

28 de Marzo 2024

# El Semanario

THE WEEKLY ISSUE

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**Establishing Financial Stability 8**  
*Estableciendo Estabilidad Financiera*

**28 de Marzo 2024**  
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## ***“A Tribute in Song and Verse to Civil Rights Icon Cesar Chavez”***

Wednesday April 10, 2024, 2-4pm

St. John Francis Regis Chapel

3333 Regis Blvd, Denver, CO

(off of Lowell Blvd)

**Moderator:** Ricardo LaFore

**Music:** Debra Gallegos, Toby Rampa, Leslie Gomez, Frank Davila, & R. LaFore

**Poetry by:** Dr. Ramon Del Castillo, Margie Domingo, and Ernesto Alvarado

**Denver Peace and Justice Committee History:** Dr. Ramon Del Castillo

**Special Guests:** Dr. Priscilla Falcon, Jose Aguayo, and Dr. Nicki Gonzales

refreshments and conversation after the program in the Chapel lobby

~ *this program proudly presented by* ~



For more information about this event: [info@calmaco.org](mailto:info@calmaco.org)



César E. Chávez Peace and Justice Committee of Denver

### **23rd Annual Marcha & Celebration**

Cultivating Cesar Chavez' Social Justice

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**Saturday, April 13, 2024**

Catholic Mass: Regis University  
Marcha from Regis University to César E. Chávez Park  
Program & Awards at César E. Chávez Park  
Denver, Colorado

*Details coming soon!*

For more event information:

[Cesar Chavez Peace and Justice Committee of Denver | Facebook](#)



# Former President Already Instigated a Bloodbath on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Maribel Hastings**

Donald Trump and his campaign tried to clarify that when he said there will be a "bloodbath" if he loses the election, he was referring to the auto industry and a tariff war with China. This "clarification" does not erase his history of xenophobic, incendiary, and violent rhetoric.

“

*Those who think his attacks will be limited only to undocumented people underestimate him.*

The Spanish saying "crea fama y acuéstate a dormir" [loosely translated as 'your reputation will follow you everywhere'] certainly applies to Trump, who has risen to his level in politics by maligning others, and certainly doesn't seem capable of change. Therefore, it's

no surprise he would say something like this. Moreover, the speech in Ohio where he pronounced the phrase was a dark and fatalistic one, where he referred to immigrants as "animals" and declared that if he loses the election, democracy will end. "If we don't win this election, I don't think you're going to have another election in this country," Trump said.

Furthermore, he called the convicts involved in the bloody attempted coup d'état on January 6, 2021—the same one we all witnessed live and in full color, but which Trump and his fanatics insist was a product of our collective imagination—"hostages" and "unbelievable patriots."

In fact, the attack on the Capitol, instigated by Trump with the lie that the 2020 election Joe Biden won was "stolen" from him, was itself a bloodbath. And the fear of what could occur if Trump loses this election persists.

In his speech, Trump redoubled his attacks against immigrants. "I don't

know if you call them people. In some cases, they're not people, in my opinion ... they are animals," he affirmed. Moreover, he has intensified the rhetoric that immigrants are "poisoning the blood" of the country, in the style of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

Anyone who doesn't take Trump's threats and his virulent language against immigrants seriously is committing a grave error. He has already demonstrated, through his actions, the extremes to which he can go in four years of presidency and later, after losing re-election, attempting to steal it by intimidating public officials and demanding that his ex-Vice President, Mike Pence, avoid certifying Biden's win. It was Pence's refusal that gave way to the assault on the Capitol.

There is a long list of extremist policies against immigrants, from the so-called Muslim ban to the separation of families at the border and losing track of children who have not been returned to their parents. These and other mea-



sures were stopped in the courts, but Trump and his team have had sufficient time to refine the mechanisms that permit them to revive and implement them, as well as initiate others, like his promise of detention camps and mass deportations.

But anyone who thinks that, if they are not an immigrant, they have nothing to fear in a potential Trump return to the White House, is also committing a grave error. Those who think his attacks will be limited only to undocumented people underestimate him. We're talking about a person who, as president, treated the Justice Department as if it was his personal legal team. An individual who is facing charges stemming from four criminal cases and is looking to exact vengeance on anyone who, he says, "unjustly persecuted" him.

So, it would not be surprising if, in a second term, Trump looks for mechanisms to at least intimidate political opponents, the media, and even organizations and institutions he finds uncomfortable. That is the way the autocrats Trump admirers act.

If not, look at his "takeover" of the Republican National Committee (RNC) before even being officially nominated, placing relatives and allies who promote his ideas about "electoral fraud" there.

With or without clarification, Trump already incited a bloodbath on January 6, 2021. Nothing has changed. To the contrary, he acts even more emboldened. His strategy continues to focus on demonizing immigrants to rile up his base and those who feel upset by the situation at the border. But his threat goes even beyond that. He is already invoking "electoral fraud" to undermine confidence in the system, and our very democracy may suffer the consequences.

*Maribel Hastings is a Senior Advisor to América's Voice.*

**Read More Commentary:  
ElSemanarioOnline.com**

## Expresidente Ya Instigó un Baño de Sangre el 6 de Enero de 2021

**Maribel Hastings**

Donald Trump y su campaña intentaron aclarar que cuando dijo que si pierde las elecciones habrá un "baño de sangre", se refería a la industria automotriz y a una guerra arancelaria con China. La "aclaración" no borra su historial de retórica xenófoba, incendiaria y violenta.

A Trump se le aplica aquello de "crea fama y acuéstate a dormir" porque no sería raro que dijera algo así. Además, el discurso en Ohio donde pronunció la frase fue uno oscuro y fatalista donde se refirió a los inmigrantes como "animales" y donde declaró que si pierde las elecciones la democracia llegará a su fin. "Si no ganamos esta elección creo que no habrá otra elección en este país", dijo Trump.

Asimismo, catalogó de "rehenes e increíbles patriotas" a los convictos por la sangrienta intentona de golpe de estado del 6 de enero de 2021 en el Capitolio federal, la misma que todos presentamos en vivo y a todo color, pero que según Trump y sus fanáticos fue producto de nuestra imaginación colectiva.

De hecho, el ataque al Capitolio, instigado por Trump con la mentira de que le "robaron" la elección 2020 que ganó Joe Biden, fue en sí mismo un baño de sangre. Persiste el temor de lo que pueda ocurrir si Trump pierde las elecciones.

En su discurso, Trump redobló sus ataques contra los inmigrantes. "No sé si se les puede llamar personas. Creo que en algunos casos no son personas... son animales", afirmó. Asimismo, ha

intensificado la retórica de que los inmigrantes están "envenenando la sangre" del país, a la mejor usanza de Adolfo Hitler y Benito Mussolini.

Comete un grave error quien no tome en serio las amenazas de Trump y su virulento lenguaje contra los inmigrantes pues ya demostró con hechos los extremos a los que puede llegar en cuatro años de presidencia y luego, al perder la reelección, al intentar robársela intimidando funcionarios y obligando a su exvicepresidente, Mike Pence, a evitar la certificación del triunfo de Biden. Fue la negativa de Pence la que dio paso al asalto al Capitolio.

“

*Lo subestiman quienes piensan que sus ataques se limitarán a los indocumentados.*

Contra los inmigrantes hay una larga lista de políticas extremistas, desde la llamada prohibición musulmana hasta la separación de familias en la frontera y perder el rastro de menores que no han sido devueltos a sus padres. Estas y otras medidas fueron frenadas en los tribunales, pero Trump y su equipo han tenido el tiempo suficiente para afinar mecanismos que les permitan revivirlas e implementarlas e iniciar otras, como su promesa de campos de detención y deportaciones masivas.

Pero también comete un grave error quien piense que como no es inmigrante no tiene nada que temer a un poten-

cial retorno de Trump a la Casa Blanca. Lo subestiman quienes piensan que sus ataques se limitarán a los indocumentados. Se trata de una persona que como presidente trataba al Departamento de Justicia como si fuera su bufete de abogados personales. Un individuo que enfrenta 91 cargos en cuatro casos judiciales y busca vengarse de quienes, según él, lo han "perseguido injustamente".

De manera que no extrañaría que en un segundo mandato, Trump busque mecanismos para al menos intimidar a opositores políticos, medios de comunicación o incluso organizaciones e instituciones que les sean incómodas. Así actúan los autócratas como los que Trump admira.

Si no, mire su "toma" del Comité Nacional Republicano (RNC) antes de ser oficialmente nominado, colocando familiares y aliados que promueven sus ideas de "fraude electoral".

Con aclaratoria o sin ella, Trump ya instigó un baño de sangre el 6 de enero de 2021. Nada ha cambiado. Al contrario, actúa más envalentonado. Su estrategia sigue enfocada en satanizar a los inmigrantes para atizar a su base o a quienes se sientan contrariados por la situación en la frontera. Pero su amenaza va más allá. Ya está invocando "fraude electoral" para minar la confianza en el sistema y es nuestra propia democracia la que puede sufrir las consecuencias.

*Maribel Hastings es Asesora Ejecutiva de América's Voice.*

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# The 'Dark Money' Behind the Lobbyists Opposing a Colorado Charter School Accountability Bill

Mike DeGuire

**O**n March 7, three Colorado legislators introduced a [charter school accountability bill](#) to establish improved guidelines for authorizing and renewing charter schools by local school districts. The bill would strengthen the authority that elected school boards have regarding their governance of charter schools, and it also provides citizens with expanded information about the operations of charter schools in their districts.

According to its backers and public education advocacy groups, this is the [first major legislation](#) to prescribe more charter school accountability since the first Charter Schools Act was passed in 1993. Current state legislation often limits local control over the charter school approval process, funding requirements, and waivers from state legislation. Given that nearly two-thirds of the state's 64 counties experienced an ["absolute decline in the under-18 population over the last decade,"](#) the charter school accountability bill would empower local school boards to address the overall enrollment needs of the district. While charter schools primarily utilize taxpayer dollars for their funding, many charter schools allow private interests to invest in their growth and development, which can [create potential conflicts of interest](#).



savings accounts for families to use for any school of their choice. Last January, [AFP joined with the American Legislative Exchange Council](#) and the Heritage Foundation to form the [Education Freedom Alliance](#), an organization that [ALEC initiated to promote parents' rights](#) to use public money to attend a private, charter, home or public school of their choice. Funded with nearly \$80 million primarily from the Koch Industries, the Americans for Prosperity political action group has also supported far-right candidates for decades.

American for Prosperity and [Advance Colorado](#) issued a press release on X stating the bill would "mark the beginning of the end of charter schools in Colorado," and together, the two groups "would work overtime to make sure the bill was soundly defeated." According to the Colorado Times Recorder, Advance Colorado is a [conservative dark money group said to be funded by billionaire Phil Anschutz](#). Formerly known as Unite Colorado, Advance Colorado has "given over \$17 million to support major Republican political groups and efforts in Colorado." [Colorado Dawn](#), another dark money group headed by State Board of Education member Steve Durham and Colorado state Sen. Paul Lundein, gave millions to [Ready Colorado](#), which also has lobbyists opposing this bill.

Besides Americans for Prosperity and Ready Colorado, these organizations have [enlisted their lobbyists to defeat the bill](#): [Colorado Succeeds](#), the [Colorado Children's Campaign](#), [Transform Education Now](#), [Colorado League of Charter Schools Action](#), [Education Alliance of Colorado](#), and [Education Reform Now Advocacy](#). Several of these organizations have access to deep pockets of money, and often the donors are not known.

Pro-charter school organizations don't agree with this legislative effort to increase accountability as they believe this bill would "kill" charter schools. [Republicans have been especially vocal](#) in their opposition to this bill, even though the bill promotes increased local control over charter schools. The pro-charter [organizations hired over 30 lobbyists to oppose the bill](#). Lobbying can be expensive, but the organizations opposing the bill have connections to several billionaire-funded foundations.

The largest lobbying team hired to oppose the bill works for [Americans for Prosperity](#), a conservative organization funded by the [Koch network](#), whose goal is to ["destabilize and abolish public education."](#) American for Prosperity has been active in Colorado for years promoting [vouchers](#) and [education](#)

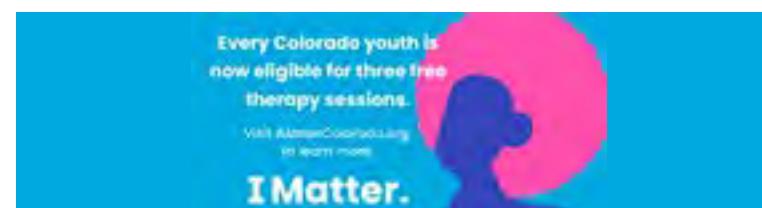
[Education Reform Now Advocacy](#) is closely connected to Democrats for Education Reform, "which was started by Wall Street hedge fund managers," according to Ballotpedia. Colorado Politics stated that "various reports say [Education Reform Now has taken in millions](#) from [Rupert Murdoch](#) and the [Walton Family Foundation](#)." The Education Reform Now money also benefited the campaign coffers of 14 Democratic legislators, which may create a hurdle for the charter bill's passage unless these legislators decide the bill's merits warrant their support.

The upcoming lobbying effort in Colorado's legislature is not unique, as similar high-paid lobbying efforts occur wherever there is significant charter school legislation. In Nashville, a [local news reporter exposed who 67 pro-charter lobbyists](#) worked for during legislative hearings on several charter bills in 2022. In the [video](#) that accompanied his report, Phil Williams highlighted the direct connections that the pro-charter lobbyists have with billionaires. His investigative report documented that "Americans for Prosperity is linked to billionaire Charles Koch," and they also "received funding from billionaire Bill Gates and the Walton family of Walmart fame."

As in Tennessee, the Colorado lobbyists will meet frequently with legislators to convince them this bill is not necessary. The legislators will need to weigh the benefits of the bill with the concerns of those who participate in a [massive letter-writing campaign initiated by the lobbying organizations](#) to oppose the legislation. The bill's backers hope this will be the legislators' opportunity to update 30-year-old legislation and begin to ensure increased local control and accountability for the millions of taxpayer dollars that fund the charter schools educating 15% of the state's K-12 student population.

