

Julián Castro on Supporting a Diverse Latino Community after Trump's Win

Julián Castro: [00:00:02] Here's the thing. Now we're in this period where those organizations out there are going to be the ones doing the very heavy lifting of everything that we're going to have to deal with in this new administration and making sure that those vulnerable communities are protected.

Grace: [00:00:23] Welcome to Giving Done Right, a show with everything you need to know to make an impact with your charitable giving. I'm Grace Nicolette.

Phil: [00:00:30] And I'm Phil Buchanan.

Grace: [00:00:39] Today our guest is Julián Castro, the former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Obama and a former mayor of San Antonio, Texas. He's currently serving as the CEO of Latino Community Foundation, an organization which has created the largest network of Latino philanthropists in the U.S. And its mandate is to invest in Latino-led organizations and increase the civic and political engagement of Latinos. To date, LCF has invested over \$25 million into nearly 400 grassroots and Latino-led groups. Welcome, Julián.

Julián Castro: [00:01:19] Great to be with you all. Thank you for having me.

Phil: [00:01:21] So great to talk to you. We have so much we want to chat with you about. We wanted to have you on because there's been so much conversation about the Latino community in the U.S., its richness, its diversity and also its rising political power. And we're at a particular moment, just a few weeks after the U.S. presidential election, where the shifts in voting patterns of many Latinos have been much discussed. And our listeners are also just interested in supporting racial equity and communities of color. And I think they're going to be so curious about the work of the Latino Community Foundation, how you're processing this moment that we're in, so a ton to talk about. But before we get to all that, you've had this incredibly interesting and impressive political career that started when you were super young. I imagine you could have done a number of things after that political career and maybe you have another political career in front of you, I don't know. But you joined the Latino Community Foundation. Why? What drew you to that role?

Julián Castro: [00:02:22] You know, I always have been interested in making an impact in other people's lives. And of course, the first way that I did that in my career was through public service. After graduating from law school, both practicing law and then running for city council and ultimately serving as mayor and HUD secretary. And so I always found in public service that I could positively impact the lives of others. And what's been so appealing about the Latino Community Foundation is that I see that in the same vein. Obviously, it's philanthropy. It's not public service. And so the approach to having impact and the difference that you make is different. But I very much see it in that vein. How can you make an impact in the lives of others? And to me, this is one excellent way to do that.

Phil: [00:03:13] What feels different about it to you?

Julián Castro: [00:03:16] Well, you know, when you're in public service, I feel like you're a little bit spoiled because you think about it, think about the sort of avenues that you have to make change. You can change law or administrative policy, especially if you're in local government. You can dedicate resources. You don't have the gridlock of Washington, D.C. So oftentimes local government, like when I was mayor, is quicker. I liken it to, you know, that commercial, the easy button, that easy red button, Staples I think is the one that does it compared to the federal government. But you have that power to

dedicate resources in public service. You also have a bully pulpit. You have the ability to use the network of resources that come with being in public office. In philanthropy, like in other, I think, roles, you have to sort of, I think, pick and choose more wisely and engage in more coalition building and collective impact. If you want to make a difference. And so for me, that's been the most interesting part of this past 11 months that I've been in this role. It's different in that you are investing in nonprofit organizations and their leaders to make a difference out in the community. It's super satisfying to see when they are making that difference and to know that, you know, the Latino Community Foundation and others that are in the space are making a difference themselves by doing it.

Grace: [00:04:50] Were there threads of philanthropy or ties to philanthropy in your childhood or in your story?

Julián Castro: [00:04:56] You know, I wish that I could say that that were the case. But no, not really. You know, I mean, of course, I grew up understanding a little bit about the role that philanthropy had played. And as they got into high school and then college, of course, you hear about things like the Ford Foundation and other big philanthropies. But I didn't really see the connection growing up between the work that a lot of philanthropy was doing and the improvements that had been made over the years. And, you know, it's fascinating. I was having a conversation right before I took on this role with Arabella Martinez, who was Bay Area icon, Latina there, who helped start essentially one of the first chapters of what became the National Council of La Raza, which now is UnidosUs, which is the largest Latino/Latina advocacy organization. And that was originally seeded with a significant investment from the Ford Foundation. And so you see, you know, philanthropy, of course, has played a big role. But for whatever reason, I don't think that that's really seeped into the consciousness of so many people when they're growing up, especially, I think, in traditionally underrepresented communities. Communities that, you know, have not been in the mix of philanthropy or philanthropic leadership. That certainly describes my upbringing.

