigos postales cuyos residentes son predominantemente de raza blanca.

Esfuerzos en las escuelas después del caso de Flint

Después de la crisis de agua en Flint, algunos distritos escolares de Colorado empezaron voluntariamente a hacerle pruebas al agua y corregir cuando los niveles de plomo alcanzaban 15 o más partes por mil millones — el nivel usado en ese momento por la Agencia de Protección Ambiental para que las compañías de agua tomaran acción.

A partir de 2017, algunos distritos de Colorado aprovecharon un programa estatal voluntario de *grants* que paga por pruebas de plomo en las escuelas, pero el programa no cubría los costos de reparación y no fue usado ampliamente.

Los funcionarios del distrito escolar de Denver, el más grande de Colorado, empezaron a usar el estándar de 15 partes por mil millones, y luego cambiaron a un límite de 10 partes por mil millones en 2019. Durante los últimos seis años, el distrito reemplazó 264 sistemas de plomería, e instaló 83 filtros en fuentes de agua.

Sin embargo, la ley nueva requerirá trabajo adicional porque hubo pruebas anteriores que encontraron unas 150 fuentes de agua con niveles por encima del límite nuevo, pero por debajo del anterior.

Joni Rix, gerente del programa ambiental del distrito, dijo que aunque algunas de esas fuentes están en escuelas intermedias y secundarias (que no son el enfoque de la ley nueva), el distrito les va a instalar filtros.

Esas reparaciones, dijo ella, costarán "bastante dinero" — aproximadamente \$1,000 cada una para instalarles un filtro inicialmente, y luego \$70 en mantenimiento anual.

La Representante del Estado Emily Sirota, demócrata de Denver y una de las auspiciadoras de la legislación, dijo que quienes prepararon la ley usaron estimados altos al momento de asignar los fondos de recuperación de COVID a la ley nueva. Los funcionarios de salud del estado dijeron que esperan cubrir la mayor parte posible de los costos de pruebas y remediación, pero que los detalles están por verse.

En el distrito Pueblo 60, cinco escuelas obtendrán reparaciones este mes para cumplir con el límite nuevo de 5 partes por mil millones. Aunque los funcionarios del distrito les hicieron pruebas a todas las fuentes de agua en el

2017 y 2018, usaron el límite de 10 partes por mil millones para determinar dónde se harían reparaciones.

Los funcionarios en el distrito Mesa County Valley, en el oeste de Colorado, hicieron reparaciones en cinco de las 42 escuelas después de participar en el programa estatal voluntario de *grants* hace varios años. Aparte de los edificios en los que se instalaron plomerías nuevas o estaciones para llenar botellas, ninguna escuela tuvo un nivel de plomo más alto del límite nuevo de 5 partes por mil millones.

Desde entonces, el distrito ha construido dos escuelas nuevas pero no ha recibido instrucciones de los funcionarios de salud del estado en cuanto a si se requiere hacer pruebas de plomo.

"Si ellos quieren que hagamos pruebas en esos lugares nosotros con mucho gusto lo haremos, pero no veo por qué nosotros debamos hacerlo", dijo Eddie Mort, coordinador de mantenimiento del distrito.

Una portavoz del Departamento de Salud Pública y Ambiente de Colorado, que supervisa la implementación de la ley nueva, dijo que no se ha decidido todavía si las escuelas o centros de cuidado de niños que hicieron pruebas de agua en los años recientes tendrán que hacer una serie nueva de pruebas.

"La decisión final podría ser que no habrá una solución 'unitalla' para todas las escuelas del estado que hicieron pruebas previamente", dijo en un email.

Lo que debes saber acerca de la ley de plomo en Colorado

- Las escuelas primarias y los centros de cuidado de niños

de Colorado tendrán que hacerle pruebas de plomo a todas las fuentes de agua potable antes del 31 de mayo de 2023. -Si el nivel de plomo supera 5 partes por mil millones — un límite nuevo y más estricto — las escuelas y los proveedores de cuidado de niños tendrán que reparar la plomería o instalar filtros. -Las escuelas y los centros de cuidado de niños tendrán que notificarles los resultados de las pruebas a los padres, y decir qué van a hacer para corregir los problemas.

- La ley incluye unos \$21 millones para pagar por pruebas y reparaciones en las escuelas y los centros de cuidado de niños. Las escuelas intermedias serán elegibles para obtener fondos si queda algún restante.

- La exposición al plomo puede causar problemas de habla, atención y conducta en los niños, y el agua potable es solo una de las fuentes de exposición a plomo posibles.

- Otras fuentes son las pinturas que tienen plomo, el polvo de pinturas que tienen plomo, y artículos importados como ollas de cocina, especias, dulces o joyería.

Ann Schimke es reportera senior en Chalkbeat y cubre temas de niñez temprana y alfabetización temprana. Esta historia fue publicada originalmente por Chalkbeat. Traducido por Milly Suazo-Martinez.

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And how about the fact that, with millions in the U.S. and hundreds of millions around the world thrown out of work, global production in many sectors came to a screeching halt in 2020. Then, as people began to go back to work, the economy had to ramp up again so quickly that it created historic bottlenecks along major shipping routes, leading to mass product shortages, higher demand, and spiking prices?

Plain and simple, if the American Rescue Plan had not been passed by Democrats, the U.S. economy would have tumbled into recession — or far worse. Biden's efforts helped millions stave off hunger, unemployment and eviction from their homes, it pulled millions of children out of poverty, and it helped save tens of thousands of small and big businesses.

Instead of falling into recession, the U.S. economy today is booming. More than 500,000 people found jobs last month, the unemployment rate is nearly half of what it was when Biden took office, wages are up, gasoline prices are dropping fast, and the country's deficit has dipped by \$350 billion with projections that somewhere "between another \$500 billion and \$1 trillion dollars in further reductions" could occur before the end of the year.