**Mike DeGuire, Ph.D., is an executive coach for school leaders in Denver, and he serves on the board of Advocates for Public Education Policy. He has been a teacher, district level reading coordinator, and a principal in the Denver metro area for most of his education career. He also worked as a leadership consultant for several national education organizations, and as an educator effectiveness specialist with the Colorado Department of Education. He blogs periodically at [medium.com/@ifiske80](#).**

Read More Commentary:  
[ElSemanarioOnline.com](#)



**THE WEEKLY ISSUE**  
**El Semanario** **LIVESTREAM**

**"River Sisters"**  
**Interview with Nita Gonzales**  
Denver, Colorado - March 23

**Denver Public Schools Announces La Raza Report**  
Denver, Colorado - March 19

**18 Annual Latino/a Advocacy Day Conference**  
Denver, Colorado - March 16-18

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# River Sister's Call to Action

Daniel Stange de Acatl



**C**olorado is a very strategic location when it comes to water access and rights. We have a very antiquated rule about water rights so that the first person that claimed land was given the first right over how that water was distributed. Of course, this had NO consideration for the Native People that were here first. Yet the Federal courts did award the Southern Ute nation a settlement in 1988 because their treaty had some good language to ensure that they could access the water on their reservation.

Over the last century the work of civil engineers and major water projects have made some serious changes to the natural distribution of our river systems. Reservoirs have transformed the work that beavers previously did and tunnels across the mountains diverted millions of gallons yearly from the west to the eastern plains for the large industrial famers in more than a dozen transmountain water diversions. The result of these projects led to the erasure of the Colorado River Delta that flowed into the gulf of Baja California, also known as the Sea of Cortez.

The Hoover Dam in the 1930's was the first big projects that stopped the flow of the river for six years as it filled Lake Mead and then again with other locations like Lake Powell. The result of these projects devastated the

birds, animals and human populations that had survived in the Delta area that once covered almost two million acres of land. Early explorers wrote about the abundance of animals including jaguars and the native people called Cuapa' (people of the river) numbered in the thousands. As usual, the result of human intervention allowed the Sonoran Desert to encroach upon the once fertile lands and most of the area dried up.

As far back as 1974, the Mexican Government listed the area as a reserve zone and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO—finally had the site designated as a Biosphere Nature Reserve in June 1993. Since this time, there have been considerable efforts to restore the river and despite many recent dry seasons and the climate crisis, there was a celebrated arrival of the Colorado River return to its delta in the Spring of 2014.

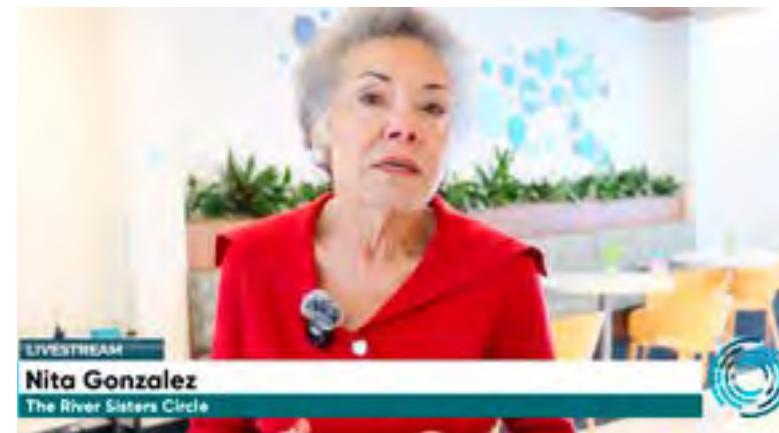
This type of conservation efforts and campaigns like actor Robert Red-

ford initiated about the river led to compacts between México and the U.S. like Minute 319 in 2012. In 2002, Colorado legislation passed the Colorado Healthy River Fund that helps fund efforts for many rivers in the state. In 2015, the fund expired, but with quick efforts by advocates they reopened the bill and continue to fund projects and conservation efforts. Reports are available to the public [here](#).

Slowly the efforts to improve our water supply and reduce overuse is being championed by many non-profits like Groundworks Denver, Yampa Valley trust, Willow Creek watershed, and South Platte Communities United to name a few. Some deeper research is illustrated in this [news water study](#) report last month about the history of water rights and river compacts. There is an old saying that "whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting".

Sadly, many of these struggles leave our community without the richness of the stories that accompany the flow of water. Water is life, and humans have been dependent on the rivers to build community from time immemorial. It's tragic to see how often we use rivers to divide political state and national boundaries. We must recover the stories that our elders related to rivers like the South Platte, which is one of the few rivers that flow north. The

The [River Sister Congreso \(El Semanario Livestream interview with Nita Gonzales\)](#) that was held this past weekend was a generous example of people that understand the spirit of the river. All ancestors acknowledged the spirit of the river in a variety of rituals and ceremonies. The effort to clean and conserve our rivers will lead to a cleaner and healthier community for all. The stories of the rivers are like turquoise beads that string together in a beautiful necklace or rosary of prayer beads.



Watch an El Semanario interview with River Sister member, Nita Gonzalez [here](#). (Photo: Karen Gutiérrez/El Semanario)



Left-right: Solicia E. López, Irene Vilar, and Jorge Figueroa spoke at the River Sister's Congreso in Denver, Colorado. (Photo: Karen Gutiérrez/El Semanario)

because Cuauhtémoc had instructed the people to abandon their streets and cover their temples until the new sun returns.

Rivers carry a message for those who listen. The sound of flowing water over rocks and around bends. There is an immense number of lessons that can be derived from the teaching of water. Water-Unite is another group that seeks to help others realize the value of cultivating this relationship. Our body is mostly water and the qualities of water to respond to the environment and ourselves in turn. There are incredible potentials for human development, healing and refreshing our views of how and why we can come together in the spirit of water and flow like a river.

*Daniel Stange de Acatl is a Denver Native and Cultural activist that serves his community on various levels.*

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**FRIDAY,  
APRIL 19  
4:00pm-7:30pm**

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Denver, CO 80206

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[dept\\_sustainability@dpsk12.net](mailto:dept_sustainability@dpsk12.net)

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Students will learn from their peers about how they can contribute to climate action, build leadership and advocacy skills, and find where they fit into the District's Climate Action Plan (CAP). Whether you have been involved in a sustainability club or not, all are welcome to attend and learn how to fight for a livable future!

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# I Moved to Rural New Mexico to Report on the Aftermath of a Massive Wildfire

**Patrick Lohmann**

In February 2023, I signed a lease on a dusty studio apartment in Las Vegas, New México, two hours from my apartment in Albuquerque and just outside the burn scar of the largest wildfire in New México history. Based on the railroad ties that served as vigas, my landlord told me my new home had likely been built in the late 1800s.

The rural communities in the mountains of northern New México have long been wary of outsiders. More than a century ago, a band of white-capped marauders on horseback, known as the Gorras Blancas, rode through the countryside to fight back against the predominantly white speculators and railroad barons taking over the land. The Gorras Blancas cut through newly built fences dividing shared pastureland, known as the "ejido," and burned piles of railroad ties. But they failed to repel the newcomers, who built Victorian homes on what became the town's well-to-do east side.

My apartment was on the historically Hispanic, lower-income west side. I had moved there at the beginning of a yearlong collaboration between my newsroom, Source New Mexico, and ProPublica to examine the area's recovery from the fire. The federal government had accidentally triggered the blaze; now the Federal Emergency Management Agency was in charge of distributing checks to compensate people for the government's mistake. I knew some survivors wouldn't appreciate being interviewed by someone they perceived as an outsider, even though I'm from New México and have lived here most of my life. For the next year,

my job was to gain their trust.

The fire had broadened divisions among residents: between those who had suffered and those who had been spared; between those who had money to rebuild and those who had to wait for a check from FEMA; between those angry at how long it was taking to be paid and those who had taken jobs with FEMA to help process their neighbors' claims.

I introduced myself to the community in a column published in the weekly newspaper, the Optic, asking people to get in touch. I then set about speaking to anyone willing to open up about the trauma of the disaster, what they saw as a painfully slow release of compensation funds and disaster aid, their fears about losing their culture and their realization that this place had permanently changed. That meant showing up early to public meetings at high school gyms, carrying a stack of business cards and speaking with frustrated survivors until janitors threatened to turn off the lights.

And I worked the phones. After a bit of pestering, a county assessor marked down all the houses she knew had been lost in the fire. I called every property owner, often reaching people who were living far away until they could rebuild or were making do in RVs, friends' homes, and even, in one case, a tent. Many people were reluctant to talk; some said it was too painful to discuss what they had been through.

One man pretended to speak only Spanish to get me off the phone; I spoke just enough Spanish to convince him to chat with me in English. He taught me a Spanish phrase with a special meaning for those who speak a disappearing dialect unique to the region: "*No le bus-*

*ques tres pies del gato sabiendo que tiene cuatro.*" It means, "Don't look for three legs on a cat knowing it has four." He meant it both as a joke and a warning: Tread carefully. He turned out to be friendly, later showing me around his damaged property.

People soon began to recognize me around town. They invited me to sit down and listen in on conversations they were having about the fire that had changed their lives and the long recovery that now consumed their attention. (FEMA officials have said they worked as quickly as they could on a mission that is far different from their typical job of providing short-term disaster aid.)

Many of those conversations reflected the randomness of this disaster, in which some properties were burned to their foundations and others were untouched. Some people had survivors' guilt; others nursed bitterness. I remember when Juan Ortiz, a rancher, told me that someone with a second home in the area had complained about his own house being spared; the man had hoped to collect the insurance money. Ortiz was devastated over the loss of his home and livelihood. He wished he still had his father's book collection.

Byard Duncan, an engagement reporter with ProPublica, came out to help in June, about five months after my arrival. We recorded public service announcements and participated in call-in shows on local radio stations, went to church services and set up a folding table at a farmers market in Las Vegas. By then, we knew that the region's spotty internet access was a barrier to getting people to fill out an online form that we had posted in English and Spanish. We



Juan Ortiz displays a photograph of his family's home in Rociada, New México, taken before the Hermits Peak-Calf Canyon Fire destroyed the house, his barns and acres of trees. (Photo: Adria Malcolm for ProPublica)



Maria Luisa Sena sits with a photo of her husband, Donato Sena, in their temporary home. In the photo, Donato Sena stands in front of a replacement mobile home, which the couple bought with their savings while they waited for the federal government to pay for their losses in the Hermits Peak-Calf Canyon Fire that destroyed their old home. (Photo: Patrick Lohmann / Source New Mexico)

drove over and around the mountains, passing out more than 300 flyers with our contact information at diners, gas stations, grocery stores and post offices.

Over those months, I observed the recovery up close. I drove to and from interviews on roads still washed out from the floods that followed the fire. Panicked survivors called me when a small wildfire started in Las Tunas, in an area that had been untouched by the

blaze the year before. Like my neighbors, I watched the horizon for storm clouds, wary of the flooding that had become common because the fire-scarred soil couldn't absorb rainwater. Notices were regularly dropped in my mailbox warning of potential contaminants in the city's water supply, which had been polluted after the fire.

See Lohman on page 22

## New México is Right to Hold Out for Higher Prices for its Most Valuable Commodity

**Bill Jordan**



New México is a land with many valuable assets – from our rich cultural diversity to our stunning physical beauty, to our mineral wealth. These assets belong to us all and while it's impossible to put a price on some of them – our culture and natural landscape, to be precise – we can and do put a price on our mineral wealth. And that price needs to be fair so that we are all receiving the benefit of the bounty beneath our feet.

That's why we support State Land Commissioner Stephanie García Richard's pause on certain leases on land in the Permian Basin. Commissioner

García Richard rightfully paused the leasing until the state increases its royalty rates to market values. Currently, New México's royalty rates on state land are below the rates on privately owned land here and in Texas and 5 percentage points lower than on state-owned land in Texas.

By leasing our oil-rich land at below-market rates, we're forgoing tens of millions of dollars every year that should be going to educate our children.

The state Legislature was all set to correct this deficiency last month with HB 48, which would have increased the royalty rate for certain oil and gas tracts from 20% to 25%. The bill would have only applied to new leases on the most lucrative oil and gas parcels. HB 48 passed the House of Representatives on a 39-28 vote but then stalled in the Senate Finance Committee, where it received a hearing but no vote.

Texas last increased its royalty rates on state-owned land in the 1990s.

Rates on New México's state land haven't been updated since 1970 – or since long before the richness of the Permian Basin was even discovered.

Although Commissioner García Richard has a fiduciary duty to earn money for our schools and other public institutions, she can't change these royalty rates on her own. That must be done legislatively. This pause in issuing leases will only impact a small number of parcels, and new leases for other parcels are still being sold. García Richard is right to hold out for market value for these particularly promising parcels.

This is a particularly pertinent issue given that just last week it was re-

ported that some oil and gas producers have been failing to pay their taxes. Instead, they've been lining their own pockets with money that is supposed to go to our schools, colleges, hospitals, and other public institutions.

New México has some of the best oil-producing land in the nation. It's an insult to our school children to lease the oil that funds their schools at bargain-basement prices. That's like setting them up for a bargain-basement education. We applaud the action of our State Land Commissioner and urge the Legislature to take up this issue again when they convene in 2025 and to pass it this time.

**Bill Jordan** is the Government Relations Officer for New Mexico Voices for Children and is currently acting as Interim Co-Director of the organization.

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# Can Accessory Dwelling Units Help Keep Families and Communities Intact?

By Sarah Tory

The first house that Michelle Chávez owned was in a suburb south of Denver. To pay her mortgage, she worked three jobs—for Arapahoe County, Home Depot, and at a nearby golf course. But when Chávez became pregnant, she had to quit two jobs and couldn't keep up with her mortgage payments. She lost the house and moved in with her parents.

A few years later, Chávez and her parents had a falling out. By then a single mother of three, Chávez tried and failed to find another place to live. She ended up living in her cousin's house for six months, sleeping on the couch with two of her kids (her other child was living with her ex). Though she had a stable job, her life felt precarious without stable housing.

When Chávez, now 48, and her parents finally mended their relationship, she bought one of their houses on the western side of Denver. Her parents gifted her the down payment—the first step, she said, in finding housing stability. The second step came a few months

ago when construction was completed on her accessory dwelling unit, or ADU—a small, independent living unit inside or on the same property as an additional primary residence.

With the rental income generated by her ADU, Chávez hopes to save enough

“

*I want my good fortune to be something that can benefit other people.”*

Ann Karlberg, Denver Resident

to retire one day and have a place she can offer her kids when they're older, helping them avoid the housing insecurity she once faced.

“It's kind of building for my kids,” she said. “That way, when they're ready to move out, they have a place to go.”

Chávez's ADU is part of a new pilot program to help stabilize low- to moderate-income homeowners in a part of Denver where the city's soaring hous-



Michelle Chávez and two of her kids, Thaddeus Chávez, 10, and Azzan Booker, 18, outside of Chávez's accessory dwelling unit in the family's backyard in west Denver on March 13, 2024. / Michelle Chávez y sus dos hijos, Thaddeus Chávez, de 10 años, y Azzan Booker, de 18, afuera de la unidad de vivienda accesoria de Chávez en el jardín trasero de la familia en el oeste de Denver el 15 de marzo de 2024. (Photo/Foto: Eli Imadali / Special to The Colorado Trust)

ing market has pushed out many of the area's longtime working-class residents. The program offers technical assistance and subsidizes the cost of building an ADU for these homeowners. It gives them rental income to help cover rising property taxes and other expenses or a place to house family members needing housing. In turn, the ADUs can boost the number of affordable units since

homeowners in the program must rent them below market rate.