Phil: [00:06:22] I'm so curious, Julián, to hear how you're thinking about your work and the work at the Latino Community Foundation in this particular moment? I got to be honest, I've been a little surprised by the number of op eds I've read and podcasts I've listened to in the last couple of weeks where issue based identity nonprofit groups are getting a lot of blame for having pulled the Democratic Party too far to the left or having somehow played a role in this election result. I just read something to that effect and I was like, really? I mean, first of all, it's more complicated than any one thing. But I guess the question I think I want to ask you is, why does an organization like yours matter in this moment? And can you speak to that, to the mission and to your response to some of this backlash we're hearing as we have this conversation in December 2024.

Julián Castro: [00:07:27] Well, the Latino Community Foundation is the nation's largest Hispanic serving foundation. And our mission is to unleash the civic and economic power of Latinas and Latinos. We feel that's vital to the future prosperity of the United States, because, according to the census, already, just over a quarter of the children, a quarter of the people under the age of 18 in our country are young Latinas or young Latinos. And in states like California, Texas, Illinois, New York, Florida and so forth, the percentage of students in public school classrooms already approaches 50% that are Latina or Latino. And sometimes it's higher than that in states like California. And the way that I see it, you can only have a successful America in the years to come if the Latino community succeeds. You can't have more than a quarter of your population with the kind of health outcomes, economic outcomes, life outcomes that we've seen in the community, which are generally low, educational outcomes and believe that in the future we're going to thrive as a country. So we feel like the investments that we're making to lift up the economic power, the civic power, ultimately the educational and life outcomes of the community, that's not just going to benefit Latinos, that's going to benefit the United States of America as a whole in the years to come. I know there's been a lot of conversation about the political identity of the Latino

community after the last election. You know, it did seem like there was a shift to the right by at least a few percentage points toward Donald Trump. And I think that's also in some ways putting a strain on the Democratic coalition that's existed for a long time. I would just say the word that you always hear about the Latino community after an election, and I believe it's true, is that it's not monolithic. That's very accurate. I think you could say that about a number of other communities as well. So we have to remember that. But I think the biggest challenge in this 2024 election was that a lot of people stayed home. To address it, not necessarily in partisan terms, but just analytically, Trump did gain votes. He went up by about 2 million votes from the 2020 election. But the Democratic candidate, Vice President Harris, got about 7 or 8 million less votes than Vice President Biden had gotten in 2020. And less people voted overall. And so I think the biggest problem was a lack of enthusiasm and a lack of people actually going to the polls. And I imagine as more and more analysis is done on that, that that group that stayed on the sidelines probably tended to skew younger. And it wouldn't surprise me if Latinos were among those who stayed more on the sidelines this time than last time. I don't know that part for a fact, but that's my hunch. And so I think both parties should have an incentive to understand the community, to reach out to the community, to fight for the vote of the community. I don't think it's any secret to folks that I've run as a Democrat and what my beliefs are. But what I try to do at the Latino Community Foundation, we are a nonprofit 501C3 organization, is to make sure that the community is invested in and that it has its voice heard. And I fundamentally believe that the more that the parties together are paying attention to how the Latino community is doing and what the needs of the community are, the better off the Latino community is going to be. Because what I'd like to see are the policies coming out of city halls and state legislatures and out of Congress be the kinds of policies that are going to lift up the educational outcomes and health outcomes and job outcomes of Latinos, Latinas and then so many vulnerable communities that I think we still need to invest in in the United States.

Grace: [00:11:39] In terms of when you think ahead like the next 50 years for Latino civic power in the U.S., it could be that one of the outcomes is that it may not be like a wholly progressive force, right? I think about that for Asian Americans as well. And with your background, I can imagine we talked about this a little bit, that there would be a tension, right, because you are a Democrat. Do you see strength in the possibility that with more civic participation, there might actually be more of a bipartisan kind of participation among Latinos? What is your thinking about the future?