Yes, high global inflation is real and punishing, especially to those at the bottom of the economic ladder. But if we have to face inflation in the short run, isn't it better to face it with a job under our belts instead of being unemployed and having to live through a recession that would inevitably lead to a massive loss of jobs? Of course it is.

The context: Our country's infrastructure has been in desperate need of repair for decades. Our roads, bridges, airports, dams, and railroads are crumbling. Meanwhile, tens of millions of people, especially in rural América, have gone without internet access during what some have labeled the "Fourth Industrial Revolution."

Enter President Biden's bipartisan — and, yes, it *really* is bipartisan — \$1 trillion infrastructure bill. The bill's passage will lead to millions of new jobs in the coming years. Many of the projects have already begun.

"There are over 5,300 infrastructure projects getting underway across the country — in every state, and multiple in every congressional district," CNN reports. "They range from laying wires for rural broadband to modernizing the terminals at Los Angeles International Airport."

Unlike his predecessor, what Biden *did not* do was spend four years promising but failing over and over again to even offer up an infrastructure bill, much less get it passed.

The context: The Biden administration is run now by experienced professionals who have the country's best interests in mind.

Other stuff Biden has done: He ended U.S. involvement in the war in Afghanistan (the longest in U.S. history); he signed the first major gun reform bill in decades (though it does not go far enough to curb today's wave of mass shootings); he signed a bill that makes us less dependent on overseas manufactured computer microchips, the lifeblood of the Fourth Industrial Revolution; he signed the Inflation Reduction Act, which will cut the cost of prescription drugs, ensure more people have health insurance, and provide hundreds of billions to combat climate change; he rallied the world to help defend Ukraine against Russian dictator Vladimir Putin (who Trump called a genius for invading Ukraine); he hired what is said to be the most diverse presidential administration staff in U.S. history; and he just ordered that stu-

dent loan debt be cut by as much as \$20,000 for many borrowers.

And as for other stuff he *did not* do?

He didn't steal top secret government documents, including information about our nuclear arsenal, from the White House and keep it stored in the basement of a Florida golf resort; he hasn't supported anti-democratic, white nationalist candidates running for office who are still circulating false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from Trump; he hasn't ordered federal immigration authorities to separate children from their families at the border as a way to punish them for escaping poverty and persecution; he has not appointed judges to the Supreme Court like the ones who recently stripped women of a constitutionally protected right to decide what to do with their own bodies; he didn't try to overthrow the government by urging fellow Republicans to pose as fake electors; and he didn't direct a violent mob of domestic

terrorists to attack the U.S. capitol to keep Congress and Vice President Mike Pence from certifying the votes cast by the country's actual electors.

The context: President Biden has acted like the rational, informed, fair-minded, decent human being that he is instead of like the petty, self-serving, vengeful, racist, ignorant, criminal-minded, misogynist, and wannabe dictator who had the job before him.

All-in-all, that's quite an accomplishment.

James E. García is a Phoenix-based journalist, playwright and communications consultant. James is the author of more than 30 plays, including the upcoming "The Two Souls of César Chávez." This oped is republished from Arizona Mirror under a Creative Commons license.

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Juárez-Alonzo

not when the warning signs of climate catastrophe are everywhere.

Our state was on fire all summer and now faces catastrophic flooding, while the Rio Grande runs dry during the summer months year after year, and the leading climate scientists say our country's coastline will be significantly changed by sea-level rise in my lifetime.

New México's potential for renewable energy is unmatched in the Southwest with the third-highest potential for solar energy and the third-highest untapped potential for wind energy anywhere in the nation. Paired with energy storage capabilities that are rapidly expanding, we could be leading the world in a rapid transition to renewable energy, transforming from one of the largest exporters of oil and gas in the world to one of the most sustainable economies ever created.

The reality is that we aren't lacking in climate solutions. We're lacking the political willpower to dismantle and transform an industry that holds every aspect of our state in economic hostage.

Instead of rising to the challenge of the climate crisis and taking bold action, New Mexico is

handing out symbolic victories like tuition-free college that are meaningless when thousands of New Mexicans are being displaced by wildfires, and our farmers are losing their crops because the acequias are running dry.

We need real solutions like the ones our communities have been calling for — investments in proven renewable energy and battery technologies, and investments in industry cleanup (which our politicians should make the polluters cover).

I applaud that college is more financially accessible. But let's make sure we are creating pathways to end our fossil fuel dependence and its dire climate impacts so those degree-holding youth have a future to graduate into.

Jonathan Juárez-Alonzo is a queer, two-spirit Indigenous climate activist and award-winning community organizer in unceded Tiwa Territory (Albuquerque, NM). Currently, Jonathan serves as the Chairmxn of the Board of Directors of Pueblo Action Alliance, New Mexico.

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Experts agree that there should be a government effort to make the H1B visa program stronger and more inclusive for all sectors. / Los expertos están de acuerdo en que debe haber un esfuerzo del gobierno para hacer que el programa de visas H1B sea más fuerte e inclusivo para todos los sectores.

of them changed professions, and some even died of COVID. This left us with fewer nurses to fill the open positions in our units."

Although COVID floors have been essentially shut down, hospitals are short staffed and one-on-one patient care is over, she said. "Oftentimes nurses are caring for multiple patients, which is increasing their chances of creating errors and causing emotional distress."

There are close to 194,000 open positions for nurses, and not enough US nurses to fill them. Since the 80s, when hospitals were understaffed, nurses from other countries have filled these roles. But today, annually, H1B visas are

limited to 140,000 and family-sponsored visas are limited to 226,000.

"I am seeing how tired and exhausted the nurses are and how frustrated they feel like their voices aren't being heard," Collins said. "If hospitals come up with a system so that they could keep bringing in (immigrant) nurses, they wouldn't have problems filling their open positions," she concluded.

