



## **“Building An Agenda with a Gender Perspective through Bilateral Cooperation between Mexico and California.”**

### **Biographies**



**Christian Tonatiuh González  
Consul General of México  
Sacramento, California**

Christian Tonatiuh González recently served as Chief of Protocol and Public Diplomacy at the Permanent Mission of Mexico in the United Nations. During Mexico's recent participation as an elected member of the Security Council (UNSC), 2021-2022, he served as the spokesperson and was in charge of disseminating Mexico's activities, results and positions in the UNSC.

During his tenure as a UN delegate, he served as an Election Officer from 2016 to 2023, in which he obtained 100% of the elected Mexican candidates in more than 40 multilateral nominations presented by Mexico at UN Headquarters. Between 2008 and 2015, he represented the Third Committee of the General Assembly as a delegate of Human Rights, Cultural, Social and Humanitarian Affairs. In this honorable position, he further sustained the agenda of protecting children, women, migrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and other minorities.

Lastly, throughout his management of the Mexican delegation in the UN, he responsibly administered the Cultural Affairs sector. The main highlights in this position include the restoration and return of the Mural “Fraternidad” by Master. Rufino Tamayo, the donation of the Mural “Agenda 2030” by Mtro. Gabriel Felguérez, as well as the organization of cultural events within the UN Headquarters such as the Guelaguetza (in collaboration with the Government of Oaxaca), the concert of the UNAM Youth Orchestra, the concert of the Mexican jazz singer Magos Herrera (in collaboration with UN Women), among others.

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SENATOR ANNA M. CABALLERO  
SENATOR MARÍA ELENA DURAZO  
SENATOR BRIAN W. JONES

# California State Senate

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## SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CALIFORNIA-MEXICO COOPERATION SENATOR STEPHEN C. PADILLA



**Migrant Senator Elect Karina Ruiz**  
**Mexican Senate**

Migrant Senator Elect Ruiz holds a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Arizona State University. She was elected as a Migrant Senator in Mexico in the Mexican Congress for the Morena party in the last election on June 2. She is a beneficiary of the Deferred Action (DACA) program for those who migrated to the United States during their childhood and is the executive director of the Arizona Dream Act Coalition Inc. She was born in Tlalnepantla, Mexico and emigrated to the United States at the age of 15.

As a migrant Senator, Senator Elect Ruiz hopes not only to serve and listen to migrants, but to address their needs to see how she can help improve their lives in both countries. As executive director of the Arizona Dream Act Coalition Inc., she has worked on listening, supporting procedures, and making the dream of family reunification come true through groups such as the *Suenos Migrantes* and Study Abroad. In 2017, Karina returned to Mexico with an *advanced parole* permit and then returned in 2021 to form her own groups of dreamers to travel to Mexico, managing to bring 400 dreamers in four years. She worked to recover the *advanced parole* permit that Trump had canceled, which was recovered in April 2021. Certain young people known as "Dreamers" who are already present in the United States, but want to leave the country and return, can apply for an advanced parole permit, which allows them to travel back to the United States.

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**Lilia García-Brower**  
**California State Labor Commissioner**  
**Commission on the Status of the Women and Girls**

Lilia García-Brower was born and raised in East Los Angeles. She was appointed by Governor Newsom as the California State Labor Commissioner on July 29, 2019. As Labor Commissioner, she oversees the primary law enforcement agency for workplace protections. The Labor Commissioner's Office has 20 offices throughout California and employs 500 hardworking public servants who investigate and adjudicate a wide range of workplace violations from unpaid wages to retaliation. As Labor Commissioner Lilia has launched a multi-disciplinary outreach campaign, Reaching Every Californian.

This campaign prioritizes educating employers and worker populations who have a history of trauma and do not have a pathway to the LCO. Lilia has also initiated strategies to eliminate retaliation, increase judgement recovery and criminal prosecution of wage theft. As Labor Commissioner Lilia commenced a process to make the agency trauma informed. As part of this process, she leads monthly meditation sessions and has established a Wellness Committee and Racial Justice Committee comprised of LCO team members who develop programming to promote an internal culture of well-being, grow efficient mission driven focus, and improved public service.

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**Natalia Vega Varela**  
**Director of Policy**  
**Gender Equity Policy Institute (GEPI)**

Natalia Vega Varela is Policy Director at the Gender Equity Policy Institute (GEPI). In this capacity, she oversees the implementation of GEPI's research projects, managing tasks ranging from data analysis to policy research. With a background in international development, development policy, macroeconomics, and feminist economic analysis, Natalia brings a wealth of experience to her work. She has collaborated with various international institutions, including the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as non-profit organizations such as the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) that advocate for gender equality and climate change awareness.

Notably, she authored "Double Disadvantage: Undocumented Women in the U.S.", an in-depth analysis of undocumented women in the United States, with a particular focus on the four states with the highest numbers of undocumented immigrants: California, Texas, Florida, and New York.

Natalia earned her Master's degree in International Development from the New School, where her research delved into the intersections of inequality and gender dynamics in Latin America and Africa. She holds a Bachelor's degree in International Affairs from Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico City. Natalia joined GEPI in 2021 and has played a pivotal role in advancing its mission towards gender equity.



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**Helen Iris Torres,  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality**

As the CEO of HOPE for 23 years, Helen Iris Torres has strategically built a Latina leadership and advocacy infrastructure in California, composed of thousands of civically engaged Latina leaders serving in elected and appointed office, as business, philanthropic and community leaders. She has created robust pathways to leadership for Latinas in high school to Latinas across the United States, resulting in over 1,600 leadership positions being filled by Latinas. Helen was raised by a single mother outside of Detroit, Michigan. She is a first-generation college graduate. Her passion to fight for women's rights stems from witnessing the sexual and racial discrimination her mother faced daily.