



## DEBORAH ESCOBEDO'S BIOGRAPHY

Deborah Escobedo spent her entire 40-year plus legal career as an education advocate on behalf of some of California's most vulnerable student groups, including those who are: English Learners (EL); immigrant and/or migrant; detained in juvenile facilities; and/or subject to harsh disciplinary measures and targeted for other means of exclusion or push out from our schools.

Throughout her career, Deborah was involved in a broad range of litigation, administrative and legislative advocacy on educational equity issues. She participated in litigation challenging statewide anti-immigrant initiatives, including Proposition 187 (Pedro A. v. Dawson) and Proposition 227 (Angel V. v. Davis) and was co-lead counsel in *Pazmiño v. Cal. Board of Ed.*, which successfully challenged the exclusion of EL students from participation in a federally funded reading program.

Deborah spent the last seven years of her career as a Racial Justice Senior Attorney with the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights – SF (LCCR) and led the organization's educational equity initiatives. With LCCR, Deborah co-negotiated a formal settlement with Modesto City Schools to address suspensions targeting Black, EL and other vulnerable student groups. She successfully challenged exclusionary enrollment policies and practices by hundreds of School Districts targeting immigrant students through administrative complaints filed with California's Attorney General and complaints filed directly with Districts. Deborah also worked with other advocates to prevent the closure of schools by several Districts that would have disproportionately impacted Latinx, EL, migrant and other low-income students.

Deborah also spent extensive time in the policy arena, having worked on numerous pieces of legislation. Some of these efforts include: AB 699 (protects the educational rights of immigrant students); SB 1088 (ensures that juvenile justice youth are not denied enrollment because of their prior delinquency status); SB 607 & AB 2242 (reduces the use of "defiance" as grounds for suspension); and SB 1111 (reforms the enrollment process for county community schools).

Prior to LCCR, Deborah was a partner at Garcia Hernández Sawhney, LLP where she focused on the firm's nonprofit organizational clients. She also served as a staff attorney at the Youth Law Center where she worked to protect the educational rights of foster and juvenile justice youth.

Deborah received her B.A. from UC Santa Cruz and her J.D. from Berkeley School of Law. Her education advocacy has been recognized at the national level by the Hispanic National Bar Association, which honored her with its Primera Abogada Award. She is also the recipient of the CA La Raza Lawyers Assoc. Cruz Reynoso Community Service Award; the SF La Raza Bar Assoc.'s Latino Advocacy Award; La Raza Centro Legal Cesar Chavez Community Service Award; LA County Bilingual Directors' Assoc. Honoree; the CA Association for Bilingual Education Advocacy Award; the Assoc. of Mexican American Educators' Homenaje a La Mujer Award; and the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation's Access to Justice and Legal Excellence Award.

Deborah's Spousal Unit of forty-four years is José R. Padilla, the former Executive Director of California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