Jenny Manrique is a Reporter with Ethnic Media Services.

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Wells

"These are environmental hazards that contaminate groundwater, litter the landscape with rusted and dangerous equipment, harm wildlife and leak methane, a serious safety hazard and significant cause of climate change," she said.

Haaland said the funding announced on August 25 is just the start, and more funding will be available later.

Meanwhile, Turk announced the start of a Rapid Response Team to help with the energy transition in areas like San Juan

County, which is facing the closure of coal-fired power plants.

"It's rare to have an announcement in a day with so many threads of the work that you do comes together and the multiple positive announcements, but today is one of those days," Sarah Cottrell Propst, secretary of the state Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, said.

She said EMNRD is excited for the funding to address 200 orphaned well sites in the state.

Normally, EMNRD is able to plug just 50 orphaned wells a year.

"This funding allows plugging, but also reclamation of the surface so that it will improve the landscape, it'll improve health outcomes, it will improve water, less methane leakage, and on and on. So we're really, really pleased to be able to deliver that to New México," she said.

Cottrell Propst said many of the things in the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act built upon successful programs like New México's orphaned well program.

When asked about the next steps in the orphaned well plugging and remediation, Cottrell Propst said EMNRD already has four rigs ready to go. She said the state's General Services Department will seek more local contractors that can work with the state on the plugging and remediation work.

"We're ready to rock," she said.

In terms of the Rapid Response Team, Turk said each word in the name has a meaning.

In terms of rapid, he said, "we don't have time to just wait. This community doesn't have time to just wait for the transition. We've got to be rapid."

When it comes to the word response, he said that federal officials in Washington D.C. do not have all the answers and will be working with communities and stakeholders.

"We don't have all the solutions. What we do have is a number of tools in the tool belt," he said.

Finally, he said that the word team refers to various federal agencies working together to assist communities impacted by the transition.

"New México has been, and is, an energy powerhouse," Turk said.

He said he believes New México will be a clean energy powerhouse just as it has provided energy through fossil fuels.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act are what he described as historic pieces of legislation to help in that transition. He said they provide coherent tax incentives across a full array of clean energy and provide a bit of certainty to help with development.

"This is a huge, huge wind at the back of this transition," he said.

That certainty, Thomas de Swardt, the chief commercial officer for San Juan Solar's developer DESRI, is important for the solar industry.

He said projects like San Juan Solar take three, four or five years and require policy stability.

In the last few years, developers have faced challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic and disruptions in the supply chain. The San Juan Solar project was initially slated to be completed this summer when PNM planned to retire the San Juan Generating Station. The project delays led to concerns about electricity shortages this summer and regulators delayed the closure of unit four at the power plant because of those concerns.

The Inflation Reduction Act includes incentives for solar projects in areas where coal plants are closing.

"Truly the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act has provided a huge boost of good news to the industry and to projects like this," he said.

Warren Unsicker, the director of economic development for the City of Farmington, attended the event on August 25.

"It's all exciting information," he said. "I look forward to seeing how it plays out in our community."

Hannah Grover is a Reporter with New Mexico Political Report. This story was originally published by New Mexico Political Report.

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años de los tres años que Martínez estuvo estudiando, llegó tarde a clases todos los días, ya que la guardería abría a las 7:30 a.m., la misma hora en que su primera clase empezaba.

Por fortuna, la maestra de Martínez fue "muy comprensiva" sobre sus tardanzas crónicas, dijo. Eso no siempre es común.

"Algunos maestros realmente no perdonan", dijo Jamie Barnes, gerenta de programas en Hope House. A través de su trabajo en Hope House, Barnes conoce a varias mamás que reprobaron sus clases universitarias porque faltaron demasiadas veces cuando sus hijos se enfermaban.

Más allá de los requisitos estrictos de asistencia, "existen tantas normas y prácticas institucionales que realmente marginan" a los padres-estudiantes en la universidad, Lewis dijo. Da el ejemplo de que muchas universidades tienen una regla de "no permitir niños en las instalaciones". Ciertamente, en una encuesta nacional de Generation Hope de 259 padres-estudiantes en casi 150 instituciones, solo el 3 por ciento dijo que su universidad permite que haya niños en las clases; el 60 por ciento dijo que no sabía si su escuela tenía esa regla.

Una norma de "no permitir niños en las instalaciones", Lewis dijo, "comunica a los padres y estudiantes que no pertenecen, que este no es un entorno que los considera y los valida".

Jada Galissini sabe lo que significa no sentirse bienvenida. Galissini tiene 25 años, vive en Denver y es madre de Gabby, su hija de 7 años. Recuerda una situación hace varios años cuando fue con Gabby en su carrito de bebé a la oficina de ayuda financiera de un colegio comunitario en el área. Galissini le preguntó al empleado qué debía hacer para inscribirse a la escuela y solicitar ayuda financiera. El empleado, Galissini recuerda, le preguntó cómo planeaba ir a la escuela si tenía una bebé y no podía pagar por los estudios.

"Eso fue bastante terrible", recuerda Galissini, quien asistió a tres colegios comunitarios locales diferentes y esta primavera completó los estudios necesarios para convertirse en técnica médica.

Algunas instituciones se están esforzando para apoyar mejor a los padres-estudiantes. Por ejemplo, el Sistema de Colegios Comunitarios de Colorado (CCCS, por sus siglas en inglés), una red de 13 colegios con 35 centros en todo el estado, actualmente está implementando un programa piloto en el Colegio Comunitario de Aurora que incluye un centro de cuidados infantiles para padres-estudiantes, además de recolectar datos para entender qué normas de la escuela son perjudiciales para los padres-estudiantes. Con eso, el sistema de colegios comunitarios determinará qué cambios hacer para reducir ese daño, dijo Ryan Ross, vicerrector de asuntos estudiantiles, equidad e inclusión en CCCS. CCCS también está formando un comité estatal de padres y educadores que platicarán sobre las realidades de ser padre-estudiante y desarrollarán recomendaciones normativas, Ross agregó.