Denver, like many other cities in the U.S., is facing an unprecedented housing affordability crisis. According to a July 2023 report from Zillow, the city has one of the nation's most significant housing shortages, with a 70,000-unit deficit. Meanwhile, Colorado has the eighth most unaffordable housing costs in the country, with over one-third of Coloradans spending more than 30% of their income on rent or mortgage, leaving little left over for other necessities. With the cost and regulatory hurdles associated with building large-scale housing developments, ADUs have emerged as one way to address various housing-related challenges.

In 2016, the Denver mayor's office created the West Denver Renaissance Collaborative (WDRC), which includes the City and County of Denver, the Denver Housing Authority and various nonprofits, to examine which parts of the city were not recovering from the 2008 recession and which areas were underinvested. They zeroed in on nine neighborhoods roughly bounded by Colfax Avenue to the north, I-25 to the east, Mississippi Avenue to the south, and Sheridan Boulevard to the west—an area that was historically redlined by mortgage lenders and federal, state and local governments from the 1930s into the late 1960s.

Renee Martínez-Stone became WDRC director in 2016. West Denver had already begun a lot of housing-related changes. Historically, the area had a large Latino/a/x population and was where working-class families could afford a house.

By the time Martínez-Stone started with WDRC, higher-income households, rising rents, and investor activity had started displacing low- to moderate-income residents in west Denver. Working-class families renting or owning those homes lost their housing,

as wages did not keep pace with rising property taxes and expenses. With 78% of renters and 58% of homeowners considered low-income, “west Denver became particularly vulnerable as households could not keep up financially,” according to a 2022 report on the ADU program.

“If you have to pay \$1,000 more in property taxes per year than you’re used to, and if you’re a working-class family and your budget is tight because your wages haven’t increased, and you’re paying the equivalent of \$220 extra a month than you were in 2009, on top of inflation—that’s what’s creating some of the instability,” said Martínez-Stone.

Between 2015 and 2021, approximately 13,800 households with students in Denver public schools left west Denver, moving to other cities and other less expensive neighborhoods, per a forthcoming (but not yet published) update on the ADU program for 2023. Data shows many households left west Denver following a real estate transaction where their home or the home they were renting was sold; up to 40% of the property buyers were investor companies.

WDRC leaders saw the urgency for coming up with a solution. To curb displacement and keep families in place, they needed to think beyond short-term financial stabilization and create opportunities for long-term wealth-building.

The large, predominantly single-family lots of west Denver made ADUs viable, creating benefits for homeowners and providing much-needed family-oriented affordable housing without demolishing existing homes. They also allowed homeowners to take their home equity and invest in another house, helping them build wealth. However, few ADUs were

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# ¿Pueden las Unidades de Vivienda Accesoria Mantener Intactas A Las Familia y Comunidades?



La unidad de vivienda accesoria de Michelle Chávez cuenta con un pórtico al frente y puertas estilo francés a un costado de la casa. La alquila a una familia que antes había estado sin vivienda. / Michelle Chávez's accessory dwelling unit has a front porch and French doors on the side of the house. She rents it to a family that had previously been unhoused. (Foto/Photo: Eli Imadali / enviado de The Colorado Trust)

Por Sarah Tory

**L**a primera casa que Michelle Chávez tuvo fue en un suburbio al sur de Denver. Para pagar su hipoteca, trabajó tres trabajos—con el Condado de Arapahoe, Home Depot y en un campo cercano de golf. Pero cuando Chávez se embarazó, tuvo que renunciar a dos de los trabajos y no pudo seguir pagando la hipoteca. Perdió la casa y se fue a vivir con sus padres.

“

*Quiero que mi buena fortuna sea algo que pueda beneficiar a la gente”.*

*Ann Karlberg, Residente de Denver*

Un par de años después, Chávez y sus padres tuvieron un disgusto. Para ese entonces, Chávez era una madre soltera con tres hijos soltera e intentó sin éxito encontrar otro lugar para vivir. Terminó viviendo en la casa de su prima por seis meses, durmiendo en el sofá con dos de sus hijos (el otro hijo estaba viviendo con su ex). Aunque tenía un trabajo estable, sentía que su vida era frágil sin vivienda estable.

Cuando Chávez, ahora de 48 años, y sus padres finalmente repararon su relación, compró una de sus casas en el lado oeste de Denver. Sus padres le dieron el dinero para el pago inicial—el primer paso, dijo, para encontrar vivienda estable. El segundo paso vino hace

un par de meses cuando se completó la construcción de su unidad de vivienda accesoria, o ADU (por sus siglas en inglés)—una unidad pequeña e independiente adentro o en la misma propiedad como una residencia principal adicional.

Con los ingresos generados por alquilar su ADU, Chávez espera ahorrar suficiente dinero para retirarse algún día y tener un lugar que ofrecerles a sus hijos cuando sean mayores, ayudándolos a evitar la inseguridad en la vivienda que ella enfrentara alguna vez.

“Es como construir para mis hijos”, dijo. “De esa forma, cuando estén listos para salirse [de la casa], tendrán un lugar donde ir”.

La ADU de Chávez es parte de un nuevo programa piloto para ayudar a estabilizar a los propietarios de vivienda con bajos a moderados ingresos en una parte de Denver donde el mercado de bienes raíces de la ciudad ha desplazado a muchos de los residentes de clase trabajadora que han vivido en el área por muchos años. El programa ofrece asistencia técnica y subvencióna la construcción de una ADU para estos propietarios.

Les da ingresos por alquilarla para cubrir el aumento de los impuestos en la propiedad y otros gastos, o un lugar para alojar a parientes que necesiten vivienda. A su vez, las ADU pueden aumentar la cantidad de unidades asequibles, ya que los propietarios en el programa deben alquilarlas a un precio por debajo del precio de mercado.

Denver, como muchas otras ciudades en Estados Unidos, está enfrentando una crisis nunca antes vista en la asequibilidad de la vivienda. Según un informe publicado por Zillow en julio de 2023, la ciudad cuenta con una de las faltas más significativas de vivienda, con un déficit de 70,000 unidades. Mientras tanto, Colorado ocupa el octavo lugar en el país en la lista de estados con costos de vivienda más inasequibles, con más de un tercio de personas en Colorado que gastan más del 30 por ciento de sus ingresos en el alquiler o los pagos de la hipoteca. Esto deja poco dinero para cubrir otras necesidades. Con el costo y los obstáculos reglamentarios para construir desarrollos de vivienda a gran escala, las ADUs han surgido como una forma de abordar una variedad de desafíos relacionados con la vivienda.

En 2016, la oficina del alcalde de Denver creó la Colaborativa del Renacimiento del Oeste de Denver (WDRC, por sus siglas en inglés), la cual incluye a la Ciudad y Condado de Denver, la Autoridad de Vivienda de Denver y varias organizaciones sin fines de lucro, para examinar qué partes de la ciudad no se estaban recuperando de la recesión de 2008 y en qué áreas no se estaba invirtiendo. Se enfocaron en nueve vecindarios aproximadamente limitados por Colfax Avenue al norte, I-25 al este, Mississippi Avenue al sur y Sheridan Boulevard al oeste—una área que fue históricamente delineada en rojo (en inglés: redlining) por los prestamistas hipotecarios y go-

biernos federales, estatales y locales de los años 1930 y hasta finales de los 1960.

Renee Martínez-Stone se convirtió en la directora de WDRC en 2016. En el oeste de Denver ya se habían iniciado muchos cambios relacionados con la vivienda. Históricamente, el área había tenido una numerosa población latina y era donde las familias de clase trabajadora podían comprar una casa.

Cuando Martínez-Stone empezó a trabajar en WDRC, hogares con mayores ingresos, alquileres en aumento y actividades de inversionistas ya habían empezado a desplazar a los residentes con bajos a moderados ingresos en el oeste de Denver. Las familias de clase trabajadora que estaban alquilando o eran dueñas de esas viviendas las perdieron, ya que los salarios no se mantuvieron a la par con el aumento en los im-

puestos y gastos de las propiedades. Con el 78 por ciento de los inquilinos y el 58 por ciento de los propietarios considerados como de bajos ingresos, “el oeste de Denver se convirtió en [una área] especialmente vulnerable ya que los hogares no podían mantenerse a flote financieramente”, según un informe de 2022 sobre el programa de ADU.

“Si tienes que pagar \$1,000 más en impuestos a la propiedad por año de lo que pagabas antes, y si eres una familia de clase trabajadora y tu presupuesto está justo porque tu salario no ha aumentado, y estás pagando el equivalente a \$220 extra al mes de lo que pagabas en 2009, además de la inflación—eso es lo que está creando parte de la inestabilidad”, Martínez-Stone dijo.

Vea ADU/Esp, página 18

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# University of Northern Colorado Achieves Federal Designation as Hispanic Serving Institution

## COLORADO

**M**ore than 18 months ahead of schedule, the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) received notification last week from the U.S. Department of Education that it is officially Colorado's newest Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

"This is a significant milestone for our university," said UNC President Andy Feinstein. "Since officially beginning our pursuit of the HSI designation, our focus has been twofold. We have endeavored both to meet and exceed the enrollment threshold requirements for the designation and ensure that our institution fosters a sense of belonging for Hispanic and Latine students, their families and the broader community."

"This ambitious vision is fundamental to our future. It aligns with our commitment to put students first and create an inclusive environment where all individuals — students, faculty and staff — feel welcomed and supported," continued Feinstein.

Achieving the federal HSI designation was a key action identified in UNC's 10-year strategic plan, *Rowing, Not*

*Drifting* 2030. Under the leadership of Vice President of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Tobias Guzmán, the university formally embarked on a comprehensive five-year plan in 2020, with the goal of attaining the HSI designation by fall 2025.

***This is a significant milestone for our university.***  
***Andy Feinstein, President, University of Northern Colorado***

Guzmán said that realizing the goal more than a full year ahead of schedule is a testament to the level of commitment within the university community that dates as far back as 1969, long before the federal HSI designation was created, when UNC established its Mexican American Studies Program.

"We may not have been talking about becoming an HSI in 1969, but had we not taken that first step 55 years ago, and many other steps along the

way, to recognize the importance of celebrating and supporting cultural diversity, we wouldn't have been as prepared as we are today," said Guzmán.

The U.S. Department of Education defines an HSI as an institution of higher education with an undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment of at least 25% Hispanic students. UNC has seen a consistent, steady increase in the number of Hispanic/Latine students over the past several years. In fall 2022, enrollment of Hispanic/Latine students was at 25.5% and reached a high of 26.3% in fall 2023.

The designation is important in that it opens the doors to additional federal funds, in the form of competitive grants, specifically designed to support HSIs in improving their academic quality and service to students. But leadership at the university has been steadfast in their assertion that the designation is just one element of what they foresee as a successful HSI at UNC.

"At UNC, being an HSI is more than a federal designation — it's a way of being," said Guzmán. "Our collective work toward student success, regardless of a students' race/ethnicity,



The University of Northern Colorado (UNC) recently announced their official status as Colorado's newest Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). / La Universidad del Norte de Colorado (UNC) anunció recientemente su estatus oficial como la Institución de Servicio Hispano (HSI) más nueva de Colorado. (Photo/Foto: UNC)

socioeconomic status, gender, physical or mental abilities and other demographic traits, will provide equitable outcomes and systemically eliminate disparities."

According to the Colorado Department of Higher Education, even though Hispanic/Latine individuals represent the largest and fastest-growing ethnic group, they have the lowest average educational attainment and the lowest college enrollment rate of any ethnic group in the state. Nationally, the four-year college graduation rate for Hispanic students is 13%-points lower than that compared to their white, non-Hispanic peers. At UNC, the discrepancy isn't as high, but Hispanic/Latine students still experience lower graduation and retention rates compared to their white, non-Hispanic peers.

With just under one-third of Colorado's high school graduates and 60% of the students in the Greeley-Evans School District identifying as Hispanic/Latine, finding ways to better serve this growing demographic is a priority.

Guzmán said it's imperative that for UNC to be an effective HSI, it needs to find ways to address these disparities — to operate in a way that reduces potential barriers that Hispanic/Latine students face in accessing higher education while at the same time creating an environment where they feel they belong.

The UNC Tuition Promise is one example of the university's most recent efforts to remove those barriers and increase higher education opportunities for educationally and economically disadvantaged students. The program, which goes into effect in fall 2024, will lessen the financial burden for students with the greatest financial need by covering tuition and mandatory fees for all eligible Colorado residents with an adjusted gross income of \$65,000 or less.

Another recent initiative, UNC's Colorado First-Year Admission Guarantee was implemented last fall to provide clarity and confidence for high school guidance counselors, families and prospective students as they explore pathways to a college education. Eligible students who meet the clearly defined criteria are guaranteed admission to the university.

These programs are in addition to work that has been underway over the past several years specifically focused on creating a more culturally inclusive campus environment, strengthening community engagement and partnerships with local Hispanic-serving organizations and enhancing academic support and success for all underrepresented populations.

"We're not done," said Guzmán when referring to the university's next steps.

"The federal designation opens doors to federal funding opportunities specifically designed to support institutions serving all students, but we'll also be internally focused on continuing to build and foster our cultural responsiveness.

"We know students that come from limited income and/or marginalized backgrounds will benefit from resources that may now be available to us — resources that would allow us to enhance academic programs, expand support services and invest in initiatives aimed at promoting student success and graduation. By leveraging these resources effectively and cultivating a sense of belonging for all of our students, we will create more equitable pathways to higher education and ensure that all students have the tools they need to thrive."

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# La Universidad del Norte de Colorado logra la designación federal de Institución al Servicio de los Hispanos

## COLORADO

Más de 18 meses antes de lo previsto, la Universidad del Norte de Colorado (UNC) recibió esta semana la notificación del Departamento de Educación de los EE.UU. de que es oficialmente la más reciente Institución al Servicio de los Hispanos (HSI) del estado de Colorado.

“Este es un hito importante para nuestra universidad”, dijo el presidente de UNC, Andy Feinstein. “Desde que comenzamos oficialmente nuestro camino hacia la designación HSI, nuestros objetivos han sido dos. Nos hemos esforzado tanto por cumplir y superar los requisitos de matriculación de estudiantes para obtener la designación y garantizar que nuestra institución forme un sentido de pertenencia para los estudiantes hispanos y latinos, sus familias y la comunidad en general”.

