



DISINFORMATION MESSAGING GUIDANCE FOR LATINX COMMUNITIES October 2020 UPDATE

Bad actors continue to spread disinformation online and offline seeking to sow distrust in our electoral process and amplify tensions in the Latinx community. It is important that progressives communicate a message of unity and a sense of trust in our democratic process while ensuring communities have the tools and information they need to make their voices heard.

To that end, we propose focusing on a message of action, unity and agency to fight back against the message of chaos, fear and division. This strategy seeks to build trust (and even patience) should the election results be too close to call on Election Day.

NOTE: *If you are encountering disinformation that is targeted to a person or organization or if you are seeing unusual levels in impact or reach, please contact our team so we can help investigate and/or to help develop a tailored message to combat disinformation.*

In this updated memo you will find:

- **General guidance** on how to respond to disinformation grounded in research including conspiracy theories **(NEW)**;
- **UPDATED Talking points** addressing key election related themes and disinformation themes targeting Latinx communities (TPs in **Spanish- NEW**);
- **NEW: Unbranded social media content** to help in your effort to develop a positive message that mobilizes the Latinx community.
- Guidance on spokespeople/validators

GENERAL GUIDANCE ON RESPONDING TO DISINFORMATION

1. **Do not engage with disinformation directly.** Do not like, comment or share—even to debunk because that informs algorithms that the message is important. If you need to respond to disinformation, do so indirectly (e.g. "Politicians are spreading lies about X for political gain, but...")
2. As a general rule, **only engage with content you want to reward and spread.**
3. **Prime people to be skeptical.** Point out (using non-political examples) how easy it can be for anyone to unintentionally believe or spread false information.
4. **Acknowledge shared concerns,** then pivot to a proactive, positive message.
5. **Redirect to accurate information.**

Guidance on Conspiracy Theories

- Bad actors and the far-right are investing in moving conspiracies (ie. Q'Anon, wild stories about Hunter Biden) in far-right Latinx spaces on social media. These kinds of conspiracies and "hack and release" stories can be highly successful at forcing mainstream and progressive actors to shift the wider political conversation. It is important that progressives do not take the bait and do not engage in fighting the veracity of claims themselves.
- If it becomes necessary to engage with a specific claim, do so by undermining the credibility of far-right messengers and calling out their strategy, NOT by engaging with the substance of any false claims. For example, note that conspiracies are not rooted in fact, are tied to real-world acts of violence, and spread dangerous and hateful claims. Or note that the sources spreading false claims have a history of spreading lies, ties to far-right groups, and are looking to help flailing political campaigns.
- These conspiracies and stories do not require a direct response that might repeat or amplify any attack or disinformation. Progressives should focus on their own messages and priorities. Rather than fact-checking the claims, it's more important to push positive responses and keep the focus on core issues such as COVID-19, health care, and the economy.

TALKING POINTS ON UNITY, EMPOWERMENT AND PRO-DEMOCRACY:

- The path to the White House goes straight through Latinx communities in key states like Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Pennsylvania. Latinx voters of all backgrounds have begun breaking voter turnout records, and they have the power to impact this election and the direction of our country.
- Elections are both our most sacred obligation and our greatest national project. And while this election will unfold differently than previous ones, we need to do what we can to protect our institutions of democracy.
- Increased voter turnout has historically benefitted civil and human rights, helped to change policy in favor of workers and challenged oppressive power structures.
- Democracy is about government for and by the people. It looks like Americans of all backgrounds and persuasions exercising their right to vote and fulfilling their responsibilities to strengthen the country through participation.
- By joining together as voters, we will deliver a democracy where everyone counts, no exceptions.
- A successful election is one in which everyone eligible to vote can do so, every ballot is counted and when the voters decide the winner.

TALKING POINTS IN CASE THERE IS A DELAY IN ELECTION RESULTS :

- In response to the coronavirus pandemic, many states are allowing more voters to use absentee ballots than in past elections. It takes election officials longer to verify and count absentee ballots than votes cast by electronic voting machines because they need extra time to double check that those ballots have been verified and counted before announcing a result. What's more, in some states, by law election officials can't even start processing these ballots until after polls have closed on Election Day.

- The coronavirus is also going to make the process of counting all the votes and declaring a winner take longer than normal. Just like many workplaces, election officials are being careful to stay socially distanced and are sometimes working with reduced staff or fewer resources
- Democracy's long-term fate depends on adherence to the rules of the game, even if that takes time. We must maintain a path back to national unity—both in recognizing the legitimacy of the eventual winner and in condemning any improper attempts to undermine the result.
- Just about everything is different in 2020, and the November election will be no exception.
- We have to count every ballot that is cast — from members of the military who send in their vote from overseas, to people with pre-existing conditions voting absentee because of COVID-19, to people who vote in person on Election Day.
- No one in the media or in either party should rush to make any announcements about who has won the election until all the votes have been counted, even if that takes a week or more to complete. Every eligible voter should have their voice heard and their vote counted. When election officials take the time to count and verify every ballot, that's a sign that our democracy is working.
- Be skeptical of allegations of fraud or interference, regardless of who makes them. It's easy to make accusations, but very hard to pull anything off without getting caught.