Julián Castro: [00:12:16] Yeah, I look forward to the day for the Latino community wherein people have much higher education levels, much higher income levels. When we talk one day about the equivalent of the Coca-Colas and McDonald's and Googles and IBM's of the world, that we're hearing names like Gomez and Rodriguez that own some of those, so that the community in full is one that has teachers and doctors and business owners and everything in between. And of course, that will include a community that is diverse politically. I don't expect that that's always going to look the same. My hope is that, you know, it will lean more progressive than not. But I also think that when a community is such that both political parties are vying, competing for its vote, when they have to be responsive, that that has value as well. And so I think that by investing in civic power building in the Latino community, really what we're investing in is better educational outcomes and health outcomes and economic outcomes to create that community that we want. And as part of that, where there is more power democratically, then both political parties are going to have to seek out their votes. You know, that may cause more to go one way or another. But fundamentally, what I want is the well-being of the community.

Phil: [00:13:56] So talk to us a little bit then about the work of the foundation. So you're in some ways an intermediary, right? You're raising money and you're distributing money toward strategies that help to do what you described in terms of empowering Latino communities. Can you talk to us a little bit about both parts of that, like how you make the case to donors that they should give through you and then what strategies you're pursuing to achieve the goals that are so important to the foundation?

Julián Castro: [00:14:26] Yeah. You know, you put your finger on, for me, coming into this role, the part of it that took me the hardest to be able to fully appreciate and convey to our funders. I'm used to public service. I'm used to, you know, whether it's a city hall or in HUD, doling dollars out to nonprofit organizations and to other governmental units like a city government or county government when I was at HUD. And less familiar coming in with this idea of an intermediary, although if you think about it, when the federal government gives dollars to the state government or a local government, basically that's the role that those units are playing, the local government or the state government, because oftentimes they're passing that on to nonprofits that are doing work or individuals that are doing work in the community. What I saw, what I've seen in these 11 months is just the value of the intermediary visiting with partners of ours, grantees all over California, because mostly we've been a statewide foundation. We just started to grow to Arizona and Nevada this year, but mostly we've been in California. And what I heard over and over was the value of the relationship. That Latino Community Foundation was a relationship that was different, where not only would we provide grants, but understood the needs of the nonprofit organization, would help in other ways, trying to get attention for their efforts. And so the relationship there goes well beyond simply, you know, getting in dollars and then passing those dollars along to an organization. On top of that, the relationships that the team members that LCF have have mean that we have a really good sense of who's doing good work, who's actually effective on the ground, who has the respect of the community, who understands it, and who is legitimately having an impact. That's super valuable. What I found is that we have in the philanthropic sector a lot of family foundations, a lot of others that have a staff of one, two, three, four or five people. They simply don't have the time or the resources to understand the picture on the ground. And so the intermediary becomes that much more important that has those relationships, that understands who's having good impact, that can manage that grantor grantee relationship effectively and help ensure that they get the results that they want. So yeah, that's, I chalk that up as one of my lessons and things that I've learned this year. And in terms of the work that we're doing, the way I think of it, we really make impact in four ways. We help build power through investing in civic engagement on the one hand; organizations that are informing, mobilizing people to go vote, people to advocate in front of their city council for dollars. For instance, the groups that we've invested in over the last several years have leveraged our investment and the investment of other funders to pull down more than \$700 million of American Rescue Plan money right in their different local communities. We engage in economic power building by investing in entrepreneurship initiatives and others that are doing work to lift the quality of life and the economic opportunity in communities. For instance, Promotoras in the North Bay in Northern California. We also administer the largest giving circle network, the largest network of Latina and Latino philanthropists. We have 17 different giving circles right now in the state of California, and we're looking to expand that. And then finally, we do our work through advocacy. Because we're a community foundation, we actually have the ability to do a limited amount of advocacy. So when there's an issue in front of the California legislature, for instance, or federally, we have the ability to put out a statement on that. We've done that on issues like housing, on immigration, on a number of other issues that truly impact Latinos. And we'll continue to use our voice. You can imagine that the time period that we're going into is a time period where a large part of the Latino community has a target on its back. And so we feel this sense of urgency right now to do the work in these different ways of economic justice, of civic engagement, of cultivating a network of philanthropists and also of advocacy.

Grace: [00:19:12] How would you describe to donors, I mean, you made such a compelling case of why investing in Latino communities is so important and they're also not a monolith. And so how would you advise donors who want to learn more about how to get involved? Like, where should they go? How would you describe some of the kind of main headwinds that are facing different communities?