“Esta ambiciosa visión es fundamental para nuestro futuro. Se alinea con nuestro compromiso de tener como prioridad a los estudiantes y crear un entorno inclusivo en el que todas las personas – tanto estudiantes como personal académico y administrativo – se sientan bienvenidas y apoyadas”, continuó Feinstein.

Conseguir la designación federal HSI fue una acción clave identificada en el plan estratégico a diez años de la UNC, “Remar, no ir a la deriva, 2030” (Rowing, Not Drifting, 2030). Bajo el liderazgo del Vicepresidente de la División de Diversidad, Equidad e Inclusión, Tobias Guzmán, la universidad se embarcó formalmente en un plan integral de cinco años en 2020, con el objetivo de lograr la designación HSI para el otoño de 2025.

Guzmán dijo que el cumplimiento de esta meta con más de un año de anticipación es un testimonio del nivel de compromiso dentro de la comunidad universitaria que se remonta a 1969, mucho antes de que se creara la designación federal HSI, cuando UNC estableció su Programa de Estudios Mexicamericanos.

“Puede que no estuviéramos hablando de convertirnos en una HSI en 1969, pero si no hubiéramos dado ese primer paso hace 55 años, y muchos otros pasos a lo largo del camino, para reconocer la importancia de celebrar y apoyar la diversidad cultural, no habríamos estado tan preparados como lo estamos hoy”, dijo Guzmán.

El Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. define una HSI como una institución de educación superior con una matrícula equivalente a tiempo completo de al menos un 25% de estudiantes hispanos. UNC ha visto un aumento consistente y constante en el número de estudiantes hispanos/latinos en los últimos años. En el otoño de 2022, la matrícula de estudiantes hispanos/lati-

nos fue del 25.5% y alcanzó un máximo del 26.3% en el otoño de 2023.

La designación es importante porque abre las puertas a fondos federales adicionales, en forma de subvenciones competitivas, diseñadas específicamente para apoyar a las HSI en la mejora de su calidad académica y el servicio a los estudiantes. Aún así, la dirección de la universidad se ha mantenido firme en afirmar que la designación es sólo un elemento más de cómo plantean convertir a UNC en una HSI exitosa.

“En la UNC, convertirnos en una

**“Este es un hito importante para nuestra universidad”.**  
**Andy Feinstein, Presidente, Universidad del Norte de Colorado**

HSI es más que una designación federal: es una nueva forma de ser”, dijo Guzmán. “Nuestro trabajo colectivo hacia el éxito de los estudiantes, independientemente de su raza/etnia, estatus socioeconómico, género, capacidades físicas o mentales y otros rasgos demográficos, proporcionará resultados equitativos y eliminará sistemáticamente las disparidades.”

Según el Departamento de Educación Superior de Colorado, aunque los hispanos/latinos representan el grupo étnico más numeroso y de más rápido crecimiento, tienen el nivel de educación media más bajo y la tasa de matriculación universitaria más baja de todos los grupos étnicos del estado. A nivel nacional, la tasa de graduación universitaria en programas de cuatro años de los estudiantes hispanos es un 13% puntos menos que la de sus compañeros blancos no hispanos. En la UNC, la discrepancia no es tan alta, pero los estudiantes hispanos/latinos todavía experimentan tasas más bajas de graduación y retención en comparación con sus compañeros blancos, no hispanos.

Con un poco menos de un tercio de los graduados de preparatoria de Colorado y siendo el 60% de los estudiantes del distrito escolar de Greeley-Evans identificados como hispanos/latinos, encontrar formas de atender mejor a este creciente grupo demográfico es una prioridad.

Guzmán dijo que es imperativo que para que UNC sea una HSI eficaz, necesita encontrar maneras de abordar estas disparidades – no solo para operar de una manera que reduzca las barreras potenciales que los estudiantes hispanos/latinos enfrentan en el acceso a la educación superior, si no que también se pueda crear un ambiente del cual se sientan parte importante.

La Promesa de Pago de Colegiatura UNC es un ejemplo de los esfuerzos más recientes de la universidad para eliminar esas barreras y aumentar las oportunidades de educación superior para los estudiantes en desventaja educativa y económica. El programa, que entrará en vigor en otoño de 2024, reducirá la carga financiera de los estudiantes con mayores necesidades económicas al cubrir el costo base de la colegiatura y las cuotas estándar para todos los residentes de Colorado que cumplan los requisitos y que tengan un ingreso bruto ajustado de \$65,000 dólares o menos.

Otra iniciativa reciente, la Garantía de Admisión de Primer Año de Colorado de UNC, se puso en marcha el otoño pasado para proporcionar claridad y confianza a los consejeros de orientación de las escuelas preparatorias, las familias y los futuros estudiantes a medida que exploran los caminos hacia una educación universitaria. Los estudiantes que cumplen los criterios claramente definidos tienen garantizada la admisión en la universidad.

Estos programas se suman al trabajo que se ha venido realizando en los últimos años, centrado específicamente en la creación de un entorno universitario más incluyente desde el punto de vista cultural, el fortalecimiento tanto de los vínculos de participación comunitaria como de las asociaciones con organizaciones locales de servicio a los hispanos, así como la mejora del apoyo académico y el éxito de todas las poblaciones subrepresentadas.

“Aún no hemos concluido”, dijo Guzmán al referirse a los próximos pasos de la universidad.



Tobias Guzmán, Vicepresidente de la División de Diversidad, Equidad e Inclusión de la Universidad del Norte de Colorado. / Tobias Guzmán, University of Northern Colorado's Vice President of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. (Foto/Photo: UNC)

“La designación federal abre las puertas a oportunidades de financiación federal diseñadas específicamente para apoyar a las instituciones que atienden a todos los estudiantes, pero también nos centraremos internamente en seguir construyendo y fomentando nuestra sensibilidad y responsabilidad cultural”.

“Sabemos que los estudiantes que proceden de entornos con ingresos limitados y/o marginados se beneficiarán de los recursos que ahora pueden estar a nuestra disposición, recursos que nos permitirían mejorar los programas

académicos, ampliar los servicios de apoyo e invertir en iniciativas destinadas a promover el éxito y la graduación de los estudiantes. Si aprovechamos estos recursos de forma eficaz y cultivamos un sentimiento de pertenencia para todos nuestros estudiantes, crearemos vías más equitativas hacia la educación superior y garantizaremos que todos los estudiantes dispongan de las herramientas que necesitan para prosperar.”

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# Mental Health Matters: What Being Aware Can Do

## COLORADO

By Hilary Olivares

**W**hen we hear about mental health, we often disregard the physical and mental challenges that are associated with it. For starters, what is mental health and how does it affect those who are dealing with it? Mental health can be characterized as a well-being for the mind in order to cope with things like stress, anxiety, or any other uneasy feelings. Those who are affected by mental health can push away their thoughts and feelings or find it hard to talk to someone about what they are going through. Mental health is important because it makes up how we pursue our ways of life and how we interact with society. Having someone to talk to, whether it be a friend, family member, or crisis center, can save someone's life before it's too late.

Mental health is a common thing we see with all ages, races, and genders. Although there are many aspects of what can cause poor mental health, social media among the many, are what can

strike changes to a person. Social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have an outlook on them that result in mental health issues. Most commonly seen, is the lifestyle in which others live. Those who are well-known celebrities show off their designer bags, their mansions, luxury cars, and can make those who aren't as fortunate feel less of themselves. Now even as a celebrity, many can see them as happy individuals because they can afford to buy whatever they want and live however they want, but that's far from the truth. Celebrity or not, social media is a place that allows others to make comments about your appearance, what beauty standards should look like, and how you should have the power to drive yourself to a good work ethic. This in itself causes a person to feel at their lowest leading to depression and other mental health challenges.

Mental health has been existent for years, but it hasn't been talked about until recently. When Covid-19 first hit, schools and jobs were going remote as temporary caution for everyone's safety. However, this would only be the beginning to a worldwide lockdown.



Olivia Almaguer, a representative for the bilingual department for Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners. / Olivia Almaguer, representante del departamento bilingüe de Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners. (Photo/Foto: courtesy Olivia Almaguer)

Among schools being remote, people began to lose jobs due to not being able to be in a face to face setting. This caused a lot of people to struggle with their mental health because these jobs were sources of income and ways to help pay bills. Many people were able to file for unemployment, but many people became homeless and lost all that they owned. This alone has had

an impact on everyone and has caused anxiety and depression. Those attending school virtually could not be surrounded by their friends and many students started their first year of middle and high school remotely and seniors weren't able to have a graduation. It doesn't just stop there. Unfortunately, many people have lost loved ones due to Covid. What may have been a struggle

among many, is how no one could visit their loved ones in the hospital or have a proper goodbye.

“

*It's okay to ask for help.”  
Olivia Almaguer, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners*

Facing the most trouble when it comes to a mental health problem is the Hispanic and Latino community. Many who are of Hispanic or Latino descent, often find that their problems should only be kept within their household and never told outside of that. It's very common for Hispanic or Latino cultures to overlook the idea of mental health causing a buildup of emotion. Olivia Almaguer, a representative for the bilingual department for Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners, has shared a lot on why mental health is important for everyone but also for those who may be from other cultural backgrounds and who may not speak English. The Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners, is a free non-profit, confidential, 24 hour, 7 days a week, crisis center that is open to everyone and anyone of all ages and genders. Olivia states, “We are seeing such a high demand in calls. For example, last year, I want to say we were averaging about 200 to 300 calls a month, we started to

See Health on page 19

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## Building Safe Communities: The Impact of Railroad Safety

A dive into railroad safety and why it matters in our communities

**Javier Mabrey**  
State Representative HD1

**Omar Ledesma**  
SMART Union Engineer

**Debbie Ortega**  
Former Denver City Council

March 28th, 2024  
6:00pm  
Zoom Meeting ID : 814 1109 8498  
Register Here: [Register Here](#)

# La Salud Mental Importa: Lo Que Puede Hacer Ser Consciente

## COLORADO

Por Hilary Olivares

**C**uando oímos hablar de salud mental, a menudo no tenemos en cuenta los problemas físicos y mentales que conlleva. Para empezar, ¿qué es la salud mental y cómo afecta a quienes la padecen? La salud mental puede caracterizarse como el bienestar de la mente para hacer frente a cosas como el estrés, la ansiedad o cualquier otro sentimiento de malestar. Las personas afectadas por la salud mental pueden alejar sus pensamientos y sentimientos o encontrar difícil hablar con alguien sobre lo que están pasando. La salud mental es importante porque determina nuestra forma de vida y de interactuar con la sociedad. Tener a alguien con quien hablar, ya sea un amigo, un familiar o un centro de crisis, puede salvar la vida de alguien antes de que sea demasiado tarde.

La salud mental es algo común que vemos en todas las edades, razas y géneros. Aunque hay muchos aspectos de lo que puede causar la mala salud

mental, los medios de comunicación social entre los muchos, son lo que puede golpear cambios a una persona. Las redes sociales como Facebook, Instagram, Twitter y TikTok tienen una perspectiva que provoca problemas de salud mental. Lo más común es ver el estilo de vida de los demás. Los famosos muestran sus bolsos de diseño, sus mansiones, sus coches de lujo, y pueden hacer que los que no son tan afortunados se sientan menos de sí mismos. Ahora bien, incluso siendo una celebridad, muchos pueden verlos como individuos felices porque pueden permitirse comprar lo que quieran y vivir como quieran, pero eso está lejos de la verdad. Celebridad o no, las redes sociales son un lugar que permite a otros hacer comentarios sobre tu apariencia,

Vea Salud, página 22

“

*Está bien pedir ayuda”.  
Olivia Almaguer, Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners*

# New Scholarships Aim to Connect Class of 2024 to High-Demand Jobs

COLORADO

By Eric Galatas

This year's high school graduates will be eligible for 14,000 new scholarships offered through Opportunity Next Colorado, a \$21 million investment approved by state lawmakers. Angie Paccione, Colorado Department of Higher Education executive director, said the goal is to set graduates up for success, and fill high-demand jobs that fuel the state's economy. She said 75% of all jobs in Colorado, and 94% of top jobs that pay enough to sustain a family, require some form of education beyond high school. "Right now just under 50% of our high school graduates are pursuing

post-secondary education," she said. "We want to see that number bump up so that our students have the credentials they need to get the job they want." Members of the Class of 2024 can get a \$1,500 scholarship, which Paccione added should cover the entire tuition costs for certificate programs that can be completed in as little as six months. Graduates can explore scholarships and advising available at [OpportunityNext.org](#).

A new platform that spotlights Colorado's fast-growing industries and related education and training programs. The initiative hopes to reach students from school districts with below-average college or trade school enrollment rates, and districts with low rates of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid

(FAFSA). Paccione explained many students never see the financial opportunities that are available for pursuing a degree or credential. "We're doing a lot of things right now that are targeted at those who are either on the margins of society, or they live in population areas where college has not always been seen as a pathway to success," she continued. This year's high school graduates can choose from a range of programs that can prepare them for careers as engineers, health professionals, computer and IT specialists, as well as construction, family and social sciences, education, advanced manufacturing and more. "There's eight different pathways that are high-demand positions. And this would allow people to get the training



Opportunity Next Colorado will provide guidance on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and college applications, and group coaching over the summer. / Opportunity Next Colorado brindará orientación sobre la Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal para Estudiantes y solicitudes universitarias, y capacitación grupal durante el Verano. (Photo: Adobe Stock)

and education that they need, and get into the workforce, and strengthen the economy. So, we're very excited to offer these scholarships," Paccione said.

Eric Galatas is a Producer with Public News Service.