TALKING POINTS ON KEY DISINFORMATION THEMES:

Vote By Mail/Voting Absentee

- More than ever we need all eligible voters to register and vote in this election. Vote early, no matter how you do it: in person or by mail.
- Vote by Mail/Voting Absentee is a safe and tested way to vote. States across the US have been doing it successfully for many years.
- You don't have to choose between your health and your vote. Eligible voters can vote safely and securely from your home if they choose to.
- While voting is easy for most people, for some it is really tough. At a time when people are struggling and have enough to worry about, we need safe and secure options for in-person, early, and mail-in voting. Protecting our vote means protecting our right to stand up for a fairer, safer society.
- No one should have to worry about the safety of voting. Some national leaders want to make it harder for us to make our voices heard, but we won't let that happen. Voters can get the information they need to cast a safe and secure ballot at vote411.org.

Voter Mobilization/Engagement

- The coronavirus pandemic means this election will be different. It might be harder to vote than in the past because of delays in the mail or fewer polling places available. But there are plenty of ways to vote safely. It is not too late to make a plan for how you are going to vote this year to make sure your vote is counted.
- Protecting our vote means protecting our right to stand up for a fairer, safer society.

- Whether it is police and justice reform, healthcare access, climate change, or immigration reform, communities of color need to vote to keep the momentum and make our voices heard in the 2020 election.
- Communities of color turned out in unprecedented numbers in 2018. We need to continue this momentum and vote for the change we need.

Racial Solidarity

- Communities of color, whether Black/Brown or Indigenous, face many of the same challenges: institutional racism, police brutality, lack of access to healthcare, jobs and other resources.
- We have more in common than what separates us and our common struggles outweigh our differences. We work hard, we care for our families, we give back to our communities, and we stand in solidarity with one another.
- By definition Latinx people come from various backgrounds and are multiracial- we are Indigenous, Black, Jewish, Muslim, Asian, Mestizo, and White. We can't be separated from each other.
- There are others who seek to divide us, but we can resist them. These forces do not have the Latinx communities' interest at heart. To build power and effect change, we have to show solidarity, be present and united, and not allow others to sow distrust and create tensions among us. By the same token, we need to recognize the racism/colorism inside our communities.
- Ours is a common struggle for fairness, justice and opportunity.
- Our faith calls on us to love one another, to treat others with compassion, to fight for equality no matter our gender, race, or creed, and to care for the most vulnerable among us.

Socialism

- Those that seek to divide us by attacking the press, lying, and threatening political opponents are the ones that are attacking our democracy.
- Many of us have come to the US in search of a better life for ourselves and our families, escaping dictators, conflict and poverty. Now it is our turn to maintain and support our democracy by voting.
- We are fighting for our basic social contract: the need to take care of each other and the right to basic dignity.
- The pandemic has shown us more than ever how important living wages, paid sick days and healthcare access are for our collective well being. Policy interventions that allow for greater health, safety and dignity for our communities should be uplifted not demonized.

GUIDANCE ON SPOKESPEOPLE/VALIDATORS

In general, trusted, local leaders are the most effective to drive messages of participation.

- Uplift leaders who are multiracial, women, young people, and those who work across movements.
- Uplift unusual messengers (ie. business owners, faith leaders, etc).
- Find validators/spokespeople representative of the communities you are trying to reach.

- Provide them with factual information and resources on a regular basis to ensure they are prepared to deliver timely and effective messages.

UNBRANDED CONTENT:

We are continuously developing unbranded content with a message of participation and also to demystify different aspects of the election process. In this [google spreadsheet](#) you will find:

- Unbranded content in English/Spanish to download and use on Twitter, FB and IG.
- All the text has been reviewed so that it is consistent with our messaging.
- Text is under the character limits for Twitter.
- All you have to do is copy and paste.

Examples:

Video: <https://vimeo.com/468226449/761a2b2f8a>

Title: Who runs the election?

Format: 30 second video

La democracia es un compromiso hacia nuestras familias, nuestros vecinos, nuestros amigos.

Un compromiso entre nosotros.

La democracia gana cuando *estamos unidos*.

Creemos en el Sueño Americano porque SOMOS el Sueño Americano.

Haz que tu voz se escuche.

Vota. 🗳️



De•mo•cra•cy [dih-mok-ruh-see]:

“Government OF 🗳️ BY 🗳️ and FOR 🗳️ THE 🗳️ PEOPLE 🗳️.”

La democracia gana cuando participamos.

💡 Tu voz cuenta.

🗳️ Be a voter. Send in your ballot, vote early, or vote in person.