Julián Castro: [00:19:36] Right now. There's a tremendous amount of anxiety in much of the Latino community because of the incoming administration's promise to engage in mass deportation. I want to be very clear, you know, the majority of Latinas and Latinos, they actually are not recent immigrants. They

have been here for a generation, five generations, nine generations. So majority of folks have been here. I think oftentimes people have a misimpression about that. But still, there are tens of millions of people who are either immigrants themselves, including undocumented immigrants or who live in a mixed status household, meaning that somebody in the household is undocumented. And so for the Latino community, that means a lot of people's family members, their mothers, their fathers, their aunts or uncles. They are at risk, including Dreamers who are contributing a lot to the forward progress of our country. That's definitely a headwind that is causing a lot of anxiety. And the Latino Community Foundation is part of a larger effort among groups to prepare for that, to invest in organizations that are doing direct work to provide advocacy and protection for immigrants. In fact, recently we just approved six planning grants to organizations in California for that purpose. In addition to that, the community continues to grow in every way that a community can grow. It has one of the fastest rates of small business startups in the country. So we believe there's a real role for us in terms of promoting, helping to promote entrepreneurship. We just launched something called the Latino Capital Accelerator, which is basically performance bootcamp for organizations that are CDFIs, community development financial institutions, to be able to grow, to scale up and provide more access to capital to Latina and Latino entrepreneurs. And in addition to that, we continue to help ensure that organizations that are working to educate voters and potential voters have robust funding. Because one of the things that we know is that there's a tremendous amount of disinformation and misinformation, including in Spanish language social media and publications. So we want to be funding groups that are on the ground with facts and informing the Latino community about the issues and about candidates, and again, doing it in a nonpartisan way. But the more information that's true that people have in their hands at the ready, I think the better off the community is.

Grace: [00:22:24] Don't go anywhere. More after this break.

[BREAK]

Phil: [00:22:40] This is an interesting and as you say, very anxiety provoking moment. And it's because we don't know what's next. And there's a lot of different scenarios, but we know what some of the rhetoric has been and we can imagine what some of the implications might be of an attempt to implement against that rhetoric. From a human rights point of view, from a basic humanity point of view. And so it seems to me that donors, you know, the audience for the show is philanthropic donors. And so often what donors are doing is looking for the thing that works that they can support. I want to help make progress on this issue. I know this organization is doing good work and they've got a strategy, so I'm going to support it. But in this case, what's needed actually is preparation and readiness to respond, right?. So, I mean, normally zero it down to, you know, support the organization that our guest represents. But it is true that if you're concerned about the implications of this administration acting on some of the rhetoric, one thing you can do is support the organizations. And Latino Community Foundation would be one. And I'm sure there are others that are doing that preparation work right now, not because you know what the strategy is going to be, but because, you know, there needs to be a strategy to respond when it's clear what's coming, right? So I think what, this is a very long winded way of asking you, Julián, for donors who have the anxieties that you are describing as within the Latino community and want to support an infrastructure of organizations to be ready to minimize the damage, to counteract what might come next, what should they do?

Julián Castro: [00:24:32] Well, I think they should look out, do research on organizations that are doing great work, from advocacy to protecting immigrant communities. The Latino Community Foundation is one organization that has excellent relationships with a whole host of nonprofits across California that are doing great work to protect immigrant communities. And recently, a few days after the election, we launched a relaunch of what we call our Latino Power Fund and set a goal of \$10 million to raise. Part of that would go to supporting organizations that are doing legal representation for immigrants, advocacy on immigration, direct services. Those are the kinds of relationships that we have. And there are other

organizations that do, too. So I would suggest doing that research, and they will find a ready group of organizations doing excellent work. I can't stress enough how important it is for people to be prepared for this next moment and to be proactive. We believe that it's going to be unlike anything that we've seen in a long time. The last time that there was a mass deportation effort in a mid-20th century, there were about a million people that were deported, including many American citizens who wrongfully got wrapped up in an effort to deport people who were not citizens. And we fear that that's the kind of thing that's going to happen again. In addition to that, we know that we have an incoming administration that wants to get rid of any kind of race consciousness in our society, which we think is going to be a step backward because of course, we believe when we think about racial equity, that we need to understand the challenge, we need to understand the problem. We need to understand the progress that we certainly have made as a country since the civil rights movement, but also the challenges and the progress that we still need to make and the organizations that we support are committed to doing that work and making a difference on the ground.