For More Colorado News: [ElSemanarioOnline.com](#)

# Nuevas Becas Buscan Conectar Graduación de 2024 Con Trabajos de Alta Demanda

COLORADO

Por Eric Gálatas

Los graduados de la escuela secundaria de este año serán elegibles para más de 14,000 nuevas becas ofrecidas a través de Opportunity Next Colorado, una inversión de [21 millones de dólares](#) aprobada por los legisladores estatales. La Dra. Angie Paccione, del Departamento de Educación Superior de Colorado, dice que el objetivo es preparar a los graduados para el éxito y ocupar puestos de trabajo de alta de-

manda que impulsen la economía del estado. Ella agrega que el 75% de todos los empleos en Colorado, y el 94% de los empleos más altos que pagan lo suficiente para sostener a una familia, requieren algún tipo de educación más allá de la escuela secundaria. "En este momento, poco menos del 50% de nuestros graduados de secundaria están cursando estudios postsecundarios. Queremos que ese número aumente para que nuestros estudiantes tengan las credenciales que necesitan para conseguir el trabajo que desean," enfatizó Paccione. Los miembros de la promoción de

2024 pueden obtener una beca de \$1,500, que, según Paccione, debería cubrir todos los costos de matrícula para los programas de certificación que se pueden completar en tan solo seis meses. Los graduados pueden explorar las becas y el asesoramiento disponibles en [OpportunityNext.org](#), una nueva plataforma que destaca las industrias de rápido crecimiento de Colorado y los programas de educación y capacitación relacionados. La iniciativa espera llegar a estudiantes de distritos escolares con tasas de inscripción en escuelas profesionales o universitarias por debajo del promedio,

y distritos con tasas bajas de completar la Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal para Estudiantes. Paccione explica que muchos estudiantes nunca ven las oportunidades financieras disponibles para obtener un título o una credencial. "Estamos haciendo muchas cosas en este momento dirigidas a aquellos que están en los márgenes de la sociedad o que viven en áreas pobladas donde la universidad no siempre ha sido vista como un camino hacia el éxito," insistió además la entrevistada. Los graduados de la escuela secundaria de este año pueden elegir entre una variedad de programas que pueden prepa-

rarlos para carreras como ingeniería, profesionales de la salud, especialistas en informática, así como construcción, familia y ciencias sociales, educación, manufactura avanzada y más. "Hay ocho caminos diferentes que son puestos de alta demanda. Y esto permitiría a las personas obtener la capacitación y la educación que necesitan, ingresar a la fuerza laboral y fortalecer la economía. Por eso estamos muy emocionados de ofrecer estas becas," mencionó también Paccione.

Eric Gálatas es productor de Public News Service. Traducción por Gretchen Sanchez Higuera Public News Service.

Para Noticias de Colorado: [ElSemanarioOnline.com](#)

# Su Teatro Features 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Xicano Independent Film Festival

COLORADO

Su Teatro presents a month of programming April 4-7, focused around 2 annual festivals. The 25th Annual Xicano Independent Film Festival features the best of Latino World Cinema. This year the focus will highlight Chicano independent films and filmmakers. Films included will be *A Little Family Drama* and will welcome featured actress Alma Martinez; *Divorce Bait* with special guests include director Patrick Pérez and lead actress Vanessa Vasquez. The festival will also pay tribute to local filmmakers as well in collaboration with CineFe and the Colorado Humanities.

The XIFF created by Angela Manzanares, and continued by Daniel

Salazar has been the premier Latino film festival in the region for the last 26 years. It has been instrumental in promoting and supporting Chicano/Latinx film and filmmakers and has hosted talent such as Benjamin Bratt, Pepe Serna, Miriam Colón and Esai Morales. See XicanIndie schedule at [www.suteatro.org](#).

## WordFest

Su Teatro's Festival Month will continue with the 10th Annual WordFest "Everything Dedicated to the Word" featuring guest artists and rehearsed play readings.

Guest artists include: **Safos Dance Theater**, April 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 7pm, Safos Dance Theater will be performing *Stories from Home*, based on stories by

Choreographer/Director Yvonne Montoya, who chronicles her family's journey from New México to Arizona.

The work explores how geographies, languages, and stories among Latinx and border communities have shared histories and experiences. *Stories from Home* is a series of dances embodying oral traditions of Latinx communities in the American Southwest. Choreographer Yvonne Montoya and an all-Latinx cast of dancers draw upon personal histories and ancestral knowledge, including stories from Montoya's family members. Montoya, a 23rd-generation Nuevomexicana, began to develop *Stories from Home* after her father's passing in 2015; compelled to continue his storytelling tradition for her own child, she turned to



The film "A Little Family Drama" will be featured at Su Teatro's 25th Annual Xicano Independent Film Festival. (Photo: screenshot)

dance. *Stories From Home* is a vessel for personal and specific tales. The work explores how geographies, languages, and stories among Latinx and border communities have shared histories and experiences. Stories from Home was commissioned by Su Teatro and Gala Hispanic Theater (Washington D.C) and co-funded by the National Performance Network.

**Vanessa Sánchez y La Mezcla, Ghostly Labor, April 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm,

the nationally renowned dance company Vanessa Sánchez y La Mezcla present Ghostly Labor. *Ghostly Labor* is a multidisciplinary dance performance documenting histories of profiteering and exploitation of female labor in the US-Mexico borderlands through percussion, video, tap dance, zapateado jarocho, and Afro-Caribbean dance. Director and Choreographer Vanessa

Vea **Film**, página 17

# Fearing Political Violence, More States Ban Firearms at Polling Places

NEW MÉXICO

By Matt Vasilogambros

Facing increased threats to election workers and superheated political rhetoric from former President Donald Trump and his supporters, more states are considering firearm bans at polling places and ballot drop boxes ahead of November's presidential election.

“

*Anything we can do to turn the temperature down and allow for the safe operation of our very basic democratic right, voting, is critical.”*

State Rep. Reena Szczepanski

This month, New México became the latest state to restrict guns where people vote or hand in ballots, joining at least 21 other states with similar laws — some banning either open or concealed carry but most banning both.

Nine of those prohibitions were enacted in the past two years, as states

have sought to prevent voter intimidation or even violence at the polls driven by Trump's false claims of election rigging. At least six states are debating bills that would ban firearms at polling places or expand existing bans to include more locations.

The New México measure, which was supported entirely by Democrats, applies to within 100 feet of polling places and 50 feet of ballot drop boxes. People who violate the law are subject to a petty misdemeanor charge that could result in six months in jail.

“Our national climate is increasingly polarized,” said Democratic state Rep. Reena Szczepanski, one of the bill's sponsors. “Anything we can do to turn the temperature down and allow for the safe operation of our very basic democratic right, voting, is critical.”

She told Stateline that she and her co-sponsors were inspired to introduce the legislation after concerned Santa Fe poll workers, who faced harassment by people openly carrying firearms during the 2020 presidential election, reached out to them.

The bill carved out an exception for people with concealed carry permits and members of law enforcement. Still, every Republican in the New México legislature opposed the measure; many said they worried that gun owners

might get charged with a crime for accidentally bringing their firearm to the polling place.

“We have a lot of real crime problems in this state,” said House Minority Floor Leader Ryan Lane, a Republican, during a House Judiciary Committee hearing last month. “It’s puzzling to me why we’re making this a priority.”

But over the past several years, national voting rights and gun violence prevention advocates have been sounding the alarm over increased threats around elections, pointing to ballooning disinformation, looser gun laws, record firearm sales and vigilantism at polling locations and ballot tabulation centers.

National surveys show that election officials have left the field in droves because of the threats they're facing, and many who remain in their posts are concerned for their safety.

Add in aggressive rhetoric from Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, and it becomes “a storm” that makes it essential for states to pass laws that prohibit guns at polling places, said Robyn Sanders, a Democracy Program counsel for the Brennan Center for Justice, a voting rights group based at the New York University School of Law.



Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham at a bill signing ceremony on March 4, 2024 in Albuquerque. The governor signed a new law restricting firearms at polling places. The legislature amended the proposal so the law doesn't impact people with concealed carry permits. (Photo/Foto: Office of Gov. Lujan Grisham/fb)

“Our democracy has come under new and unnerving pressure based on the emergence of the election denial movement, disinformation and false narratives about the integrity of our elections,” said Sanders, who co-authored a September report on how to protect elections from gun violence.

The report was a partnership between the Brennan Center and the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

“The presence of guns in these places presents a risk of violence,” she added.

See Ban on page 22

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National Hispanic Cultural Center

## Por Temor a la Violencia Política, Más Estados Prohiben las Armas de Fuego en los Colegios Electorales

NEW MÉXICO

By Matt Vasilogambros

Ante el aumento de las amenazas a los trabajadores electorales y la retórica política sobrecalentada del expresidente Donald Trump y sus partidarios, más estados están considerando prohibir las armas de fuego en los centros de votación y las urnas antes de las elecciones presidenciales de noviembre.

Este mes, Nuevo México se convirtió en el último estado en restringir las armas donde la gente vota o entrega las papeletas, uniéndose a al menos otros 21 estados con leyes similares —algunos prohíben la portación abierta u oculta, pero la mayoría prohíbe ambas—.

Nueve de esas prohibiciones se promulgaron en los últimos dos años,

y que los estados han tratado de evitar la intimidación de los votantes o incluso la violencia en las urnas impulsada por las falsas afirmaciones de Trump sobre el amanecer de las elecciones. Al menos seis estados están debatiendo proyectos de ley que prohibirían las ar-

“

*Cualquier cosa que podamos hacer para bajar la temperatura y permitir el funcionamiento seguro de nuestro derecho democrático básico, el voto, es fundamental.”*  
Representante Estatal Reena Szczepanski

Vea Prohiben, página 20



New Mexico  
Department  
of Justice

# Know Your Rights

## Victims of the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire deserve justice. You have control over your legal representation.

### You Have Rights

#### You have the right to:

- Hire (or not hire) any attorney that accepts your representation
- Decide the objective of the case
- Decide whether you settle a case or not
- Be kept reasonably informed about the status of a matter

### Choosing an Attorney



#### Hiring an Attorney

In New Mexico, an attorney-client relationship begins when a lawyer has agreed to represent you and act on your behalf. This usually results in a contract but a written contract is not required.



#### Firing an Attorney

You have the right to discharge a lawyer at any time, with or without cause. Doing so may result in payment owed for work already done, provided that services were actually performed. The amount you owe for services performed depends on prior agreements made, including any signed contracts.



#### Firing under "Good Cause"

In some cases, if an attorney fails in their duties or gives you a good reason to fire them, you may be able to discharge an attorney without any requirement to pay for prior work.

#### Examples of Good Cause

An attorney stops communicating, abandons your case, or consistently violates rules of professional conduct.

### Warning Signs

#### Solicitation

- Solicitation violates the rules of professional conduct and is also known as "ambulance chasing."
- Solicitation occurs when an attorney seeks your business with a motivation for financial gain.

#### Coercion or Harassment

- An attorney cannot seek your business through coercion, duress, or harassment.
- If an attorney continues to contact you after declining their business, that is harassment!

#### Silent Treatment

- A lawyer must keep you reasonably informed about your case.
- If you experience a long period of no contact from your attorney, this may be a reason for firing under Good Cause.

#### Kept Out of the Loop

- You should be made aware of changes to your claim, including updates and settlement offers.
- If your attorney has not made you aware of a change to the objectives of your case, they may have violated the rules of professional conduct.

### Contact Us



Las Vegas Field Office: 1800 New Mexico Ave, Las Vegas, NM 87701

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# Long-Awaited FAFSA Fix Means Students From Immigrant Families Can Finally Finish Aid Applications

By Kalyn Belsha

Many students breathed a sigh of relief when federal education officials announced critical fixes to the federal application for financial aid that allows parents without Social Security numbers to contribute information to the form.

The change means tens of thousands of U.S. citizen students and others who are eligible for federal financial aid can finally complete their FAFSAs. But it also leaves families and college counselors scrambling to get through the process months after other students. And some families are still encountering problems.

"It can be very discouraging for students and families who feel like they're doing all the right things and yet are still coming up against barriers," said Amanda Seider, who oversees the Massachusetts branch of the college access group OneGoal.

Chalkbeat reported in January that a technical glitch had blocked students with undocumented parents from completing their financial aid applications for over two months. That left many educators and college access groups worried that students who already face higher barriers to college would be deterred by the delays — piled



School counselors and college advisers are moving quickly to support students who until recently were unable to submit applications for college financial aid, due to a technical glitch that prevented parents without Social Security numbers from contributing to the form. / Si tienes preguntas sobre como llenar la FAFSA, habla con el asesor universitario en la escuela de tu hijo. Miles de estudiantes pasan por las mismas dificultades y hay ayuda disponible. (Foto/Foto: Adobe Stock)

on top of an already difficult rollout of the new, supposedly easier FAFSA. Some colleges and scholarships award aid on a first-come, first-served basis, so students who apply later are at a disadvantage.

During that time, students were left to navigate a confusing array of options, including whether they should just sit tight and wait for a fix, or try a partial workaround that could put

them at a higher risk of making a mistake on their application or would require them to come back and fill out more paperwork later.

And there are still outstanding issues. As federal officials put the new fix in place, they uncovered two more issues affecting the same group of students that still need to be resolved.

That means parents without Social Security numbers will have to enter

their financial information manually, instead of having it pulled directly from the IRS. And in some cases — when a parent enters a name or address that doesn't exactly match what their child put down, for example — parents are still getting error messages that block them from filling out the form. Federal officials said earlier this month they would work to fix the issue "in the coming days."

Federal officials estimated that around 2% of financial aid applicants were affected by the original Social Security number glitch, which would equate to hundreds of thousands of students in a typical year.

The issue caught the attention of dozens of Democratic House members, who sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona urging the department to fix the problem quickly. In a press release issued last week, U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman of California said the glitch was a "completely unacceptable error" that had caused "fear, stress, and missed opportunities for many kids across my district and the coun-

try."

"I hope to see the Department take the steps necessary to ensure issues like this never arise again," Huffman said.

The rollout of the new FAFSA has been riddled with problems and delays. Education department officials have blamed insufficient funding and significant technical challenges in updating old systems. Republicans have accused the administration of being distracted by dealing with student loan forgiveness. Outside observers have said all these factors and more played a role, according to news reports.

FAFSA applications are down 33% compared with this time last year, according to federal data tracked by the National College Attainment Network.

In the meantime, many colleges have pushed back deadlines as they wait for student financial information that will help them assemble aid packages. And families are waiting.

Now, college counselors and advisers say they're working to make sure

See **FAFSA** on page 18

## Problema Corregido en la FAFSA Abre el Formulario para Muchas Familias Inmigrantes

By Kalyn Belsha

Muchos estudiantes sintieron alivio recientemente cuando los funcionarios federales de educación anunciaron correcciones críticas a la solicitud federal de ayuda financiera para permitir que los padres sin número de Seguro Social poder poner información en el formulario.

El cambio significa que decenas de miles de estudiantes ciudadanos de EE.UU. y otros que son elegibles para recibir ayuda financiera federal ahora pueden finalmente completar sus solicitudes FAFSA. Por otro lado, también significa que las familias y los orientadores universitarios están luchando para completar el proceso meses después que otros estudiantes. Y algunas familias todavía están teniendo problemas.

"Puede ser muy desalentador para los estudiantes y las familias, que sienten que están haciendo todo lo correcto y de todos modos siguen enfrentando obstáculos", dijo Amanda Seider, a cargo de la oficina de Massachusetts del grupo de acceso a la universidad *OneGoal*.

