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abril de 2025

Spanglish Lazo Cultural Edition

Vol. 22, No. 3 (LP1)

¡APRIL IS MINORITY HEALTH MONTH!

Social (Un)Security / (In)Seguro Social

*By Martin Lopez Ramirez, Author/Speaker/Retired Post Union President, with permission
Por Martín López Ramírez, Autor/Orador/Presidente Retirado del Unión Postal*

The Origins of Social Security

The origins of Social Security can be traced to the economic hardships of the Great Depression. In the 1930s, the United States faced unprecedented unemployment rates, and millions of Americans were plunged into poverty. The prevailing belief was that individuals should rely on personal savings and family support during difficult times. However, the severity of the Depression revealed the inadequacy of this approach.

Los Orígenes del Seguro Social

Los orígenes del Seguro Social vienen de las dificultades económicas de la Gran Depresión. En la década de 1930s, el Estados Unidos enfrentó de-sempleo sin precedentes y millones de estadounidenses se sumieron en la pobreza. La creencia predominante era que las personas debían depender de sus ahorros personales y del apoyo familiar durante tiempos difíciles. Sin embargo, la gravedad de la Depresión reveló la insuficiencia de este enfoque.

The Social Security Act of 1935

In response to these challenges, President Franklin D. Roosevelt championed the creation of a social insurance program designed to provide financial assistance to the elderly. On August 14, 1935, he signed the Social Security Act into law. The Act established a system of old-age benefits for workers, unemployment insurance, and aid to families with dependent children. It represented a significant shift in government policy, emphasizing collective responsibility and shared risk.

La Ley del Seguro Social de 1935

En respuesta a estos desafíos, el presidente Franklin D. Roosevelt impulsó la creación de un programa de seguro social diseñado para brindar asistencia financiera a las personas mayores. Y el 14 de agosto de 1935, firmo la Ley del Seguro Social. Esta ley estableció un sistema de beneficios para trabajadores, seguro de desempleo, y ayuda a familias con hijos. Representó un cambio significativo en la política gubernamental, al enfatizar la responsabilidad colectiva y el riesgo compartido.

A Father's Response to today's attack on Social Security

This last sentence has me writing this article today. "Collective responsibility and shared risk."

My name is Martin Lopez Ramirez, a 33-year retired veteran of the United States Postal Service and American Postal Workers Union President Local 170. Also, a proud Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) and Alliance of Informed Citizens card-carrying member.

Respuesta de un padre al ataque actual a la Seguridad Social

Esta última frase me motiva a escribir este artículo hoy: "Responsabilidad colectiva y riesgo compartido."

Me llamo Martín López Ramírez, veterano retirado de 33-años del Servicio Postal de los Estados Unidos y presidente del Unión de Trabajadores Postales de Estados Unidos, Local 170. También soy miembro orgulloso del Comité Organizador del Trabajo Agrícola (FLOC) y de la Alianza de Ciudadanos Informados.

These roles take second place as to why I write today. First and foremost, I see this administration attacking the most vulnerable in our

community. Especially my son Mario Jenaro Ramirez, who was born with Down Syndrome. Mario turned 18 years old some 11 years ago and, for the first time, received an SSI income monthly. The peace of mind this gave me and my wife is hard to explain, as we all want "security" for our children and loved ones.

Estos roles ocupan un segundo plano en la razón por la que escribo hoy. Ante todo, veo que esta administración ataca a los más vulnerables de nuestra comunidad. Especialmente a mi hijo Mario Jenaro Ramírez, quien nació con el Síndrome de Down. Mario cumplió 18 años hace unos 11 años y, por primera vez, recibió un ingreso mensual del SSI. La tranquilidad que esto nos dio a mí y a mi esposa es difícil de explicar, ya que todos queremos "seguridad" para nuestros hijos y seres queridos.

As you can see here in the history of Social Security, it was meant to bring that security to the families in difficult times, and for dependent children and aging parents. Seldom does something speak more dependent than a Down Syndrome child, and now this administration wants to toy with the funds WE paid into this system our whole working lives.

Como pueden ver aquí, en la historia del Seguro Social, su propósito era brindar esa seguridad a las familias en tiempos difíciles, así como a los hijos dependientes y a los padres mayores. Pocas veces algo habla más de dependencia que un niño con Síndrome de Down, y ahora esta administración quiere manipular los fondos que NOSOTROS aportamos a este sistema durante toda nuestra vida laboral.

I have been accused of many things, but mincing words is not one of them. So, let me tell you frankly, it's time to stop pointing out all the wrong we see being done and get



Martín López Ramírez

busy DOING something about it.

Me han acusado de muchas cosas, pero no mezclo palabras. Así que, con franqueza, es hora de dejar de señalar todo lo malo que vemos y ponernos a HACER algo al respecto.