Grace: [00:26:42] I want to go back to and kind of double click a little bit more on, I mean, one of the things I think a lot of us are processing is that, you know, Trump gained a larger share of the vote across many different races, right? So more Asian-Americans, more Blacks, more Latinos voted for him in this cycle. And I'm curious, I mean, you mentioned the fear in the community, but also I think the media has really highlighted how much pickup Trump did have from the Latino community. So what is that conversation like, and like, do you think that this is a trend for the Latino community and perhaps for other racial groups as well? And what are some of the internal conversations going on between different parts of the community I guess?

Julián Castro: [00:27:29] I think the jury is still out on that, that we need to understand exactly why that shift happened. I do think it's noteworthy that more than anything else, we saw a drop off in the number of people voting overall. And so I don't know that suddenly a whole bunch of people decided to shift or switch from Democrat to Republican, and more so that a lot of people sat on the sidelines that had voted in 2020. Either way, though, there was some amount of shift in the Latino community and other communities. What I have found, right, is that a lot of people wonder, and I get it like, hey, how in the world are you going for this guy that has spoken so badly about Mexicans coming in and, you know, committing crimes and being so anti-immigrant compared to other Democrats and Republicans? You know, I think it's important to remember it is a community that many of whom have been here a long time. They don't necessarily identify with very recent immigrants. And so all of that manipulation and the scapegoating and the division that I think Trump was trying to create, some of that played in the Latino community, too, when it comes to the Latino community and all communities. But I'll just speak for the Latino community. Hey, we have to also face the, you know, misogyny and the racism that still exists within our own community. And I think one of the things that we need to do now is focus on how, from a progressive standpoint, how do you rebuild a coalition? I think there's work to be done in the Black and Brown coalition, certainly with the Asian-American community and Latinos as well. After the spate of Asian hate that we saw over the last several years and with our indigenous community, that often gets left out of the conversation entirely. But that in many places like Arizona, for instance, being a good example, part and parcel of the same community physical space. So there is a ton of work to do. And one of the things that I look forward to being a part of is those conversations on how we rebuild a coalition to make sure that these communities are able to thrive going forward. And as I mentioned, that whatever happens in terms of which party people vote for, obviously I have my preference, but for whatever happens there, that the politicians are listening and that they're making policies that contribute to a better quality of life instead of fear and anxiety and division and a worse quality of life for the community.

Grace: [00:30:18] I've heard you talk publicly often about how important it is for elected officials to listen well, especially to folks who have less power. And I wonder if you see parallel best practices when it comes to listening for donors. Like, what advice would you give to donors about really understanding

the needs of the communities they want to support, for instance, if they would like to support Latino communities?

Julián Castro: [00:30:39] Yeah. Well, I mean, the outreach is always appreciated. Whether it's somebody in public office or somebody in the nonprofit or philanthropic space that's listening to a donor. I'd say 99% of folks are always happy to have a conversation and share perspective. But my advice would be also to get in community as much as possible and to go and actually see and hear about and get a feel for the work that's happening. I also, incidentally, think that we should mirror that in the philanthropic sector. One of the things that we're working on right now at LCF is a new policy so that we encourage our team members, our staff, to spend a certain number of hours every month in community with the organizations that we're funding, understanding their work, being there at their community events, knowing how we can be better partners, and also how all of us can be as effective as possible. And I think donors can do that as well to take that time when you can to actually. Be in community and directly hear about it, see it, feel it yourself.

Phil: [00:31:48] I think that's just right on. And like, the best thing we can all do is get out of our offices.

Julián Castro: Yeah.

Phil: And connect with people. And like you said, you know, be in community and the donor awareness of the challenges of this moment, both for communities but also for nonprofit leaders and staff who have faced rolling sort of crisis after crisis. And there's so much stress and related burnout that we've documented in some of our research. Real leadership concern about burnout. Well before we entered into the latest set of challenges, which includes not just the ones that we've been talking about, but also concerns about the sector itself and the freedom of nonprofits to pursue their goals. You know, again, this is not a politics show, but it is a show about philanthropy and a show about philanthropy is really in service of nonprofits doing vital work. And we do have a Vice President Elect who has declared that he would, for example, like the federal government, to seize the assets of foundations or to go after endowments of nonprofits whose objectives, you know, he doesn't support. And he's not the only sort of potential member of this administration who has made retribution against independent actors that traditionally have had a lot of freedom to pursue their goals, whether they're conservative or liberal, pretty clear. How concerned are you about that and what are the conversations like within the Latino Community Foundation or with your grantees about potential threats to, for example, the nonprofit status of organizations that are seen to be working in a way that is at odds with the goals of this administration?

