Chicago’s Latino Community stands with the LGBTQ Latino Community

CHICAGO – June 16, 2016 – This weekend, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community was attacked in Orlando, Florida in what is considered to be the worst mass shooting in U.S. history. The shooting occurred at Pulse, a nightclub for the LGBTQ community, during its weekly “Latin” night. Forty-nine individuals died, and an additional 53 were injured. The majority of those victims are LGBTQ Latinos – they were our children, our brothers and sisters, our family. We send our condolences to the families and loved ones of those whose life was cut short during this senseless act.

Even though this weekend’s violent shooting was perhaps the most devastating, it was not an isolated event—violence towards the LGBTQ community is rampant. LGBTQ people are twice as likely to be victims of hate crimes, compared to other marginalized communities. For LGBTQ Latinos who experience racism, homophobia, and transphobia, the violence is far too common. A national report conducted by the Human Rights Campaign and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) found that LGBTQ Latino youth are three times more likely to face harassment and violence than are their non-LGBTQ Latino peers—in their communities, in our communities. The violence directed at members of our community is something we can no longer ignore.

In light of the shooting in Orlando, we must come together, not only to help the LGBTQ Latino community heal, but also to act. Now more than ever, we must commit ourselves to eradicating homophobia and transphobia in our Latino communities. While there has been much progress for the LGBTQ community, such as marriage equality, we must continue to work to ensure that all LGBTQ people are able to live without fear of losing their lives due to intolerance and hate. We need to challenge the anti-LGBTQ sentiments from within our own families and communities. We must remember that LGBTQ Latinos are part of our entire community, and that their love is just as important.

It is also imperative that our laws reflect our values to ensure we build safe communities for everyone. We must hold our elected officials and leaders accountable, rejecting hateful rhetoric that seeks to divide and cause harm. We must pressure them to work on policy that will ensure complete equality and fair treatment for the LGBTQ community as well as legislation that will put an end to this senseless gun violence. We must also be willing to stand in solidarity with other marginalized communities, we cannot allow this tragedy to perpetuate Islamophobia. Now more than ever we need to work and move forward in unison.

The Latino communities in Chicago, and our allies, stand with the Latino and LGBTQ communities in Orlando. We send our sympathy to the LGBTQ Latino community across the country that continues to mourn and begins to heal. We will stand with the LGBTQ community to end homophobia and transphobia once and for all.
Eduardo Aguayo  
United Latin@ Pride

Sandra Aponte  
Program Officer  
The Chicago Community Trust

Tonantzin L. Carmona  
Director, Office of New Americans  
Mayor’s Office  
City of Chicago

Kara Carrell  
United Latin@ Pride

Jessica Carrillo  
Executive Director  
Youth Service Project  
United Latin@ Pride

Robert Castillo  
Community Leader

Martin R. Castro  
Chairman  
Castro Synergies,  
U.S Commission on Civil Rights

Kristin Chernawsky  
Executive Director  
Erie Neighborhood House

Oscar Chacon  
Executive Director  
Alianza Americas

Honorable William Delgado  
State Senator, 2nd District  
Illinois State Senate

Evelyn Diaz  
President  
Heartland Alliance

Antonio Elizondo  
Youth Activist  
Co-Founder, Vives Q

Sol Flores  
Executive Director  
La Casa Norte

Emmanuel Garcia  
Founder, Vives Q  
National Steering Committee Member  
Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement

Ricky Garcia  
LGBT Community Leader

Alicia Gonzalez  
Executive Director  
Chicago Run

Adolfo Hernandez  
Deputy Director, Public Engagement  
Mayor’s Office  
City of Chicago

Carlos Hernandez Falcon  
Executive Director  
Puerto Rican Arts Alliance

Alma Izquierdo  
LGBTQ Community Leader

Marco Jacome  
Chief Executive Officer  
Healthcare Alternative Systems, Inc. (H.A.S.)

Daniel Lopez  
Psychotherapist/Clinical Supervisor

Honorable Raymond Lopez  
Alderman  
Chicago City Council, 15th Ward

Kenny Martin-Ocasio  
Vice President  
ALMA

Constantina Mizis  
CEO  
The Latino Alzheimer’s & Memory Disorder Alliance
Patricia Mota  
President  
Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement

David Ernesto Munar  
President & CEO  
Howard Brown Health

Katya Nuques  
Executive Director  
Enlace Chicago

Karari Olvera  
United Latin@ Pride

Cristina Pacione-Zayas  
Co-Chair  
The Puerto Rican Agenda

Maria Pesqueira  
President & CEO  
Mujeres Latinas en Accion

Sylvia Puente  
Executive Director  
Latino Policy Forum

Edgar Ramirez  
Presido & CEO  
Chicago Commons

Honorable Carlos Ramirez-Rosa  
Alderman  
Chicago City Council, 35th Ward

Orlando Reyes  
Board Member  
ALMA

Julio Rodriguez  
President  
ALMA

Luis Roman  
Advocacy Chair  
Association of Latino/as Motivating Action

Anel Ruiz  
Community Leader

Mony Ruiz-Velasco, Esq.  
Executive Director  
PASO – West Suburban Action Project

Carlos Samaniego  
Community Leader

Robert Sanabria  
Member, Board of Directors  
Puerto Rican Cultural Center of Chicago

Pedro Serrano  
United Latin@ Pride

Carlos Tortolero  
President & Founder  
National Museum of Mexican Art

Maritxa Vidal  
Chapter President  
TransLatin@ Coalition – Chicago

Honorable Gilberto Villegas  
Alderman  
Chicago City Council, 36th Ward

Joseph Wirtz  
Community Member