En comparación con hace 20 años, actualmente hay más conciencia sobre los padres-estudiantes universitarios, Lewis dijo. Y en los últimos siete años, Barnes dijo que ha observado que los servicios universitarios de apoyo para padres y otros estudiantes desfavorecidos "aumentaron tremendamente".

Sin embargo, queda mucho progreso por alcanzar, Lewis dijo. Señala un aumento en la necesidad de fondos y políticas que aliven los desafíos que los padres-estudiantes enfrentan y de ayuda para aumentar los porcentajes de graduados. El cambio también debe ocurrir adentro de las instituciones educativas.

"Nos referimos a esta población como 'una población invisible' porque, en su mayoría, realmente siguen pasando desapercibidos para muchas de las personas que trabajan en la educación superior todos los días", Lewis dijo.

La pandemia obligó a muchas instituciones a ofrecer clases virtuales y más flexibilidad con el lugar y momento en que los estudiantes aprenden, un beneficio para los padres lidiando con demandas laborales, de cuidados infantiles y sus estudios. Clark, por ejemplo, dijo que la enseñanza virtual la ayudó a manejar mejor su tiempo

y le dio más horas para estudiar, pero tratar de aprender en casa también causó que fuera más difícil balancear sus papeles como mamá y estudiante.

En general, los últimos dos años han golpeado desproporcionadamente a los padres-estudiantes, Lewis dijo, empeorando los desafíos que este grupo ya enfrenta, como la inseguridad alimentaria y de vivienda, inquietudes de salud mental y la falta de opciones para el cuidado infantil.

Galissini dijo que el aspecto más difícil de ser madre-estudiante fue coordinar los servicios de cuidados infantiles, especialmente durante cambios en el horario escolar y en los días cuando su hija estaba enferma, lo cual sucedió con frecuencia. El papá de Gabby ayuda cuidándola cuando puede, pero no de modo constante.

"Es tan difícil organizar con quién va a estar mientras está enferma porque nadie quiere cuidarla", Galissini dijo. "Especialmente ahora con COVID, te enfermas de un catarro y es cuarentena por una semana, sin importar nada".

Con respecto a la salud mental, aunque "los desafíos de salud mental son un problema para todos los estudiantes universitarios", Lewis dijo, los padres-estudiantes

con frecuencia enfrentan más factores estresantes en sus vidas que sus compañeros sin hijos. Estos elementos estresantes pueden contribuir a desafíos para la salud mental. "Solo el peso emocional de ser un padre-estudiante es realmente difícil de sobrellevar", Lewis dijo.

Clark dijo que la parte más difícil de ser madre en la universidad "gira en torno a la culpabilidad de no estar ahí" para su hija. Lamenta los momentos importantes que se ha perdido con su hija, como no poder llevarla al zoológico por primera vez porque estaba en clases o estudiando.

El sentimiento de culpabilidad, Clark dijo, "en realidad no desaparece nunca y realmente no se puede superar. Es como estar de luto. Estás de luto por esos momentos perdidos y te culpas por perderte ese tipo de cosas".

Clark se mantiene enfocada al recordarse a sí misma que lo más importante es la salud y felicidad de su hija. Se inspira en su mamá, quien también fue madre adolescente y ya tenía cinco hijos a los 23 años.

"Mi mamá insiste mucho en que yo haga las cosas bien. Ella no lo hizo [así] y causó que tuviéramos un comienzo difícil en todas nuestras infancias".

El objetivo final de Clark es convertirse en paramédica con el departamento de bomberos. Está tomando un descanso de las clases este verano y luego le faltan tres semestres más de clases en Red Rocks. Después de eso, necesitará completar dos semestres en un programa de paramédicos en otro lugar para obtener la certificación y licencia necesarias para encontrar un trabajo en esa carrera.

"Quiero ayudar a la gente", dijo Clark, quien ha soñado con ser bombera desde kindergarten y quien se estaba preparando en high school para tomar la Prueba de Habilidades Físicas para Candidatos, la cual evalúa la preparación de una persona para los aspectos físicos de ser bombero: "Luego me embaracé y todo cambió".

Cuando se desvela estudiando por la noche, Clark piensa en A'nyah. A pesar de los desafíos de ser madre-estudiante, seguirá esforzándose para salir adelante y darle a su hija el mejor futuro posible.

Jenna McCoy es reportera en Boulder, Colorado. Reproducido con permiso de The Colorado Trust. Traducido por Alejandra X. Castañeda

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La Ley de Reducción de la Inflación del presidente Joe Biden—recientemente promulgada—originalmente incluía disposiciones para legalizar a los inmigrantes no autorizados. / President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act—recently signed into law—originally included provisions to legalize unauthorized immigrants.

Ciencias de la Salud de la Universidad Rush, un campo en el que la ausencia de inmigrantes se siente

con fuerza es la atención médica. Collins trabajó en el piso de COVID de su hospital durante dos

años y vio de primera mano el impacto de la escasez crítica de profesionales de enfermería.

"Estaba ayudando a cubrir los turnos y vi cómo las enfermeras se estaban desgastando al cuidar a los pacientes en las unidades de COVID", dijo. "A medida que COVID comenzó a mermar, las enfermeras buscaron la jubilación anticipada, algunas cambiaron de profesión y algunas incluso murieron de COVID. Esto nos dejó con menos enfermeras para cubrir los puestos vacantes en nuestras unidades".

Aunque los pisos de COVID se han cerrado, los hospitales tienen poco personal y la atención personalizada de los pacientes ha terminado, dijo. "A menudo, las enfermeras atienden a múltiples pacientes, lo que aumenta sus posibilidades de cometer errores y causar angustia emocional", dijo Collins.