Julián Castro: [00:33:42] I'm very concerned, and I think a lot of other people in the philanthropic sector are as well, people of different stripes, whether they're Republican or Democratic, concerned because of an administration that, you know, hasn't been shy about it. I mean, has actually said that they want to take vengeance on people and organizations they believe are their opponents. I'm concerned about it because of legislation that just got passed in the House of Representatives. It won't get anywhere this term in the Senate, but next term, when you have a different political make up, could possibly get on the president's desk. That would give the Treasury Secretary the ability to label nonprofits as "terrorist supporting." Now, at first blush, somebody says, well, what's wrong with that? Right? I mean, if a nonprofit is actually supporting terrorists or terrorism, if that were clear, then of course everybody would say, yeah, you know, they shouldn't be in business. But there's a real fear among people of different persuasions politically that this could be abused, it could be weaponized by an administration, you know, not just this one, but future administrations that may have it out for organizations they just don't agree with. And that's not something that we should be comfortable with. And so my hope is that Congress is going to see the better of that and avoid legislation that would allow the weaponization of that kind of law. We need to be prepared for any of these possibilities, unfortunately. And I think that that's a common theme, once we hit January 20th, is that organizations that, you know, are doing good work but may not

be the favorite of the incoming administration, need to be prepared for the eventualities of being targeted or coming under legal pressure. Unfortunately, that's where we're at in this country right now.

Grace: [00:35:40] I feel like it's almost this like perfect storm moment because even before the election, nonprofits were struggling financially and coming out of the pandemic with burnout. And I think that most people don't know that this stuff is happening, right? So I'm glad that we're talking about it on this show. And I imagine if donors are hearing this, maybe they, you know, understood that a lot of things in the macro environment are going to change after the inauguration. But actually, there are some really alarming things that may be happening to nonprofits. What's your exhortation to donors? I mean, for me, I'm like, don't sit on the sidelines. Like, ask your partners what they need, how you can help prepare them. But I'm curious, what would you say?

Julián Castro: [00:36:23] It's a check in right now because as you said, there is a tremendous amount of anxiety slash scenario planning that's happening. That's the good part. I mean, donors should know that organizations are not sitting on their hands. Organizations across the board have been doing scenario planning for months and getting ready for, you know, whatever happened in the election. We've done that at LCF. I know so many others that have done that in the, you know, the nonprofit sector and the private sector. But what organizations need now is they need the support and the solidarity of their donors, of their supporters and the voice that they offer in our, you know, small d democratic process to help ensure that the good work that organizations are doing continues. In a time when I mean, let's face it, if you care out there about lifting up vulnerable communities, whether that's immigrant communities, the Latino community, you know, any number of ethnic or racial communities, women, the LGBTQ community that's been so targeted, especially the transgender community in this election cycle, now is the time to show support and to show solidarity that goes beyond, of course, you know, the dollars very important, but really your voice to your voice and your and your thinking and strategizing on it.

Phil: [00:37:51] And I would throw in that we need to care about and support, and donors should seriously consider supporting the organizations that are protecting the sector and the sort of basic infrastructure we take for granted. I think of organizations that typically have primarily been funded by foundations, not individual donors. But there's no reason individuals can't support these organizations like Council on Foundations, Independent Sector, National Council of Nonprofits, United Philanthropy Forum. I don't agree with every single position that those organizations have taken on every single issue. I mean, I don't think. I probably don't. Nobody does, right? That's not the point. They are fighting for in D.C. and National Council on Nonprofits at the state legislature level. The protection of a sector that has historically mattered, in which we have historically had a sort of consensus that whatever we guess about the ideological leanings of an organization, they should be free to pursue their mission. And the sector is diverse and it's full of organizations we would consider maybe liberal and organizations we would consider maybe conservative. And there used to be a kind of rough understanding and agreement that that freedom and that pluralism was good for all of us and we would stand up for each other. So I would just put in a plug for those organizations that are actually going to be the ones on Capitol Hill talking to people, saying about the bill that you just described, Julián, you know, no this would be dangerous for the freedom of the independent sector. So I would just add that to the conversation as well.

Julián Castro: [00:39:37] That's a great point. Having served in Washington, D.C., for a couple of years as Housing Secretary, I know that oftentimes it's these organizations that legislators, they check in on what the perspective is from these organizations that they know represent a whole host of other organizations. They rely on getting a temperature check and their opinions. Of course, those legislators offices don't have time to go survey 4000 different philanthropic organizations, but they do care about what the council and foundations and similar organizations think about legislation, knowing that they represent a lot of voices within them. And so that's a great point.