There is an old saying: *Do not mix business with pleasure.*

Hay un viejo dicho: No mezcles negocios con placer.

Here is Martin's new one: *Do not mix business with Public Service. (Social Security)*

Aquí está el nuevo de Martin: No mezcles negocios con servicio público. (Seguro Social)

The United States Post Office was created in 1775, one year before the United States of America declared independence. Both are still in existence because, at the root of what they do, they serve the people of this great country; they do not "business" this country.

El Servicio Postal de los Estados Unidos se creó en 1775, un año antes de que Estados Unidos de América declarara su independencia. Ambos siguen existiendo porque, en esencia, sirven al pueblo de este gran país; no hacen negocios con él.

I will ask you now to think of any company you know of that is older than 250 years. Is it Sears, Enron, Rite Aid, WorldCom, or

(Continued on Page LP4)



ESLABÓN ARMADO TO PERFORM AT DEVOS PERFORMANCE HALL

Grand Rapids: Musical group, Eslabón Armado, announced that they will be bringing their 2025 Vibras de noche Tour to DeVos Performance Hall on Saturday, May 31, 2025. Tickets are on sale now at DeVosPerformanceHall.com.

Eslabón Armado, the first Mexican music group to reach No. 1 on Billboard's Global 200, has defied cultural barriers to exceed all expectations in the most unconventional way possible. Hailing from California, Eslabón Armado consists of brothers Pedro Tovar Jr. (vocalist) and Brian Tovar (bass), along with Damián Pacheco (requinto) and Ulises González (acoustic guitar). With their recent worldwide hit "Ella Baila Sola," they have taken Regional Mexican music to an unprecedented level of global dominance.

ESLABÓN ARMADO VIENEN POR PRIMERA VEZ AL DEVOS PERFORMANCE HALL ESTE 31 DE MAYO

Grand Rapids – El grupo musical Eslabón Armado, anuncia fecha en el DeVos Performance Hall este 31 de Mayo de 2025. Boletos a la venta en DeVosPerformanceHall.com.

Eslabón Armado, el primer grupo de Música Mexicana en alcanzar el No. 1 en el Global 200 de Billboard, ha desafiado barreras culturales para superar todas las expectativas de la forma más convencional posible. Nacidos y criados en California y siendo hijos de inmigrantes mexicanos, Eslabon Armado está conformado por los hermanos Pedro Tovar Jr. (vocalista) y Brian Tovar (bajo), junto con Damián Pacheco (requinto) y Ulises González (guitarra acústica). Con su reciente éxito mundial de "Ella Baila Sola", han llevado la música Regional Mexicana a un nivel de dominio global sin precedentes.

Michigan Immigrant Rights Center forced to lay off staff

On April 10, 2025, the *Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC)* learned that funding for the *Immigration Court Helpdesk Program* was terminated, despite litigation protecting the program after a January "stop work order." Despite a temporary restraining order restoring the contract that has been in place since March 27th, the government had not actually complied with the court's order and no contract for continued services was in place. Due to this intolerable financial pressure, MIRC was forced to provide lay off notices to 72 staff located in offices across the state on Friday, April 11th. MIRC's small Helpdesk team of five staff will, for the time being, continue providing services either at the Immigration Court or in our offices as litigation to preserve that program remains ongoing. www.michiganimmigrant.org



Gryphon Place to host 17th annual Eat Drink Give event

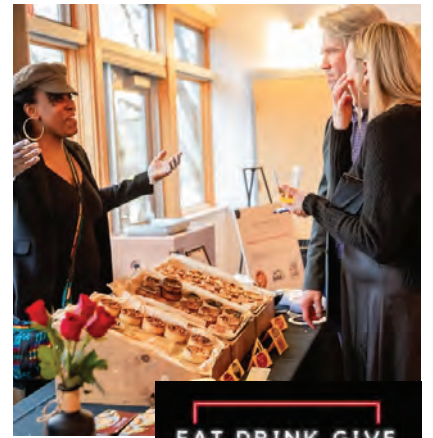
KALAMAZOO, MI: On Friday, May 9, 2025, *Gryphon Place* will host the 17th annual fundraising event *Eat Drink Give*. The event takes place from 7:00-10:00 PM at the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan Kalamazoo Regional Program and Training Center. All proceeds for the event will directly support Gryphon Place's programs and services in our community.

Tickets are currently on sale for early bird pricing at \$80. Tickets increase to \$95 beginning May 1. Tickets can be purchased at www.gryphon.org/edg.

Eat Drink Give is an annual extravaganza where guests can indulge in an array of cuisines from various local restaurants, sip on refreshing wine and beer, and try their luck at winning some fabulous auction and raffle prizes. Top it all off with a DJ and photowall, and you've got yourself a FUNdraiser you don't want to miss!