Chalkbeat reportó en enero que un error técnico había impedido que más

de dos meses que los hijos de padres indocumentados completaran sus solicitudes de ayuda financiera. Como resultado, a muchos educadores y grupos de acceso a la universidad les preocupaba que esos retrasos pudieran ser un impedimento adicional para los estudiantes que ya se enfrentan a mayores barreras para ir a la universidad — lo cual se sumaba a la ya complicada publicación de la FAFSA nueva y supuestamente más fácil de llenar. Algunas universidades y becas conceden las ayudas financieras por orden de solicitud, y por lo tanto los estudiantes que llenan la solicitud más tarde están en desventaja.

Durante ese tiempo, los estudiantes tuvieron que navegar por una variedad confusa de opciones, entre las que se incluía no hacer nada y esperar a que el problema se resolviera, o probar una solución parcial que podía ponerles en mayor riesgo de cometer un error en la solicitud o hacer que tuvieran que llenar más papeleo después.

Y aún quedan problemas pendientes. Mientras los funcionarios federales ponían en marcha la solución nueva, descubrieron otros dos problemas adi-

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Javier Mabrey  
Representante Estatal  
Distrito 1



Omar Ledesma  
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## FAFSA/Esp

cionales que afectan al mismo grupo de estudiantes y que todavía están por resolverse.

Esto significa que los padres que no tienen número de Seguro Social tendrán que poner su información financiera manualmente, en lugar de transferirla directamente del IRS. Y en algunos casos — por ejemplo, cuando uno de los padres pone un nombre o dirección que no coincide exactamente con la información que su hijo puso — los padres todavía reciben mensajes de error que les impiden llenar el formulario. Los funcionarios federales dijeron pasada que trabajarían para solucionar el problema “en los próximos días”.

Los funcionarios federales calcularon que alrededor de un 2% de los solicitantes de ayuda financiera fueron afectados por el error original del número de Seguro Social, lo que sería equivalente a cientos de miles de estudiantes en un año típico.

El asunto llamó la atención de docenas de miembros demócratas de la Cámara, que enviaron una carta a Miguel Cardona, Secretario de Educación de EE.UU., pidiéndole al departamento que solucionara el problema rápidamente. [En un comunicado de prensa publicado la semana pasada](#), el Rep. Jared Huffman de California dijo que el error técnico fue un “error completamente inaceptable” que había causado “miedo, estrés y pérdida de oportunidades para muchos niños de mi distrito y del país”.

“Espero que el Departamento tome las medidas necesarias para asegurar que nunca ocurran problemas como este”, dijo Huffman.

La publicación de la FAFSA nueva ha estado plagada de problemas y retrasos. Los funcionarios del Departamento de Educación le han echado la culpa

a la falta de fondos y a retos técnicos significativos al actualizar los sistemas viejos. Los republicanos han acusado a la administración de estar distraída con la iniciativa de perdonar los préstamos estudiantiles. Según las noticias, observadores externos han dicho que todos estos y otros factores jugaron un papel.

Según datos federales [rastreados por la National College Attainment Network](#), hay un 33% menos solicitudes de FAFSA en comparación con esta fecha el año pasado.

Por el momento, muchas universidades han retrasado las fechas límite mientras esperan por la información financiera de los estudiantes que les ayudará a preparar los paquetes de ayuda. Y las familias están esperando.

Ahora, los consejeros y orientadores universitarios dicen que están trabajando para asegurar que los estudiantes sepan qué hacer si siguen encontrando errores técnicos. También están tratando de mantener el ánimo de los estudiantes y prepararlos para comparar sus paquetes de ayuda financiera y aceptación cuando los reciban.

“Lo más importante que podemos hacer es compartir información sobre cómo poner la información manualmente, cómo asegurar que sean muy precisos al completar esos pasos”, dijo Seider. “Realmente queremos asegurar que los estudiantes y las familias estén siendo proactivos y no sientan que todo esto es por falta suya, sino que piensen: ‘Este sistema ha sido un poco confuso, necesitamos que nos ayuden’”.

*Kalyn Belsha es reportera nacional de educación, de Chalkbeat. Este artículo fue publicada originalmente por Chalkbeat.*

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## Film

Sanchez will partner with labor organizations to conduct interviews, collaborate with Son Jarocho musician Laura Rebolloso (Veracruz, MX), and work with animator John Jota Leaños (San Francisco). Performed by Sanchez's company La Mezcla, this new dance-theater performance brings together percussive dance forms, an original musical score, and animated archival footage to illuminate the resilience, beauty, and strength of borderlands womxn at work. Ghostly Labor was commissioned by Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana (MACLA; San Jose, CA), Su Teatro (Denver, CO), The Yard (Chilmark, MA), and Pregones/PRTT (Bronx, NY) and co-funded by the National Performance Network.

Both productions will take place at Cleo Parker Robinson Dance 119 Park Avenue West in a joint collaboration with CPRD.

## Rehearsed Play Readings

Su Teatro will also present a series of rehearsed play readings. The first is- *How to Remain A Humanist after a Massa-*

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## ADU/Esp

Entre 2015 y 2021, aproximadamente 13,800 hogares con estudiantes en escuelas públicas de Denver se fueron del oeste de Denver a otras ciudades y a otros vecindarios menos costosos, según una futura actualización (por publicarse) sobre el programa de ADU en 2023. Los datos muestran que muchos hogares dejaron el oeste de Denver después de una transacción de bienes raíces en la que su vivienda o la vivienda que estaban alquilando se vendió; hasta el 40 por ciento de los compradores de propiedades fueron compañías inversionistas.

Líderes de WDRC notaron la urgencia de encontrar una solución. Para limitar el desplazamiento y mantener a las familias en su lugar, necesitaban pensar más allá de la estabilización financiera a corto plazo y crear oportunidades para aumentar sus riquezas a largo plazo.

Los grandes terrenos principalmente con viviendas unifamiliares en el oeste de Denver hicieron que las ADU fueran posibles, creando así beneficios para los propietarios y proporcionando vivienda familiar asequible que tanto se necesitaba sin destruir las casas actuales. También permitían que los propietarios aprovecharan su capital y lo invirtieran en otra casa, para ayudarlos a aumentar sus riquezas. Sin embargo, pocas ADU se estaban construyendo en Denver a pesar de que se incluyeron en el código de zonificación de 2010—el resultado, Martínez-Stone dijo, de opciones de financiamiento limitadas y requisitos complejos que la ciudad impone y que hacen que construir una ADU sea costoso.

Exactamente, las pocas ADU que ya se habían construido habían sido

en mercados de lujo ya que esos eran los propietarios que podían pagar para ponerlas en sus propiedades. Para hacer eso, los propietarios tienen que guiarse por regulaciones de zonificación, regulaciones de construcción y códigos de la ciudad que requieren abordar banquetas, distancias mínimas, desechos y agua.

“Era un problema de equidad”, Martínez-Stone dijo. “Si no tienes los medios ni la asistencia técnica ni el tiempo de descifrarlo todo, tienes menos acceso a construir una ADU”. Además, la desinversión crónica en el oeste de Denver, un legado de la delincuencia en rojo, significa que muchos callejones son angostos y no están pavimentados y muchas banquetas no existen o están dañadas, lo cual causa que sea más complejo y costoso construir una ADU en muchos vecindarios del oeste de Denver.

Para la WDRC, el objetivo era diseñar un programa de ADU a beneficio de propietarios de viviendas con bajos a moderados ingresos. En 2019, lanzaron el Programa Piloto de ADU Unifamiliar Plus en el Oeste de Denver (WDSF+, por sus siglas en inglés), el cual subvencionaría el costo de construir una ADU para propietarios que pudieran financiar el resto—cruicialmente, el programa se asoció con FirstBank para ofrecer un préstamo especializado en ADU con una tasa baja de interés (varios otros bancos ahora ofrecen préstamos similares).

Los propietarios pueden solicitar préstamos perdonables de hasta \$30,000 a través de fondos de la ciudad, siempre y cuando cumplan con una serie de estipulaciones durante por lo menos 25 años: Si un propietar-

io gana el 81 por ciento o más de los ingresos medios en el área, debe alquilar la ADU a alguien que gane el 80 por ciento o menos para cumplir con los requisitos. Si el propietario gana el 80 por ciento o menos, el inquilino no tiene que ganar un ingreso específico. Se prohíben los alquileres a corto plazo en plataformas como Airbnb o VRBO.

El programa paga por el análisis técnico inicial para ver si es posible construir una ADU en una propiedad. Los propietarios luego eligen entre siete diseños aprobados para su ADU, dependiendo de sus necesidades y presupuesto. Un equipo de construcción de Habitat for Humanity construye la ADU, y la WDRC también les ofrece a los propietarios capacitación gratis para gestionar su propiedad.

Con todo incluido, el programa les da a los propietarios la oportunidad de construir una ADU a entre \$100,000 y \$150,000 por debajo del precio de mercado, Martínez-Stone dijo.

La ADU de Chávez es un hogar diminuto con un pórtico al frente y puertas estilo francés que se abren a un lado de la casa, dándoles a los ocupantes su propio jardín pequeño. Alquiló la unidad a una familia que su hijo conoce y que había estado sin vivienda por un tiempo, viviendo en varios hoteles. Ahora, tienen un lugar estable para vivir.

Otros participantes del programa han construido una ADU para que sus padres vivan en ella cuando envejecen o para sus hijos adultos y sus familias. Otro participante había estado sin vivienda en el pasado y quería crear más estabilidad financiera. Uno de los resultados sorpresa del pro-

grama ha sido la cantidad de participantes que están usando la ADU para albergar a parientes que no pueden pagar el alquiler a precio de mercado o enfrentan obstáculos para vivir independientemente, dijo Jennie Rodgers, vicepresidenta de programas en Enterprise Community Partners, una organización nacional sin fines de lucro enfocada en la vivienda asequible. (Enterprise Community Partners, una exbeneficiaria de Colorado Trust, conoce el programa de ADU pero no está involucrada en él.)

Sin embargo, hay límites en lo que las ADU pueden lograr, Rodgers dijo. Probablemente no ayuden a las personas que no tienen vivienda o necesiten vivienda permanente con apoyos. Ni ayudarán a las personas con los niveles más bajos de ingresos que no tienen acceso a préstamos. Al final, Denver necesita soluciones de vivienda más densa con más unidades—pero, agregó, “no podemos solo depender de recursos públicos para construir propiedades más grandes de alquiler y esperar que resuelvan nuestra crisis de vivienda asequible. Necesitamos una combinación de estrategias”.

Además, Rodgers dijo, el programa de ADU permite que los residentes sean parte de una solución para la vivienda asequible. Ann Karlberg, una trabajadora social, compró una casa en el lado oeste de Denver hace 38 años con la ayuda de sus padres y ahora es totalmente suya después de saldar la hipoteca. Durante la pandemia de COVID-19, asistió a talleres educativos sobre la falta de hogar y aprendió que el factor contribuyente más importante es la vivienda inasequible. Cuando escuchó sobre el programa piloto de ADU asequibles, vio una manera de ayudar a la comunidad y obtener algunos ingresos con el alquiler.

“Quiero que mi buena fortuna sea algo que pueda beneficiar a la gente”, dijo.

El programa de ADU sigue estando en su fase piloto, pero Martínez-Stone y la WDRC ven potencial en ampliar el programa más allá de las 20 ADU actuales que se han construido o están en construcción. Una propuesta legislativa presentada en la legislatura estatal a finales de enero busca permitir que los propietarios de hogares unifamiliares en muchas partes de Colorado construyan una ADU en su propie-

dad. También crearía un programa de subsidios para ayudar con los costos de desarrollar planes preaprobados y proporcionar asistencia técnica a los propietarios—parte de un paquete de políticas que los legisladores esperan aprobar este año para ayudar a abordar las necesidades de vivienda en el estado. Y el 18 de marzo, el alcalde de Denver Mike Johnston llamó “ADU en toda la ciudad”, el cual terminaría actualizando el código de zonificación para permitir que se construyan ADU en cualquier propiedad residencial.

Aunque la ciudad alrededor del hogar de Chávez está cambiando conforme nuevos edificios de departamentos y condominios se construyen, con su ADU, siente que está ayudando a preservar una parte diminuta de Denver que está desapareciendo—tranquila, privada y amigable. Para Chávez, la ADU también puede significar la diferencia entre permanecer en la ciudad que ama y en la que ha vivido su vida entera, o irse. En los últimos 15 a 20 años, la mayoría de sus parientes, quienes siempre han vivido en Denver, han empezado a mudarse afuera debido al gran aumento en los precios de la vivienda.

Ahora, Chávez y su familia inmediata son los únicos que quedan. Recientemente, un vecino de 80 años de edad vino a visitar a Chávez y le dijo que sus padres habían vivido enfrente de su casa. Él se crio ahí y ahora estaba viviendo con su hermana, pero la hermana estaba preparándose para mudarse de Denver porque la ciudad se había puesto muy ajetreada. Al hombre le encantaba el vecindario—era lo único que conocía—pero no sabía si podía seguir viviendo en Denver cuando su hermana se fuera.

Chávez intentó imaginarse cómo sería empezar de nuevo en una nueva ciudad a los 80 años. Quizás, pensó, una ADU permitiría que el vecino se quedara.

*Sarah Tory, Periodista, Carbondale, Colo.  
Este artículo ha sido elaborado por Collective Colorado, una iniciativa de The Colorado Trust. Reproducido con permiso de The Colorado Trust.*

*Traducido por Alejandra X. Castañeda*

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## FAFSA

students know what to do if they continue to encounter glitches. They're also trying to keep students' spirits up and getting them ready to compare their financial aid and acceptance packages when they come in.

“The most important thing we can do is to share information about how to go about entering information manually, how to make sure that as they are completing those steps that it requires a lot of precision,” Seider said. “We really want to make sure that students and

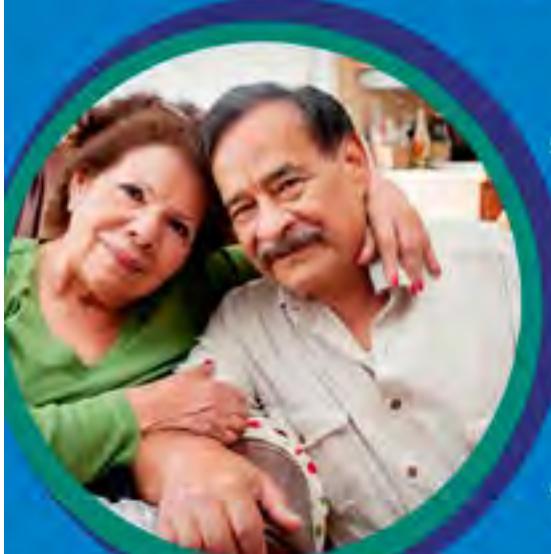
families are being proactive, and not experiencing this as their shortcoming, but rather saying ‘Hey, this system has been a little confusing, we need some help with it.’”