Hay cerca de 194.000 puestos vacantes para enfermeras y no hay suficientes enfermeras es-

tadounidenses para cubrirlos. Desde los años 80, cuando los hospitales no tenían suficiente personal, enfermeras de otros países han ocupado estos puestos. Pero hoy, anualmente, las visas H1B están limitadas a 140,000 y las visas patrocinadas por familiares están limitadas a 226,000.

"Veo lo cansadas y agotadas que están las enfermeras y lo frustradas que se sienten porque no se escuchan sus voces", dijo Collins. "Si los hospitales pusieran un sistema para que pudieran seguir trayendo enfermeras (inmigrantes), no tendrían problemas para llenar los puestos vacantes", concluyó.

Jenny Manrique es Reportera de *Ethnic Media Services*. Reproducido con permiso de *Ethnic Media Services*.

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Pozos

múltiples anuncios positivos, pero hoy es uno de esos días", dijo Sarah Cottrell Propst, secretaria del Departamento de Energía, Minerales y Recursos Naturales del estado.

Dijo que el EMNRD está entusiasmado por la financiación para

abordar 200 sitios de pozos huérfanos en el estado

Normalmente, el EMNRD sólo puede tapar 50 pozos huérfanos al año.

"Esta financiación permite tapar los pozos, pero también recuperar

la superficie para mejorar el paisaje, mejorar los resultados sanitarios, mejorar el agua, reducir las fugas de metano, etc. Así que estamos muy, muy contentos de poder ofrecer eso a Nuevo México", dijo.

Cottrell Propst dijo que mu-

chas de las cosas en la Ley de Reducción de la Inflación y la Ley de Inversión en Infraestructura y Empleos se basan en programas exitosos como el programa de pozos huérfanos de Nuevo México.

Cuando se le preguntó acerca de los próximos pasos en el taponamiento de pozos huérfanos y la remediación, Cottrell Propst dijo EMNRD ya tiene cuatro equipos de perforación listo para ir. Dijo que el Departamento de Servicios Generales del estado buscará más contratistas locales que puedan trabajar con el estado en el trabajo de taponamiento y remediación.

En cuanto al Equipo de Respuesta Rápida, Turk dijo que cada palabra del nombre tiene un significado.

En términos de rapidez, dijo, "no tenemos tiempo para esperar. Esta comunidad no tiene tiempo para esperar la transición. Tenemos que ser rápidos".

La Ley de Inversión en Infraestructuras y Empleo y la Ley de Reducción de la Inflación son lo que Turk describió como piezas legislativas históricas para ayudar en esa transición. Dijo que ofrecen incentivos fiscales coherentes en toda la gama de energías limpias y proporcionan un poco de certidumbre para ayudar al desarrollo.

Esa seguridad, según Thomas de Swardt, director comercial de DESRI, la empresa promotora de San Juan Solar, es importante para el sector solar.

Dijo que proyectos como San Juan Solar tardan tres, cuatro o cinco años y requieren estabilidad política.

En los últimos años, los promotores se han enfrentado a retos como la pandemia de COVID-19 y las interrupciones en la cadena de suministro. Inicialmente, el proyecto San Juan Solar iba a completarse este verano, cuando PNM tenía previsto retirar la central eléctrica de San Juan. Los retrasos del proyecto provocaron la preocupación por la escasez de electricidad este verano y los reguladores retrasaron el cierre de la unidad cuatro de la central eléctrica debido a esas preocupaciones.

La Ley de Reducción de la Inflación incluye incentivos para los proyectos solares en las zonas donde se están cerrando las centrales de carbón.

"La aprobación de la Ley de Reducción de la Inflación ha supuesto un gran impulso de buenas noticias para el sector y para proyectos como éste", dijo.

Warren Unsicker, director de desarrollo económico de la ciudad de Farmington, asistió al acto del 25 de agosto.

"Es una información apasionante", dijo. "Estoy deseando ver cómo se desarrolla en nuestra comunidad".

Hannah Grover es Reportera de *New Mexico Political Report*. Esta historia fue publicada originalmente por *New Mexico Political Report*.

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media estadounidense (40,2%). Los padres solteros con hijos también eran particularmente propensos a no haber recibido un refuerzo (16,4%).

¿Por qué es importante la equidad en la vacunación, evaluado a partir de la aplicación de un refuerzo? Porque las investigaciones demuestran que la "vacunación completa", sin al menos un refuerzo, no es suficiente para proteger a las personas de una infección u hospitalización. Debido a esto el COVID-19 circulará más ampliamente en los barrios y comunidades de bajos ingresos donde viven las poblaciones más vulnerables si la aplicación de los refuerzos se retrasa debido a las barreras de costos.

Por ejemplo, una familia inmigrante de cuatro miembros, de bajos ingresos, que no tiene un seguro médico— a la que se le ha convencido con éxito de que se vacune—ahora quiere recibir el nuevo refuerzo que proporciona una protección crucial contra la BA.5 y otras variantes posteriores a la Omicron: ¿Qué podría ocurrir con la comercialización? Teniendo en cuenta el costo actual de la vacuna y la vacunación, la familia tendría que pagar al menos 600 dólares por el refuerzo. Pocos podrán tener acceso a vacunarse. Adiós al sueño de la "inmunidad de rebaño".

Las consecuencias potenciales de la comercialización son aún más graves para los millones de personas que están en "alto riesgo" de evolucionar hacia una enfermedad grave (debido a la edad de la persona o a condiciones de salud subyacentes) y que no están vacunadas o no están "al día" con las vacunas de refuerzo. En la actualidad se dispone de un tratamiento antiviral altamente eficaz para estas personas, pero debe accederse a él muy rápidamente (en los cinco días siguientes a la prueba positiva o a los síntomas de COVID-19). Pero es costoso. Pagar por un curso del antiviral preferido, Paxlovid, cuesta actualmente al gobierno unos \$530 dólares, pero si se abandona el enfoque actual de "Probar para tratar" (Test To Treat) como parte

del impulso a la comercialización, se espera que el precio final en el mercado sea mayor.