"The *Eat Drink Give* event was a fantastic experience," said an event attendee. "The atmosphere was lively, and it was wonderful to see so many people come together for a great cause. The food was delicious, and I loved the chance to support the community while having fun."

Guests can sample delicious foods from local restaurants



including *Love Muffins*, *Off the Cuff Catering*, *Cima's Café*, and more. A variety of wine, beer, and NA beverages will be available for sampling from one of our generous donor, *Imperial Beverage*.

The silent auction and raffle prizes offer fun ways to donate. Auction items range all the way from wine tastings to local art, massages, adventure vouchers, autographed sports memorabilia, and more! Don't forget about music by DJ Mel-V, a photo wall with instant print out, and an evening filled with friends.

Gryphon Place's mission is to make connections to resources, nurture healing and resiliency, and promote restorative justice for people in conflict and crisis.

La Prensa Weekly Newspaper

Founded by Rico Neller in 1989

La Prensa, Inc.

Publisher

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Member of NAHP (National Association of Hispanic Publications)
Affiliated with AP via Newsfinder and Lazo Cultural.

La Prensa, Inc.

3327 Airport Hwy., Toledo, OH 43609 • www.lapresnewspaper.com

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Daniel Noboa is reelected Ecuador's president by voters weary of crime

By GONZALO SOLANO and REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

QUITO, Ecuador, Apr 14, 2025 (AP): Ecuadorian voters weary of crime reelected President Daniel Noboa, a conservative young millionaire with a divisive no-holds-barred crimefighting record, by a wide margin Sunday, but his opponent vowed to seek a recount over what she described as "grotesque" electoral fraud.

Figures released by Ecuador's National Electoral Council showed Noboa receiving 55.8% of the vote with more than 92% of ballots counted, while leftist lawyer Luisa González earned 44%. Council president Diana Atamaint said those results showed an "irreversible trend" in favor of Noboa.

The win gives Noboa four years to fulfill the promises he first made in 2023, when he stunned voters by winning a snap election and a 16-month presidency despite his limited political experience.

"Ecuador is changing... and that path will mean our children will live better lives than we did," Noboa told supporters during a brief speech in which he also criticized his opponent's

fraud allegations.

"I find it embarrassing that with an 11- or 12-point difference, they come out to question the will of the Ecuadorians," Noboa added. "Ecuadorians have already spoken, now we have to get to work."

Noboa, heir to a fortune built on the banana trade, is expected to continue applying some of his no-holds-barred crimefighting strategies that part of the electorate finds appealing but which have tested the limits of laws and norms of governing.

González's defeat marks the third consecutive time that the party of Rafael Correa, the country's most influential president this century, failed to return to the presidency. She told supporters that her campaign "does not recognize the results presented by the (National Electoral Council)," arguing among other issues that pre-election polls showed her ahead of Noboa.

The candidates advanced to Sunday's contest after getting the most votes in February's first-round election. Noboa led González by about 17,000 votes that time.

No. 1 concern among voters was violence

Voters were primarily worried about the violence that transformed the country, starting in 2021 — a spike in crime tied to the trafficking of cocaine produced in neighboring Colombia and Peru.

Both candidates promised tough-on-crime policies, better equipment for law enforcement and international help to fight drug cartels and local criminal groups.

"My vote is clear," said Irene Valdez, a retiree who voted for Noboa. "I want to continue living in freedom."

College student Martín Constante had a different view.

"I think Luisa is going to change things because Noboa has been very authoritarian," Constante, 19, said near a voting center in Quito, the capital. "Our country needs a lot of changes."

Much of González's support comes from people who long for the low crime and unemployment rates of Correa's presidency but gloss over his authoritarian tendencies, the huge debt he ran up and the corruption-related sentence handed down to him in absentia in 2020.

More than 13 million people were eligible to vote, which is mandatory for adults up to the age of 65. It is optional for people aged 16 and 17 and over 65. Failure to vote results in a \$46 fine.

Electoral authorities reported voter participation of more than 80%.

"The most important thing is that a comfortable result gives peace of mind to the country because it avoids a political confrontation, or even worse, a violent one due to accusations of fraud," said Grace Jaramillo, an Andean region expert and professor at the University of British Columbia. "Noboa's victory is clear, and that also reassures the international community in the face of a wave of uncertainty."

Several arrests over ballot anomalies

Atamaint said several people, including voters and poll workers, were arrested over ballot anomalies. She said some cases involved double voting and others stemmed from reports of counterfeit, pre-marked ballots.

Atamaint added that 17 people were caught taking photos of their ballots, which the National Electoral Council banned for this election citing reports of voter coercion by criminal groups. The violation comes with a maximum fine of \$32,000.