Grace: [00:40:22] I'm curious Julián, how would you advise donors who are thinking about the interplay between their political giving and their charitable giving, right? I imagine for folks who want to effect change, those are two different tools. And I certainly have had conversations with folks who have felt like, you know, it's a little bit zero sum where if they're giving more politically, they might give less or vice versa to charity. How would you advise donors about that?

Julián Castro: [00:40:48] Number one, I would say, look, that you have to give according to your values. A lot of times those two things are always aligned when you talk about political organizations and charitable organizations or philanthropic giving, but sometimes it gets odd. My sense right now is that probably because of the 2024 experience, a lot of donors are feeling like, Wow, I just give a lot during that political cycle from the president on down. Senate races, governors races and so forth. But here's the thing. Now we're in this period where those organizations out there are going to be the ones doing the very heavy lifting of everything that we're going to have to deal with in this new administration and making sure that those vulnerable communities are protected. And so I feel like, if anything, and as someone who was in politics and now is on this side of it, that 2024 was a very heavy political giving year. And 2025, as we deal with a new administration trying to implement their new policies and the consequences of those on the ground, that I would hope that 2025 especially is going to be a year where people focus on their charitable giving to organizations that could really use the boost right now for everything that's coming. And it's an off-cycle year apart from a couple of states like Virginia, I think, and local races. You really don't have that many political big ticket political races out there.

Phil: [00:42:19] Julián, this has been such an interesting conversation. Sobering, I mean, sobering, but also kind of gives me resolve to prepare for, you know, what comes next. And speaking of resolve, I'm wondering for you sort of personally, how you keep your resolve. I mean, you've had a lot of really interesting leadership experience, and I'm sure you've learned a lot about what it takes to lead and how to keep yourself sort of motivated and strong and not run yourself into the ground. And I'm just curious, you know, how you think about that, because I think this is going to be something a lot of us are going to have to pay attention to, right? Like how we stay strong for the long haul. We don't just check out, but we don't run ourselves into the ground either, whether as donors, whether as leaders of philanthropic organizations, leaders of nonprofits. It's just human beings in this time, in this challenging time that we're in. What gives you strength? What do you draw on as you think about leading in the coming weeks and months and years?

Julián Castro: [00:43:32] For me, I'm very grateful for my experience and my family's experience in the country. And I mean, I grew up with a grandmother who had come from Mexico as an orphan when she was six or seven, didn't even finish elementary school, who worked as a maid, a cook and a babysitter, raised my mom as a single parent. My mom that raised my brother Joaquin and me as a single parent. Attending the public schools of San Antonio and getting to go on to college at Stanford and law school at Harvard and be the first in my family to be a professional, as a as a lawyer and then get to serve my community in public service in San Antonio and then get to serve Barack Obama in the cabinet, which was a thrill. And so, you know, I'm very grateful because I feel like I've lived and I've been a part of the story of progress in our country. And I'm very proud of the progress that we can all be proud of. It also makes me optimistic that even though, as I see it, we're going through some dark times right now, that fundamentally this is a good and a great country and we're going to get through this moment that if we keep our energy and our commitment to the right values up, that we will get on track to continue to make that kind of progress in the future, to open up opportunity for more people, no matter their background, to lead the world in terms of our values and who we are, and to make this democracy that has been so challenged at different parts of our history, from the Civil War to moments like the Great Depression to Watergate, to the moment that we're going through right now and January 6th that we just lived through a few years ago, to get through that and become hopefully even stronger than ever before. I'm optimistic about that and so that's what keeps me going. And we need that resolve together, however you find it,

wherever you find it, whoever helps you, bucks you up to support you find them in this moment. Because we're going to need that resolve to get through the coming years and then get stronger as a country.

Phil: [00:45:51] Julián, that's super powerful and really helpful. Thank you. And thank you so much for spending this time with us today. It's been a really, really enlightening conversation.

Grace: [00:46:02] Yes. Thank you so much.

Julián Castro: [00:46:04] Thank you.

Phil: There are so many resources about effective giving on The Center for Effective Philanthropy's website, cep.org, as well as givingdoneright.org, where you'll find all of our episodes and show notes.

Grace: You can also send us a note at gdrpodcast@cep.org.

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