Este no es el momento de abandonar los esfuerzos del gobierno federal para que la vacunación, las pruebas y el tratamiento sean gratuitos y de fácil acceso para todos. Tras la comercialización, los hogares más marginados desde el punto de vista socioeconómico, que son vulnerables a la infección por COVID-19 debido a las condiciones de hacinamiento y al hecho de ser "trabajadores esenciales" como la agricultura o plantas procesadoras de carne, quedarán desprotegidos.

Estos hogares de bajos ingresos seguirán siendo más propensos a contraer el COVID-19 y los pacientes de alto riesgo que viven en ellos tendrán más probabilidades de ser hospitalizados, de padecer "COVID largo" y de morir.

La postura ideológica que subyace a este cambio de dirección hacia la comercialización de la respuesta al COVID-19, la propuesta de que todo el mundo tiene la responsabilidad y tendrá la capacidad económica para tomar decisiones sabias en materia de atención de salud, es a la vez hipócrita y peligrosa, porque las consecuencias de lo que la gente haga o deje de hacer nos afectan a todos en términos de riesgos para la salud, bienestar familiar y vida comunitaria.

Inevitablemente, la nación entera sufrirá las consecuencias económicas de visitas a los servicios de urgencias más costosas, hospitalizaciones y discapacidades a largo plazo para los millones de personas que tienen la des fortuna de padecer COVID largo.

Edward KISSAM es un destacado investigador y defensor de las estrategias para hacer frente al COVID-19 en las comunidades de trabajadores agrícolas e inmigrantes. También es administrador del WKF Charitable Giving Fund.

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and 30.2% of white women in college are parents, per the 2012 data.

Even though student-parents have higher GPAs than students without kids, according to an IWPR analysis of the 2015-16 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, their odds of graduating college are slimmer. An estimated 52% of undergraduate student-parents left school without a degree within 6 years, compared to 32% of students without kids, per 2009 government data, the most recent data available.

Even with such a significant proportion of U.S. college students also being parents, there is little, if any, recent research data on this population. A 2020 IWPR briefing paper underscores this knowledge gap: "Despite the large numbers of college students with children and their unique needs, most campuses, state data systems, and national higher education datasets do not count students with children or document their progress toward completion," the paper authors wrote.

One reason college is so challenging for student parents: they have fewer resources to pay for their education than students without kids, according to a 2019 United States Government Accountability Office report. They also hold nearly two times as much student loan debt compared to college students overall, per the 2015-16 data.

"It's much more expensive for student-parents to attend college than it is for non-parenting students," said Lewis. As Lewis explains it, student-parents have child care costs, increased living expenses and increased transportation costs; since many cannot live on campus with their children, they must commute to class instead—sometimes from long distances. This is all before the price of tuition, books and other fees.

Clark, for example, didn't qualify for federal student aid last semester and was struggling to pay her tuition in the timeframe the school required. Hope House Colorado, a faith-based nonprofit that supports teen moms, stepped in to cover the cost of classes.

"I owe a lot to Hope House," said Clark, who previously worked as an EMT but had to quit her job last semester to take care of sick family members, diminishing her income.

Finding reliable, affordable child care is another challenge for student-parents.

Clark can't afford child care herself, and even though Red Rocks Community College is among the 29% of 2-year public institutions in Colorado that offer campus child

care services, A'nyah didn't qualify because she isn't potty-trained. So for the 16 hours a week that Clark has in-person classes, she relies on her mom to watch A'nyah. Clark says she feels guilty about that, since her mom struggles with chronic pain and other medical issues.

Even when student-parents find quality child care, coordinating pickups and dropoffs around class schedules can present yet another hurdle. Leslie Martinez, a 21-year-old Denver resident who graduated from Red Rocks in May with an associate's degree in cosmetology, was lucky enough to get her 3-year-old daughter Leyza into the school's child care program. But for two of the three years Martinez was in school, she was late to class every day, since the day care center didn't open until 7:30 a.m.—the same time Martinez's first class started.

Fortunately, Martinez's teacher was "really understanding" of her chronic tardiness, she said. That's not always the norm.

"Some teachers are real unforgiving," said Jamie Barnes, a program manager at Hope House. Through her work at Hope House, Barnes knows several moms who failed college classes because they were absent too many times due to their kids getting sick.

Beyond strict attendance requirements, "there are so many institutional policies and practices that really marginalized" student parents in college, said Lewis. She gives the example that many colleges have a "no kids on campus" rule. Indeed, in a Generation Hope national survey involving 259 student-parents at nearly 150 institutions, just 3% of respondents said their campus allowed kids in class; another 60% said they didn't know whether their school had such a policy.

A "no kids on campus" policy, said Lewis, "communicates to parents and students that they don't belong, that this is not an environment that sees them and validates them."

Jada Galissini knows what it's like to feel unwelcome. A 25-year-old Denver resident and mother of 7-year-old daughter Gabby, Galissini recalled an incident several years ago where she went to the financial aid office of one area community college with Gabby in a stroller. Galissini asked the employee how she could sign up for college and apply for financial aid. The employee, Galissini recalled, asked her how she planned to come to college if she had a baby and couldn't pay for it.

"That was pretty terrible," remembered Galissini, who attended three different local colleges and this past spring earned the education she needed to become a medical technician.

Some institutions are making efforts to better support student-parents. For example, Colorado Community College System (CCCS), a network of 13 schools with 35 locations across the state, is currently piloting a program on its Community College of Aurora campus that includes a day care center for student-parents as well as data collection to understand which of the school's policies are harmful to student-parents. From there, the college system will determine what changes can be made to mitigate that harm, said Ryan Ross, CCCS vice chancellor for student affairs, equity and inclusion. CCCS is also forming a statewide committee of parents and educators who will discuss the realities of being a student-parent and make policy recommendations, added Ross.