Many Ecuadorians used their vote to express rejection of a candidate and not necessarily to endorse the candidate they voted for.

"Ecuador is polarized, which is a sign of rejection of the past, but also of the recent policies of the Noboa administration," political analyst

Oswaldo Landázuri said, adding that the expected tight result "could become a major problem for the country" if one candidate does not recognize the other as the winner.

In 2023, Noboa and González were largely unknown to most voters as they sought the presidency for the first time. They were first-term lawmakers in May 2023, when then-President Guillermo Lasso dissolved the National Assembly, shortening his own mandate as a result and triggering that year's snap election.

Noboa heir to a fortune built on bananas

Noboa's first foray into politics was his stint as a lawmaker. An heir to a fortune built on the banana trade, Noboa opened an event organizing company when he was 18 and then joined his father's Noboa Corp., where he held management positions in the shipping, logistics and commercial areas.

González, 47, held various government jobs during the presidency of Correa, who led Ecuador from 2007 through 2017 with free-spending socially conservative policies and grew increasingly authoritarian in his last years as president.

Noboa, 37, declared Ecuador to be in a state of "internal armed conflict" in January 2024, allowing him to deploy thousands of soldiers to the streets to combat gangs and to charge people with terrorism counts for alleged ties to organized crime groups.

Under his watch, the homicide rate dropped from 46.18 per 100,000 people in 2023, to 38.76 per 100,000 people in 2024. But despite the decrease, the rate remained far higher than the 6.85 homicides per 100,000 people seen in 2019.

Some of Noboa's heavy-handed crime-fighting tactics have come under scrutiny for testing the limits of laws and norms of governing. He has also been criticized for allegations of electoral irregularities he made after February's vote.

Following the first-round election, Noboa said there had been "many irregularities" and that in certain provinces "there were things that didn't add up." He provided no further details or evidence. Electoral observers from the Organization of American States and the European Union ruled out fraud.

As González walked through the streets of Canuto, a town in the coastal province of Manabí where she grew up, to reach her voting center, supporters shouted "Luisa is the people."

"We have all united to rewrite the history of Ecuador," she told people Sunday before denouncing reports of attempts to "plant marked ballots" with her name.

Garcia Cano reported from Mexico City.

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*Aplican otros términos y condiciones.

Conozca más

Social (Un)Security

(Continued from Page LP1)

Tyco? All of these were Billion-dollar businesses, and yet they all are bankrupt today and out of business while they were busy trying to “businessing (sic) this country.” They were more focused on profit over service, and as a good book says, you reap what you sow.

Les pido que piensen en alguna empresa que conozcan con más de 250 años de antigüedad. ¿Se trata de Sears, Enron, Rite Aid, WorldCom o Tyco? Todas eran empresas multimillonarias, y, sin embargo, hoy están en bancarrota y fuera del negocio, mientras se dedicaban a “hacer negocios en este país.” Se centraban más en las ganancias que en el servicio, y como dice un buen libro, se cosecha lo que se siembra.

Trump, Musk, and DOGE all want to run Social Security and charge Social Security a starting offer of \$1 billion annually. This is mixing oil and water, folks. Cur-

rently, there is NO charge per se to run it other than hourly-waged employees and the management structure.

Trump, Musk y DOGE quieren correr el Seguro Social y cobrarle una oferta inicial de mil millones de dólares anuales. Esto es mezclar aceite y agua, amigos. Actualmente, NO hay ningún cargo para ejecutarlo, menos los empleados por hora y la estructura administración.

Get out and vote on May 6th, 2025, in the primaries; they MATTER!

¡Salgan a votar el 6 de mayo de 2025, en las primarias; son IMPORTANTES!

“My blood’s boiling, folks, yours should be too!”

“¡Me hierve la sangre, amigos, y el tuyo también debería!”

Resources for Immigrants in Michigan

1 Know Your Rights

Find Michigan-specific information about your rights, how to prepare your family for enforcement, what to do if ICE comes to your door, and what to do after someone is arrested or detained.



bit.ly/MIRCKYR

2 Immigration Legal Services

If you are in need of immigration legal services, call us at **734-239-6863**. If lines are busy, leave a message and we will return your call.



3 All detainees can call MIRC for free from detention



michiganimmigrant.org

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Gracias al apoyo que brindamos a las clínicas gratuitas y con bajo costo, y a recursos como nuestra aplicación fácil de usar y nuestra línea de atención de enfermería las 24 horas del día, en Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan y Blue Care Network estamos preparados para apoyar la salud de todos los residentes de Michigan. Ya sea que necesite servicios de salud física o mental, estamos siempre a disposición para ayudar, cuando sea y donde sea que nos necesite.

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