*Kalyn Belsha is a senior national education reporter with Chalkbeat. This article was originally published by Chalkbeat.*

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## ADU

being built in Denver despite their inclusion in the 2010 zoning code—the result, said Martínez-Stone, of limited financing options and complex city requirements that made building an ADU expensive.

Indeed, the few ADUs that had been built were in high-end markets since those were the homeowners who could afford to figure out how to put them on their properties. To do that, homeowners must navigate zoning regulations, building regulations and city codes that require addressing sidewalks, setbacks, sewage and water.

"It was an equity issue," said Martínez-Stone. "If you don't have the means, or the technical assistance and the time to figure all that out, you have less access to building an ADU." Additionally, chronic underinvestment in west Denver, a legacy of the redlining, means that many alleys are narrow and unpaved and many sidewalks are missing or damaged, making it more complex and expensive to build an ADU in many west Denver neighborhoods.

For the WDRC, the goal was to figure out an ADU program on behalf of low- and moderate-income homeowners. In 2019, they launched the [West Denver Single Family Plus \(WDSF+\) ADU Pilot Program](#), which would subsidize the cost of building an ADU for homeowners who could finance the remainder—crucially, the program partnered with FirstBank to offer a specialized ADU loan with a low interest rate (several other banks now offer similar loans).

Homeowners can apply for forgivable loans of up to \$30,000 through funding from the city, so long as they follow a set of stipulations for at least 25 years: If a homeowner makes 81% or more of the area median income, they must rent the ADU to someone earning 80% or less to qualify. If the homeowner earns 80% and under, the tenant isn't required to have a specific income. Short-term rentals on platforms like Airbnb or VRBO are prohibited.

The program pays for the upfront technical analysis to see if an ADU is feasible on a property. Homeown-

ers then choose from seven pre-approved ADU designs, depending on their needs and budget. A Habitat for Humanity construction crew builds the ADU, and the WDRC also offers homeowners free property management training.

All told, the program gives homeowners the chance to build an ADU at \$100,000-\$150,000 below market rate, said Martínez-Stone.

Chávez's ADU is a tiny home with a front porch and French doors that open to the side of the house, giving the occupants their own little yard. She rented the unit to a family her son knows who had been unhoused for a while, living in various hotels. Now, they have a stable place to live.

Other program participants have built an ADU for parents to live in as they age or for their adult children and their families. Another participant had been unhoused in the past and wanted to create more financial stability. One of the program's surprise outcomes has been the number of participants who are using the ADU to house family members who cannot afford market rent or face barriers to independent living, said Jennie Rodgers, vice president for programs at Enterprise Community Partners, a national affordable housing nonprofit. (Enterprise Community Partners, a past Colorado Trust grantee, is familiar with the ADU program but not involved with it.)

Still, there are limits to what ADUs can accomplish, said Rodgers. They're unlikely to help people who are unhoused or need permanent supportive housing. Nor will they help people in the lowest income bracket who can't access loans. Ultimately, Denver needs denser housing solutions with more units—but, she added, "we can't just rely on public resources to build large rental properties and expect to solve our affordable housing crisis. We need a blend of strategies."

Additionally, Rodgers said, the ADU program allows residents to be part of the housing affordability solution. Ann Karlberg, a social worker, bought a house on the west side of

Denver 38 years ago with her parents' help and now owns it outright after paying off the mortgage. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she attended educational seminars on homelessness and learned that the most significant contributor is unaffordable housing. When she heard about the affordable ADU pilot program, she saw a way to help the community and earn some rental income.

"I want my good fortune to be something that can benefit other people," she said.

The ADU program is still in a pilot phase, but Martínez-Stone and the WDRC see potential in expanding the program beyond the current 20 ADUs that have been built or are under construction. A bill introduced in the state legislature in late January aims to allow owners of single-family homes in many parts of Colorado to build ADUs on their property. It also would create a grant program to offset the

costs of developing pre-approved plans and providing technical assistance to homeowners—part of a package of policies that lawmakers hope to pass this year to help tackle the state's housing needs. And on March 18, Denver Mayor Mike Johnston announced an effort called Citywide ADUs, which would eventually update the city's zoning code to allow ADUs on any residential property.

Although the city around Chávez's home is changing as new apartment and condo buildings go up, with her ADU, she feels like she's helping preserve a tiny part of Denver that's disappearing—quiet, intimate and neighborly. For Chávez, the ADU could also mean the difference between staying in the city she loves and has lived in her entire life, or leaving. In the last 15 to 20 years, most of her extended family members, who have always lived in Denver, have started moving out due to soaring housing prices.

Now, Chávez and her immediate family are the only ones left. Recently, an 80-year-old neighbor came over and told Chavez that his parents had lived across the street from her. He grew up there and was now living with his sister, but she was getting ready to move out of Denver because it had gotten too busy. The man loved the neighborhood—it was all he knew—but he didn't know if he could keep living in Denver with his sister gone.

Chávez tried to imagine starting over in a new city at 80 years old. Maybe, she wondered, an ADU would allow him to stay.

*Sarah Tory, Journalist, Carbondale, Colo. This article is produced by [Collective Colorado](#), an initiative of [The Colorado Trust](#). Reproduced with permission by [The Colorado Trust](#).*

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## Health

see the spikes in December. But in January of this year we were at 801 and for the month of February we were almost there, we were at 739, so we're starting to see more of that volume coming in."

Not only does the Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners provide services for any crisis, but they provide follow-ups through their non-profit organization which can be weekly or monthly calls. They also provide mobile dispatch services in which a person from the crisis center can meet you in a private place or in the comfort of your own home to have that face-to-face interaction. Having a resource where you can talk to someone can be very beneficial to any mental health crisis to help navigate the next steps for someone to continue their life journey.

"It's okay to ask for help," said Almaguer.

Mental health looks different for everyone, but it is important to remember that there is help out there and that it is okay to not be okay. There are so many aspects that play a role in how we feel and deal with things and knowing that there are places such as Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners can provide a lot of help for many. A healthy mind can better all of us and overall allow us to be more kind to our mind.

**Hilary Olivares is an Independent Reporter for The Weekly Issue/El Semanario.**

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## Prohiben

mas de fuego en los centros de votación o ampliarían las prohibiciones existentes para incluir más lugares.

La medida de Nuevo México, que fue apoyada en su totalidad por los demócratas, se aplica a menos de 100 pies de los lugares de votación y 50 pies de las urnas. Las personas que infrinjan la ley están sujetas a un cargo de delito menor que podría dar lugar a seis meses de cárcel.

"Nuestro clima nacional está cada vez más polarizado", dijo la representante estatal demócrata Reena Szczeplanski, una de las patrocinadoras del proyecto de ley. "Cualquier cosa que podamos hacer para bajar la temperatura y permitir el funcionamiento seguro de nuestro derecho democrático básico, el voto, es fundamental".

Ella dijo a Stateline que ella y sus co-patrocinadores se inspiraron para presentar la legislación después de que los trabajadores electorales preocupados de Santa Fe, que se enfrentaron al acoso de personas que portaban abiertamente armas de fuego durante las elecciones presidenciales de 2020, se acercaron a ellos.

El proyecto de ley establece una excepción para las personas con permisos de portación oculta y los miembros de las fuerzas del orden. Aún así, todos los republicanos de la legislatura de Nuevo México se opusieron a la medida; muchos dijeron que les preocupaba que los propietarios de armas pudieran ser acusados de un delito por llevar accidentalmente su arma de fuego al centro de votación.

"Tenemos muchos problemas reales de delincuencia en este estado", dijo el líder de la minoría en la Cámara de Representantes, el republicano Ryan Lane, durante una audiencia del Comité Judicial de la Cámara el mes pasado. "Me resulta desconcertante por qué hacemos de esto una prioridad".

Pero en los últimos años, los defensores del derecho al voto y de la prevención de la violencia armada han dado la voz de alarma por el aumento de las amenazas en torno a las elecciones, señalando el incremento de la desinformación, la relajación de las leyes sobre armas, el récord de ventas de armas de fuego y el vigilantismo en los colegios electorales y centros de

tabulación de papeletas.

Las encuestas nacionales muestran que los funcionarios electorales han abandonado el campo en masa debido a las amenazas a las que se enfrentan, y muchos de los que permanecen en sus puestos están preocupados por su seguridad.

Si a esto se suma la retórica agresiva de Trump, el presunto candidato presidencial republicano, se convierte en "una tormenta" que hace imprescindible que los estados aprueben leyes que prohíban las armas en los centros de votación, dijo Robyn Sanders, asesora del Programa de Democracia del Centro Brennan para la Justicia, un grupo de defensa del derecho al voto con sede en la Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Nueva York.

"Nuestra democracia se ha visto sometida a una nueva y desconcertante presión basada en la aparición del movimiento de negación de las elecciones, la desinformación y las falsas narrativas sobre la integridad de nuestras elecciones", afirmó Sanders, coautora de un informe de septiembre sobre cómo proteger las elecciones de la violencia armada. El informe fue una colaboración entre el Brennan Center y el Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

"La presencia de armas en estos lugares supone un riesgo de violencia", añadió.

### Aumento del entorno de amenazas

En los últimos cuatro años, las amenazas han ido más allá de los mensajes de voz, los correos electrónicos o las publicaciones en las redes sociales. Los vigilantes armados han acosado a los votantes en las urnas y se han presentado ante los centros de tabulación de votos. Otras personas han disparado contra funcionarios electorales locales.

Aunque en los últimos años varios estados han promulgado leyes que tipifican como delito las amenazas a los funcionarios electorales, algunos quieren ir un paso más allá y restringir el uso de armas.

Este año, legisladores principalmente demócratas de Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pensilvania, Vermont y Virginia han presentado proyectos de ley que prohibirían la mayoría de las armas de fuego

en o cerca de los colegios electorales u otros lugares relacionados con las elecciones. La mayoría de estos proyectos de ley permanecen en comisión.

En algunos de estos estados se han producido actos de violencia política en los últimos años, como en Pensilvania, donde en noviembre un hombre intentó entrar en un colegio electoral de Harrisburg con un arma de fuego y actuó de forma amenazadora, enfrentándose a los votantes y apuntando con un arma descargada a un coche patrulla de la policía que estaba desocupado.

En Virginia, un proyecto de ley para prohibir las armas de fuego en los colegios electorales fue aprobado este mes por la asamblea legislativa con el voto favorable de todos los partidos, pero el gobernador republicano Glenn Youngkin aún no ha tomado medidas al respecto. Su oficina de prensa no respondió a una solicitud de más información.

Dos proyectos de ley respaldados por los demócratas en Michigan pretenden prohibir la mayoría de las armas de fuego en los colegios electorales o a menos de 30 metros de ellos, así como las urnas y las oficinas de los secretarios durante los 40 días anteriores a las elecciones. Se han aprobado en el Senado estatal, pero están pendientes de votación en la Cámara de Representantes.

La representante estatal demócrata Penelope Tsernoglou, promotora de uno de esos proyectos, dijo a Stateline que espera que la legislación se apruebe en abril, después de que unas elecciones especiales cubran dos escaños vacantes.

"Queremos asegurarnos de que somos capaces de atraer a los trabajadores electorales necesarios, y que se sientan seguros haciendo ese trabajo", dijo. "Lamentablemente, estamos viendo más y más violencia con armas de fuego en todo nuestro estado y nuestra nación. Y creo firmemente que todo el mundo debería sentirse seguro cuando vota".

Pero estos proyectos de ley son "buenos para los titulares y nada más", dijo el senador estatal republicano Jim Runestad en una declaración en el sitio web de los republicanos del Senado.

"Si se tiene en cuenta el gran número de buzones colocados en grandes

comunidades, como en la ciudad de Detroit, estos lugares podrían ser casi imposibles de evitar", escribió, refiriéndose a los propietarios de armas.

Una de sus propuestas de enmienda, que fracasó, habría eximido a los propietarios de armas que las portaran para asuntos no relacionados con las elecciones, como entrar en una tienda cercana a un buzón de votación.

En 2020, la secretaria de Estado demócrata Jocelyn Benson intentó prohibir las armas de fuego a menos de 30 metros de los colegios electorales, las oficinas de los secretarios y los centros de recuento de votos por correo. Pero los tribunales de Michigan bloquearon su intento, al considerar que carecía de autoridad.

Michigan fue uno de los muchos estados donde los funcionarios electorales se enfrentaron a amenazas violentas durante las elecciones presidenciales de 2020. El mes pasado, un hombre se declaró culpable de cargos federales por amenazar de muerte a la ex secretaria de Rochester Hills, Tina Barton, diciendo que se merecía un "degüello a cuchillo".

Existe un amplio apoyo bipartidista entre los votantes para prohibir las armas de fuego en los colegios electorales. Según una encuesta realizada en 2022 a más de 1.000 adultos por encargo del Proyecto Global contra el Odio y el Extremismo, casi el 80% de los demócratas y más de la mitad de los republicanos e independientes encuestados pensaban que deberían prohibirse las armas en los colegios electorales. En conjunto, el 63% de los adultos encuestados apoya la prohibición.

Pero ese apoyo transversal no se ha trasladado a las legislaturas estatales.

**¿Dónde están las prohibiciones?**  
Los estados controlados por los demócratas han encabezado los esfuerzos para prohibir las armas de fuego en los colegios electorales en los últimos años, con sólo un puñado de legisladores republicanos uniéndose a los demócratas para aprobar los proyectos de ley en algunos estados.

En 2022, los estados de Colorado, Nueva Jersey, Nueva York y Washington aprobaron restricciones a las armas de fuego en los colegios electorales. En 2023, California, Delaware, Hawái y Maryland se unieron a la lista.

La asamblea legislativa de Nevada, de mayoría demócrata, aprobó una prohibición similar el año pasado, pero el gobernador republicano Joe Lombardo la vetó. Dijo que la medida habría infringido los derechos constitucionales de los nevadenses.

La prohibición de Maryland se enfrenta a un desafío legal por parte de grupos defensores de los derechos de

las armas y activistas que argumentan que tales prohibiciones infringen las protecciones de la Segunda Enmienda y son ineficaces.

"Es una solución que busca un problema", dijo Andi Turner, portavoz de la Asociación Estatal del Rifle y la Pistola de Maryland, que forma parte de la demanda que impugna la ley. "No tenemos gente que amenace en los colegios electorales o que vaya y dispare a los trabajadores electorales. No veo por qué tiene que ser así".

Los estados que tenían prohibiciones de armas de fuego en los centros de votación antes de las elecciones presidenciales de 2020 ahora tienen legislaturas controladas por los republicanos: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Luisiana, Carolina del Sur y Texas.