(Editor's note: Community College of Aurora announced on Aug. 30, 2022 that it was discontinuing the pilot program due to "challenges external" to the college. "We are currently reevaluating how to best support students in need of child care services and are offering limited scholarships to assist them," said a spokesperson.)

Compared to 20 years ago, there is more awareness today of student-parents in college, said Lewis. And in the past seven years, Barnes said she has seen colleges' supportive services for parents as well as other disadvantaged students "grow tremendously."

That said, there's still much progress to be made, said Lewis. She points to an increased need for funding and policies that would alleviate the challenges student-parents face and help increase graduation rates. Change needs to occur within colleges, too.

"We call this population 'an invisible population' because for the most part, they really continue to fall under the radar of many people working in higher education each and every day," said Lewis.

The pandemic forced many institutions to offer remote classes and more flexibility surrounding when and how students learn—a boon for parents juggling the demands of work, child care and education. Clark, for example, said remote schooling helped her better manage her time and gave her more hours to study, but trying to learn at home also made it more challenging to find a balance be-

tween the roles of mom and student.

In general, the past two years have hit student-parents disproportionately hard, says Lewis, exacerbating the challenges the population already faces, including food and housing insecurity, mental health concerns, and a lack of child care options.

Galissini said the hardest part of being a student-parent was coordinating child care, especially amidst shifting school schedules and on days when her daughter was sick, which was often. Gabby's father assists with child care when he can, but not on a reliable schedule.

"It's so hard to figure out who she's going to go with while she's sick because nobody wants to take care of her," said Galissini. "Especially now with COVID, you get a cold and it's like quarantine for a week, no matter what."

On the mental health front, although "mental health challenges are an issue for all college students," said Lewis, student-parents often have more stressors in their lives than their non-parent peers and these stressors can contribute to mental health challenges. "Just the emotional weight of being a parenting student is really difficult to carry," said Lewis.

Clark said the hardest part of being a parent in college "revolves around guilt of not being there" for her child. She laments the milestone moments she's missed with her daughter, like not being able to take her to the zoo for the first time because she was in class or studying.

The guilt, said Clark, "really never goes away and it really can't be dealt with. It's like grieving. You are grieving those missed moments

and you are beating yourself up over missing stuff like that."

Clark maintains perspective by reminding herself that what's most important is her daughter's health and happiness. She draws inspiration from her mom, who was also a teen mom and had five kids by the time she was 23.

"My mom is very adamant that I do things the right way. She didn't do it and it caused us to have a rough start to all of our childhoods," said Clark.

Clark's ultimate goal is to be a firefighter paramedic. She's taking a break from classes this summer and then has three more semesters of classes at Red Rocks. From there, she will need to complete two semesters of a paramedic program elsewhere to earn the certification and licensure required to get a job in the field.

"I want to help people," said Clark, who's dreamed of being a firefighter since kindergarten, and in high school was preparing to take the Candidate Physical Ability Test, which measures a person's readiness for the physical aspects of firefighting: "Then I got pregnant and everything changed."

On her late nights studying, Clark thinks of A'nyah. Despite the challenges of being a student-parent, she will keep forging ahead to give her daughter the best possible future.

Jenny McCoy is a Freelance Journalist in Boulder, Colorado.

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Lead

In part that's because plumbing advertised as "lead free" is still allowed to contain a small amount of lead.

"Water is a universal solvent. When water's in contact with lead, the lead gets into the water," said Betanzo, founder of the Detroit consulting firm Safe Water Engineering.

"It might not be today, it might not be tomorrow ... If the lead is present, it's going to be in your water at some point."

Evolving legislation

Colorado's new lead law changed significantly from its introduction in part because of pushback from some school and early childhood leaders. The final version contains fewer and less stringent requirements than were in early drafts.

In its original form, the bill would have required schools and child care programs to install filters on all drinking water sources, install a filtered bottle-filling station for every 100 children, and conduct annual testing of lead levels in drinking water. Fixes, plus new signage and other notification, would have been required for all water sources with lead levels of 1 part per billion or higher.

The 1 part per billion threshold is recommended by the [American Academy of Pediatrics for school water fountains](#), but few states have adopted it. Instead, most with recent laws on lead levels set the limit at 5 or 10 parts per billion. Maine's threshold is 4 parts per billion.

Groups representing child care providers initially opposed the bill, saying the proposed rules would have been onerous and cost prohibitive.

Dawn Alexander, executive director of the Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado, said it would be unfair to hold child care facilities to such strict standards, when many cases of lead poisoning originate in children's homes, which are not subject to such rules. During her time in a previous job at the Weld County health department, she found that investigators usually traced high lead levels to lead paint in a child's residence.

"It just doesn't make sense to have these ... impositions on businesses that are already struggling when it's not really the source that's generating such extreme health issues in the children in our state."

Alexander said she was pleased with the final version of the bill: "They really did bring it to a much more reasonable approach."

Licensed home-based child care providers will be able to opt out of the new requirements.

Mark Anderson, a pediatrician at Denver Health, thinks the law is a good one, especially because it comes with money to help schools and child care centers cover the cost of testing and repairs.

"If cost isn't a concern I can't think of a good reason not to get the lead out of the water," he said.

But Anderson noted that water isn't the main source of high lead levels in Colorado children.

"You'd have to drink a lot of water to get a lot of exposure if it was 15 [parts per billion] or below," he said.

Anderson, who is part of a [regional network of experts on children's environmental health](#), said most often high lead levels in children stem from exposure to lead paint, lead paint dust, or a category he called "imports," which can include cookware, spices, or candy from other countries.

