



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30th 2026

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Latino Cannabis Alliance forms to unite nationwide Latinos toward collective action in cannabis

JERSEY CITY, NJ — The Latino Cannabis Alliance (LCA) today announced its official launch as a national coalition of U.S.-based Latino cannabis advocacy leaders to meet the growing need for organized Latino representation in the cannabis ecosystem. The LCA is dedicated to growing Latino political influence in the United States, building bridges across diverse Latino communities, and strengthening cross-border collaboration with Latin America.

“Latino leaders have been central in the fight for cannabis legalization across the country, yet our perspectives are too often missing in the rooms where decisions are made unless we knock the doors down ourselves.” said Jessica F. González, Esq., President of the Latino Cannabis Alliance and Founder of Veridis Quo LLC and co-founder of the Rudick Law Group. “We launched the Alliance to ensure the Latino community is respected for the power we bring to every table we sit at, and that our priorities are fully reflected in the cannabis reform landscape.”

Alliance Leadership

Collectively, LCA leadership has spent decades working at the intersection of cannabis reform and community impact, from grassroots activism and coalition-building to drafting and shaping policy equity frameworks, advising elected officials and government agencies, leading national advocacy campaigns, producing research on market structure and consolidation, and building public education initiatives that expand access and opportunity. This breadth of experience

positions the Alliance to move beyond symbolic representation and deliver consistent, credible, and culturally fluent leadership grounded in real community work and ready to meet the demands of the current reform landscape.

- **Jessica F. González, Esq. (President)** — Attorney; Rudick Law Group | Founder; Veridis Quo (Jersey City, NJ)
- **Jason Ortiz (Vice President)** — Director of Strategic Initiatives; Last Prisoner Project (San Juan, Puerto Rico)
- **Ruth Jazmin Aguiar (Treasurer)** — CEO; Creatrix Management Group| Municipal Cannabis Policy Advisor (Los Angeles, CA)
- **JM Balbuena (Secretary; Director of Community Engagement)** — Founder & CEO; Synergy Studios | Executive Director; Ryan’s Law Foundation (San Diego, CA | Dominican Republic)
- **Maritza Perez Medina (Director of Policy)** — Director of Federal Affairs; Drug Policy Alliance (Washington, DC)
- **Ishaq Ali (Director of Research & Education)** — Policy Research Analyst; UC Berkeley Cannabis Research Center | Program Director; ECCO (San Francisco, CA)
- **Gaby Collantes (Director of Communications)** — Director of Client Strategy; Gold Standard | Founder; Cansulting Agency (Atlanta, GA | San Juan, PR)

A Central Forum for Analysis, Guidance, and Action

The Latino Cannabis Alliance will serve as a central forum for analysis, commentary, and guidance on Latino cannabis issues. From this foundation, the LCA will cultivate meaningful relationships with Latino lawmakers, strengthen coalitions across states and regions, and build the political, educational, and organizing infrastructure necessary to mobilize Latinos who are engaged in cannabis policy or advocacy toward coordinated collective action.

“Latinos are the largest minority group in the U.S. and we fully intend on leveraging our vast people power toward sustained political action to reform cannabis laws, ensure our share of economic opportunity, and directly resist any attempt to demonize or minimize our contributions to the cannabis space or the U.S. at large.” said Jason Ortiz, LCA Vice President and Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Last Prisoner Project.

“Latino entrepreneurs have helped build this industry from the ground up, as workers, innovators, and culture drivers; yet we remain underrepresented in the rooms where policy is written and capital is allocated. The Latino Cannabis Alliance exists to change that. We are not asking for a seat at the table. We are building one, rooted in equity, economic power, and political influence,” says Ruth Jazmin Aguiar, Treasurer of the Latino Cannabis Alliance and Municipal Cannabis Policy Advisor

“Representation is not symbolic, it is practical,” said Maritza Perez Medina, LCA Director of Policy and Director of Federal Affairs at the Drug Policy Alliance. “When Latino communities are underrepresented, policy fails to reflect the realities our families and communities face across public health, criminal justice, and immigration-related sectors. The LCA will build the social

infrastructure to ensure Latino perspectives are not an afterthought, but a driving force in all decisions that affect us.”

“Policy moves when people move, and people move when they see themselves in the story,” said JM Balbuena, Secretary and Director of Community Engagement for the Latino Cannabis Alliance. “We are placing storytelling at the center of our strategy because cannabis reform is ultimately a human movement. Through community-driven storytelling we will amplify voices that have been ignored, and build cultural power that drives policy, access, and equity.”

“Cannabis research in the US is critically behind” Said Ishaq Ali, Director of Education and Research. “By acknowledging the importance of cannabis research, and the wealth of knowledge created by our counterparts across Latin America we will be able to unite the brightest minds in our community toward creating the collective education our people deserve”

“We are building an ecosystem where our people can see themselves reflected, get involved, and move into positions of influence,” said Gaby Collantes, LCA Director of Communications and Director of Client Strategy at Gold Standard. “This is about creating pathways through culturally aligned communication and community partnerships that meet people where they are.”

To learn more, partner, or request interviews, please contact:

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