



# ***Los Angeles / Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council***

*Affiliated with the Building & Construction Trades Dept., AFL-CIO*

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## **BUILDING TRADES UNIONS ELECT FIRST LATINO LEADER**

**Ernesto Medrano, Longtime Labor Activist, Will Represent 150,000 Union Members**

For immediate release

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LOS ANGELES, Aug. 7, 2023—Delegates of the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council have unanimously elected Ernesto Medrano as Executive Secretary to lead the Council.

Medrano is the first Latino leader of the Building Trades Council in its 120-year history.

The Council is an umbrella organization of 48 local unions and district councils, representing 150,000 skilled men and women in 14 Trades. More than half its union members are of Latino descent.

“The Building Trades are one of the biggest forces propelling immigrant workers and their families into the American Dream and the middle class,” Medrano said. “As a son of immigrants myself, I am committed to bringing unions to every sector of the construction industry.”

The son of a union leader and a garment worker, Medrano was born in East LA and graduated from LAUSD’s historic Roosevelt High School. He earned a BA degree from UC Riverside with a joint major in Spanish/Chicano Studies.

Lupe Aldaco, Business Manager of Bricklayers and Allied Craft Workers Local 4, a Council-affiliated union, says Medrano’s ascendance will inspire rank-and-file members. “Our Local 4 membership is made up of many Latino immigrants and second generation,” Aldaco says. “And having an Executive Secretary who looks like them, who can understand what they’ve gone through to get here, is very important. It gives them the hope and the ambition to realize, ‘I can be a leader, not only in the field, but I can further the cause for future generations.’”

Medrano brings a long and successful history of union activism to his new job.

Medrano served as the Building Trades Council’s Representative for Orange County from 2015 to 2023. He led a dynamic coalition to transform the once-conservative OC into a center of union opportunity for working people. Medrano organized Building Trades members, elected officials and activists to win Community Workforce Agreements in the county’s three biggest cities—Anaheim, Irvine and Santa Ana.

“As a Latina labor leader, I’m proud to stand with the first Latino leader in 120 years at the LA/OC Building and Construction Trades Council,” says Gloria Alvarado, Executive Director of the Orange County Labor Federation. “Brother Ernesto has been an amazing partner in Orange County. Ernesto’s leadership, vision and support has been invaluable to us.”

Medrano started in the labor movement with the United Farm Workers of America, then became a field organizer for the national AFL-CIO.

In 2001, Medrano joined Teamsters Local 952, based in the city of Orange, where he led large-scale organizing campaigns, and in 2008 was appointed as the local’s political coordinator. Medrano has served as Executive Board member for the National Teamsters Hispanic Caucus and member of the Los Angeles Labor Council for Latin American Advancement.

Medrano succeeds Chris Hannan, who resigned earlier in July in order to become President of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California.

“Brother Ernesto is the unanimous choice of our delegates and our executive board,” Hannan said. “He has shown through his incessant organizing in Orange County that no region of our state, no area where workers need representation, is off limits. Ernesto has set the highest challenges for himself and our members, and they have won.”

“This is a crucial time for the Building Trades,” Medrano said. “We have a pro-worker Administration in the White House unleashing the force of infrastructure investment. We have a new generation of young workers committed to the union movement. This is our time, as the Building Trades, to lead the way and show what we can accomplish as skilled, essential union members.”

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