La prohibición de Georgia se remonta a 1870, y en 1874 el Tribunal Supremo del estado escribió que tener un arma de fuego en un colegio electoral "es una cosa tan impropia en sí misma, tan chocante para todo sentido del decoro, tan totalmente inútil y llena de maldad, que sería extraño que los redactores de la constitución hayan utilizado palabras lo suficientemente amplias como para darle una garantía constitucional."

Más estados liderados por los republicanos deberían considerar la prohibición de armas de fuego en los colegios electorales, dijo Jessie Ojeda, abogada de armas y democracia del Giffords Law Center, y una de las coautoras del informe conjunto de Brennan y Giffords.

Defensores de la seguridad de las armas como Ojeda ven una oportunidad para estas leyes, incluso después de la decisión del Tribunal Supremo de EE.UU. de 2022 que amplió la definición de acceso protegido a las armas de fuego. Aunque el tribunal anuló la ley de Nueva York que prohibía las armas de fuego en público, dejó abierta la posibilidad de prohibirlas en "lugares sensibles", señalando específicamente los colegios electorales.

"Tenemos que tomar medidas antes de 2024", dijo Ojeda. "Tenemos un número creciente de incidentes en los que las armas de fuego, afortunadamente, no se utilizan para disparar a la gente, pero sí para intimidar y disuadir a los votantes y a los funcionarios electorales de hacer su trabajo".

*Matt Vasilogambros es Reportero para Stateline. Este artículo ha sido publicado por Stateline bajo una licencia Creative Commons.*

*Traducido por Juan Carlos Uribe, The Weekly Issue/El Semanario.*

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# DENVER HUMAN SERVICES NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE SITES



Visit us at your local neighborhood site  
to get connected with services and benefits:

- Food assistance (SNAP)
- Medical and cash assistance
- Child care assistance
- Child support
- Rental assistance
- Energy assistance
- Property tax relief
- ... and more!

## SITIO DE RECURSOS PARA LA VECINDAD

Visítanos en el sitio de su vecindad local  
para conectarse con servicios y beneficios.

- Asistencia alimentaria (SNAP)
- Asistencia médica y económica
- Asistencia de cuidado infantil
- Mantención de miembros
- Asistencia de alquiler
- Asistencia de养育金
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- ... y mucho más!

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1339 S. Federal Blvd.  
Denver, CO 80219

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

### FAMILIES FORWARD

12060 E. 47th Ave.  
Denver, CO 80239

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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DENVER  
HUMAN SERVICES

## Ban

**Increased threat environment**

Over the past four years, threats have gone beyond voicemails, emails or social media posts. Armed vigilantes have harassed voters at ballot drop boxes and shown up outside vote tabulation centers. Other people reportedly have shot at local election officials.

While several states have enacted laws in recent years criminalizing threats to election officials, some states want to take it a step further through gun restrictions.

This year, primarily Democratic lawmakers in Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia have introduced legislation that would ban most firearms in or near polling places or other election-related places. Most of these bills remain in committee.

Some of the states have seen political violence in recent years, including Pennsylvania, where a man tried to go into a Harrisburg polling place in November with a firearm and acted threateningly, confronting voters and pointing an unloaded gun at an unoccupied police cruiser.

A bill in Virginia to ban firearms at polling places got through the state legislature on a party-line vote this month, but Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin has not yet acted on the legislation. His press office did not

respond to a request for more information.

Two Democratic-backed bills in Michigan seek to ban most firearms at or within 100 feet of polling places, and ballot drop boxes and clerks' offices during the 40 days before an election. They have passed the state Senate but await votes in the House.

Democratic state Rep. Penelope Tsernoglou, the sponsor of one of those bills, told Stateline she expects the legislation to pass in April, after special elections fill two vacant seats.

"We want to make sure that we're able to attract the needed election workers, and that they feel safe doing those jobs," she said. "Sadly, we're seeing more and more gun violence throughout our state and our nation. And I strongly believe that everyone should feel safe when they're voting."

But these bills are "good for headlines and nothing else," said GOP state Sen. Jim Runestad in a statement on the Senate Republicans' website.

"When one considers the sheer number of drop boxes placed throughout larger communities, like in the city of Detroit, these places could be nearly impossible to avoid," he wrote, referring to gun owners.

One of his proposed amendments that failed would have exempted gun owners carrying guns for non-election-related business, such as going into a store near a ballot drop box.

In 2020, Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson attempted to ban firearms within 100 feet of polling places, clerks' offices and absentee ballot counting centers. But Michigan courts blocked her effort, finding she didn't have the authority.

Michigan was one of many states where election officials faced violent threats during the 2020 presidential election. Last month, a man pleaded guilty to federal charges for threatening the life of former Rochester Hills Clerk Tina Barton, saying she deserved a "throat to the knife."

There is broad bipartisan support among voters to ban firearms at polling places. According to a 2022 poll of more than 1,000 adults commissioned by the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, nearly 80% of Democrats and more than half of Republicans and independents polled thought guns should be banned at polling places. Overall, 63% of adults surveyed supported a ban.

But that cross-party support has not translated to state legislatures.

**Where are the bans?**

Democratic-controlled states have spearheaded the effort to ban firearms at polling places in recent years, with only a handful of Republican lawmakers joining Democrats to pass the bills in some states.

In 2022, Colorado, New Jersey, New York and Washington state passed firearm restrictions at polling places. In 2023, California, Delaware, Hawaii and Maryland joined the list.

Nevada's majority-Democratic legislature passed a similar ban last year, but Republican Gov. Joe Lombardo vetoed it. He said the measure would have infringed on the constitutional rights of Nevadans.

Maryland's ban is facing a legal challenge from gun rights groups and activists who argue such bans infringe on Second Amendment protections and are ineffective.

"It's a solution looking for a problem," said Andi Turner, a spokesperson for the Maryland State Rifle and Pistol Association, which is part of the lawsuit challenging the law. "We don't have people threatening at polling places or going and shooting up election workers. I don't see why this needs to be a thing."

The states that had polling place firearm bans prior to the 2020 presidential election now have Republican-controlled legislatures: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas.

Georgia's ban dates back to 1870, and in 1874 the state Supreme Court wrote that having a firearm at a polling place "is a thing so improper in itself, so shocking to all sense of pro-

priety, so wholly useless and full of evil, that it would be strange if the framers of the constitution have used words broad enough to give it a constitutional guarantee."

More Republican-led states should consider firearm prohibitions at polling places, said Jessie Ojeda, the guns and democracy attorney fellow at the Giffords Law Center, and one of the co-authors of the joint Brennan and Giffords report.

Gun safety advocates such as Ojeda see an opening for these laws, even after the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision that widened the definition of protected firearm access. While the court struck down New York's law that prohibited firearms in public, it did leave open the potential for bans in "sensitive places," specifically noting polling places.

"We need to take action before 2024," said Ojeda. "We have a growing number of incidents when firearms are thankfully not being used to shoot people, but they are being used to intimidate and deter voters and election officials from doing their job."

*Matt Vasilogambros is a Reporter for Stateline. This article is republished from Stateline under a Creative Commons license.*

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## Salud

cómo deberían ser los estándares de belleza y cómo deberías tener el poder de impulsarte a una buena ética de trabajo. Esto en sí mismo hace que una persona se sienta en su punto más bajo, lo que conduce a la depresión y a otros problemas de salud mental.

La salud mental existe desde hace años, pero no se ha hablado de ella hasta hace poco. Cuando se produjo por primera vez Covid-19, las escuelas y los puestos de trabajo se cerraron temporalmente por precaución para la seguridad de todos. Sin embargo, esto solo sería el principio de un bloqueo mundial. Al estar las escuelas aisladas, la gente empezó a perder sus trabajos por no poder estar cara a cara. Esto provocó que muchas personas tuvieran problemas de salud mental, ya que estos trabajos eran fuentes de ingresos y formas de ayudar a pagar las facturas. Muchas personas pudieron solicitar el desempleo, pero muchas se quedaron sin hogar y perdieron todo lo que poseían. Esto por sí solo ha tenido un impacto en todos y ha causado ansiedad y depresión. Los que iban a la escuela virtualmente no pudieron estar rodeados de sus amigos y muchos estudiantes empezaron su primer año de secundaria y bachillerato a distancia y los de último curso no pudieron tener una graduación. La cosa no se queda ahí. Por desgracia, muchas personas han perdido a seres queridos debido a Covid. Lo que puede haber sido una lucha entre muchos, es cómo nadie pudo

visitar a sus seres queridos en el hospital o tener una despedida adecuada.

La comunidad hispana y latina es la que se enfrenta a más problemas de salud mental. Muchas personas de ascendencia hispana o latina, a menudo encuentran que sus problemas sólo deben mantenerse dentro de su hogar y nunca contarlo fuera de eso. Es muy común que las culturas hispanas o latinas pasen por alto la idea de la salud mental causando una acumulación de emociones. Olivia Almaguer, representante del departamento bilingüe de Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners, ha compartido mucho sobre por qué la salud mental es importante para todos, pero también para aquellos que pueden ser de otros orígenes culturales y que pueden no hablar inglés. Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners es un centro de crisis gratuito, sin ánimo de lucro, confidencial, abierto las 24 horas del día, los 7 días de la semana, para todas las personas de todas las edades y géneros. Olivia afirma:

"Estamos viendo una gran demanda de llamadas. Por ejemplo, el año pasado tuvimos una media de 200 a 300 llamadas al mes y este año hemos empezado a ver picos en diciembre. Pero en enero de este año estábamos en 801 y en el mes de febrero casi llegamos, estábamos en 739, así que estamos empezando a ver más de ese volumen entrando".

Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners no sólo ofrece servicios para cualquier

crisis, sino que también proporciona un seguimiento a través de su organización sin ánimo de lucro, que puede consistir en llamadas semanales o mensuales. También proporcionan servicios de despacho móvil en el que una persona del centro de crisis puede reunirse con usted en un lugar privado o en la comodidad de su propia casa para tener esa interacción cara a cara. Disponer de un recurso donde poder hablar con alguien puede ser muy beneficioso en cualquier crisis de salud mental para ayudar a dar los siguientes pasos para que alguien continúe su viaje vital.

"Está bien pedir ayuda", dijo Almaguer.

La salud mental es diferente para cada persona, pero es importante recordar que existe ayuda y que está bien no estar bien. Hay muchos aspectos que influyen en cómo nos sentimos y cómo afrontamos las cosas, y saber que existen lugares como Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners puede ser de gran ayuda para muchos. Una mente sana puede mejorarnos a todos y, en general, nos permite ser más amables con nuestra mente.

*Hilary Olivares es un Reportera Independiente para The Weekly Issue/El Semanario. Traducido por Juan Carlos Uribe, The Weekly Issue/El Semanario.*

**Para Noticias de Colorado:**  
[ElSemanarioOnline.com](http://ElSemanarioOnline.com)

## Lohman

The many people who generously spoke with us — more than 100 over the course of the year — were vital to our work. The Optic, which has a print circulation of about 3,000, published all our major stories. That's where most of our sources read them.

Donato Sena, an elderly man who lost his home in the hard-hit village of Rociada, was familiar with my reporting on the fire when I met him. Over the course of several conversations, he told me how grueling life had been in the last year. He and several other survivors had testified in depositions about their losses because they were concerned they would die before they were paid.

Sena had been through four bouts of cancer, which was then in remission. But one day in November, as I was nearing the end of my lease, he collapsed while carrying groceries into his temporary home. The day he died, his wife later told me, he was hopeful he'd be able to move into their new manufactured home on their old property by Christmas.

I heard about his death a day later from a volunteer for a group that donated money to survivors struggling to get by. Over the next few days, four friends of his invited me to his memorial service.

I left my notebook in my car when I arrived at a historic church near the Las Vegas plaza to pay my respects alongside more than 100 others. As

Sena's casket was carried to a hearse, I nodded in acknowledgment to those who followed, people I'd met over the past year: his lawyer, volunteers for the aid group, two others who lost their homes, a columnist for the Optic and various local officials. A few days later, Sena's widow and their daughter graciously invited me into their home for an interview.

After the funeral, I drove back to my apartment to find a chicken roasting on my patio chair. I walked around the block, seeking her owner. Neighbors told me she might've belonged to a guy who recently moved away. I posted to a local Facebook group, and within 15 minutes four folks offered to take her in. A man who lived up the street arrived in a pickup truck. We chatted about the fire, the sort of small talk that had become part of practically every conversation I had there. He tucked the chicken under his arm, and I got back to work.

*Patrick Lohman is a Reporter with Source New Mexico. This commentary is republished from Source New Mexico under a Creative Commons license. This article was produced in partnership with Source New Mexico, which was a member of ProPublica's Local Reporting Network in 2023.*

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# SNAP SUPPORTS COLORADANS GET HEALTHY FOOD ON YOUR DINNER TABLE

## WHAT'S SNAP?

SNAP, federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, exists to ensure families and individuals can purchase groceries. It supports working families, children and older adults to help weather life storms.

- SNAP is like social security:** A portion of your tax dollars funded SNAP, and now it's here to help you!
- SNAP supports the economy:** When you spend SNAP dollars you support local business owners and grocers. In 2018, SNAP contributed more than \$1 billion to Colorado's economy.
- SNAP is guilt free:** SNAP exists to help you make ends meet during tough times. The program is large enough to help you, your family & your neighbors!

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

SNAP, previously known as food stamps, is run by the USDA and provides qualifying households with monthly funds to help purchase groceries. The amount received depends on household size, income, and expenses.

Every month, funds are loaded onto a Quest Electronic Benefit Transfer (or EBT) card. EBT cards are then used like a debit card\* at grocery stores, convenience stores and select farmers markets.

\*EBT cards do not allow for cash withdrawals.

## SNAP FUELS HAPPIER, HEALTHIER LIVES!

Contact the Food Resource Hotline to speak with a food assistance navigator and get help finding food resources, like food pantries, in your area and assistance with your SNAP application. The hotline is free, bilingual and confidential. Call for immediate assistance (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 4:30 pm), no appointments necessary.



[HungerFreeColorado.org](http://HungerFreeColorado.org)

Hunger Free Colorado connects families and individuals to food resources and fuels change in policies, systems and social views, so no Coloradan goes hungry.

## BENEFITS OF SNAP



Supports better health, overall well-being and happiness



Lowers health care costs and improves long-term health



Enhances work productivity



Keeps older adults stable and independent



Supports local farmers, ranchers, producers and business owners



Improves academic achievement



Increases the likelihood of completing high school

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**FOOD RESOURCE HOTLINE**  
STATEWIDE, TOLL-FREE  
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