



**Loyola Law School**  
**Loyola Marymount University**  
Los Angeles

## **LMU COELHO CENTER FOR DISABILITY LAW, POLICY & INNOVATION TO EXAMINE ‘BREAKING BARRIERS TO VOTING’ AT SILICON BEACH FORUM**

*VOTER SUPPRESSION ISSUES SPOTLIGHTED AHEAD OF DNC DEBATE AT LMU*

**LOS ANGELES** – The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation based at LMU Loyola Law School will host “**Breaking Barriers to Voting: An Ongoing Advocacy**” at the LMU Playa Vista Campus on **Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2019 from 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. PST**. The discussion among party leaders, voting-rights experts and other stakeholders will examine voting-access issues for members of disenfranchised groups such as ethnic minorities and those with disabilities.

The event will take place a day before the Thursday, Dec. 19 DNC Democratic Presidential Debate on LMU’s Westchester campus. The event will include remarks on voting rights by **Tom Perez**, DNC chair. Hon. **Tony Coelho** (LMU ’64), former House Majority Whip and founder of The Coelho Center; Loyola Law School Dean **Michael Waterstone**, an expert on voting access for people with disabilities; and LMU **President Timothy Law Snyder**, Ph.D. will provide opening remarks.

Opening remarks will be followed by a panel of experts: **Elizabeth Campbell**, Disability Organizing Network; **Kathay Feng** and **Kiyana Asemanfar**, Common Cause; **Tony Hoang**, Equality California & Silver State Equality; and **Astrid Ochoa**, Future of California Elections. LMU First Lady and former CNN anchor **Carol Costello** will serve as moderator.

“California has experienced a resurgence in voter turnout thanks to intersectional leaders working together to increase participation in elections. With this increase in turnout, we need to ensure that everyone has equal access to the voting booth. I am pleased we will explore those issues at this important forum,” said Coelho.

The event builds on the Nov. 5, 2018 Coelho Center symposium, “Disability Impact: Breaking Through Barriers to Civic Leadership,” which looked at the electoral habits of people with disabilities. [Poll data](#) announced during “The Disability Community, the Election and the Next Congress” session outlined the results of The Coelho Center poll that found likely voters in the disability community comprise 19 percent of the population. Additionally, the survey found that the extended disability community makes up almost 60 percent of the population.

“In 2018, we saw the first implementation of the Voter’s Choice Act, a new law that seeks to find common solutions to break barriers to voting based on disability, limited English proficiency, economic status, racial divisions and more,” said The Coelho

Center Director Katherine Perez. “Yet, as advocates successfully turn each corner on their journey to develop a fair and just election system, they still encounter roadblocks, examples of voter suppression and attempts to break their coalitions.”

The LMU Playa Vista Campus is located at 2105 E Waterfront Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90094. Members of the media should RSVP to Brian Costello, LLS director of marketing & communications, at [brian.costello@lls.edu](mailto:brian.costello@lls.edu), 213-736-1444 (o) or 310-902-9560 (c). More information is available at [www.lls.edu/breakingbarriers](http://www.lls.edu/breakingbarriers). A live web broadcast will be made available at [www.lls.edu/coelhocenter](http://www.lls.edu/coelhocenter) and on social media.

The DNC Democratic Presidential Debate will be held LMU’s Westchester campus on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019. Learn more at <https://dncdebate2019.lmu.edu> or by following #DemDebateLMU.

### **About The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy & Innovation**

The Coelho Center, an interdisciplinary center intersecting all Loyola Marymount University colleges and housed at LMU Loyola Law School, pursues a unique multi-pronged mission: convening thought leaders to pursue positive change on disability issues; leveraging technology to advance the lives of people with disabilities; creating a pipeline of lawyers with disabilities to populate the bench and hold elected office; and fostering a university-wide dialogue on disability-rights issues. The Coelho Center also draws on multiple areas of expertise from other LMU colleges. Founded by former congressman, disability rights icon and LMU alumnus Hon. Tony Coelho (LMU '64), The Coelho Center is the only organization of its kind at a Catholic university in America and the only one housed at a top U.S. law school. Details about The Coelho Center are available at [www.lls.edu/coelhocenter](http://www.lls.edu/coelhocenter).