[Researchers](#) have found that children living in ZIP codes with predominantly Black or Hispanic populations are more likely to have detectable lead levels than children living in ZIP codes with predominantly white residents.

Post-Flint school efforts

In the wake of the Flint water crisis, some Colorado school districts began voluntarily testing school water and making fixes when lead levels hit or exceeded 15 parts per billion — the level used at that time by the Environmental Protection Agency to trigger action by water utilities.

Starting in 2017, some Colorado districts took advantage of a voluntary state grant program that paid for lead-testing in schools, but the program didn't cover repair costs and wasn't widely used.

Officials in the Denver school district, Colorado's largest, began testing water in 2016 using the 15 parts per billion standard, switching to a 10 parts per billion threshold in 2019. Over the last six years, the district replaced 264 plumbing fixtures, and installed 83 water fountain filters.

But the new law will require additional work because previous testing found about 150 drinking fountains with lead levels above the new threshold but below the old one.

Joni Rix, the district's environmental program manager, said even though some of those fountains are in middle and high schools, which aren't the focus of the new law, the district will install filters on them.

The fixes, she said, will cost "a good chunk of money" — about \$1,000 each for initial filter installation and \$70 for annual maintenance.

State Rep. Emily Sirota, a Denver Democrat and one of the legislation's sponsors, said lawmakers used higher-end estimates in allocating one-time COVID recovery money for the new law. State health officials said they hope that will cover as much of the testing and remediation costs as possible, but details have yet to be worked out.

In the Pueblo 60 district, five schools will get fixes this month to comply with the new 5 parts per billion threshold. While district officials tested all water sources districtwide in 2017 and 2018, they used a 10 parts per billion threshold to determine where to make fixes.

Officials in the Mesa County Valley district in western Colorado made fixes at five of 42 schools after participating in the voluntary state grant program a few years ago. Aside from the buildings where new fittings or bottler fillers were installed, no schools had lead levels higher than the newly established 5 parts per billion limit.

The district has since built two new schools, but hasn't received guidance from state health officials about whether lead testing is required.

"If they want us to test those sites we'd be more than glad to, but I don't see any reason why we'd have to do that," said Eddie Mort, the district's maintenance coordinator.

A spokeswoman for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, which will oversee implementation of the new law, said no decision has been made about whether schools or child care facilities that have tested their water in recent years will have to conduct a new series of tests.

"The final approach may not be a 'one-size-fits-all' solution for all schools across the state that previously tested," she said by email.

What to know about Colorado's new lead law

- Colorado elementary schools and child care centers will have to test all drinking water sources for lead by May 31, 2023.
- If lead levels exceeds 5 parts per billion — a new, lower standard — schools and child care providers must make repairs or install filters.
- Schools and child care centers will have to notify families about the results of testing and what they're doing to resolve issues.

- The law comes with \$21 million to pay for testing and repairs at elementary schools and child care facilities. Middle schools will be eligible for funds if there is money left over.

- Lead exposure can cause speech, attention, and behavior problems in children.

- Drinking water is just one possible source of lead exposure. Other

sources include lead paint, lead paint dust, and imported cookware, spices, candy or jewelry.

Ann Schimke is a senior reporter at Chalkbeat, covering early childhood issues and early literacy. This story was originally published by Chalkbeat.

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Covid-19

days after the administration announced the new phase of federal COVID strategy. The researchers report that by early 2022 only 16.1% of uninsured people had received a COVID-19 vaccine booster—less than half the U.S. average (40.2%). Single parents with children were also particularly likely not to have received a booster (16.4%).

Why does vaccination equity as measured by receipt of a booster matter? Because research shows that ["full vaccination" without at least one booster, doesn't do nearly enough to protect people from infection or hospitalization](#) and because COVID-19 will circulate more widely in the low-income neighborhoods and communities where the most vulnerable populations live if receipt of boosters lags due to cost barriers.

Here's an example. If a low-income, uninsured immigrant family of four that has been successfully convinced to get vaccinated now seeks to get the new booster that provides crucial protection against BA.5 and other post-Omicron variants, what might happen with commercialization? Given the current cost of [vaccine](#) and [vaccination](#), the family would need to pay at least \$600 for a booster. Few will be able to afford getting vaccinated. So much for the dream of "herd immunity."

The potential consequences of commercialization are still more serious for the [millions who are at "high risk" for progressing to serious illness](#) (due to age or underlying health conditions) and unvaccinated or not "up to date" with booster shots. Highly-effective anti-viral treatment is currently available for them but must be accessed very rapidly (within five days of testing positive or having COVID-19 symptoms). But it's expensive. Paying for a course of the preferred, anti-viral, [Paxlovid currently costs the government about \\$530](#), but if the current "Test To Treat" approach is abandoned as part of the push for commercialization, the eventual market price is expected to be higher.

This is not the right time to abandon the federal government's efforts to make free and easily accessible vaccination, testing, and treatment available to everyone. After commercialization, the most socioeconomically marginalized households, vulnerable to COVID-19 infection because of crowded living conditions and working in essential jobs such as agriculture and meat-processing, will be left unprotected.

These low-income households will continue to be more likely to contract COVID-19 and the high-risk patients in them will be more likely to be hospitalized, more likely to suffer from "long COVID," and more likely to die.

The ideological stance underlying the pivot to commercialization of COVID-19 response, the proposition that everyone has the responsibility and will have the economic ability to make their own wise health care decisions, is both hypocritical and dangerous—because the consequences of what people do or don't do affect us all—in terms of health risks, family well-being, and community life.

Inevitably, the entire nation will suffer the economic consequences of more costly emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and long-term disability for the [millions who are unfortunate enough to have long-COVID](#).

Edward Kissam is a leading researcher and advocate for strategies to deal with COVID-19 in farmworker and immigrant communities. He is also a trustee of the WKF Charitable Giving Fund.

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