

Luna campaign: South Side community advocate and nonprofit professional Ismael Luna launches campaign for Wisconsin State Assembly District 8

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MILWAUKEE, WI – On Monday morning in the heart of Milwaukee’s South Side, community advocate and nonprofit professional Ismael Luna launched his campaign for Wisconsin’s 8th Assembly District. He is running for State Assembly to advocate for the South Side and the families too often left behind when politicians stop paying attention.

Born to immigrant parents and raised in a working-class family, Ismael has lived in the district for over 14 years. He is a proud graduate of Milwaukee Public Schools, attending Kagel Elementary and Riverside High School, and was confirmed at Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Ismael’s story is rooted in service and resilience. He began working at 14 to help support his family and was unhoused as a teenager. Those experiences shaped his commitment to making sure no one in Milwaukee has to struggle alone.

Today, Ismael works at a shelter, supporting people experiencing homelessness, and has spent years volunteering with homeless shelters, food programs, and the American Red Cross. He previously served as Vice Chair of RISE Drug Free MKE, where he worked on substance use prevention and recovery efforts.

Ismael holds a bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in Spanish and a

master's in public policy. He has years of experience working in public policy at both the local and federal levels. His work has focused on housing, public health, community safety, and economic opportunity.

As a first-generation college graduate, first-time homeowner, Christian, gay man, and person with a pre-existing health condition, Ismael brings lived experience to the policies he fights for.

Ismael is running for State Assembly to:

- Fully fund public schools
- Repair our streets and keep them safe
- Expand access to affordable healthcare and mental health services
- Invest in drug treatment and recovery centers
- Create real public safety through housing and prevention
- Build more affordable and subsidized housing on the South Side
- Protect immigrant families and shift from punishment to humane, community-based immigration systems
- Revitalize neighborhood business corridors like Mitchell Street

Ismael believes real leadership is about showing up, listening, and delivering results.

"I don't forget where I come from," Luna said. "This community raised me. I was unhoused at 14, and now I help house people for a living. I'm running to represent us because the South Side deserves steady, focused leadership - someone whose full attention is on delivering results for our community every single day."

The 8th Assembly District, which includes Milwaukee's Historic Mitchell Street neighborhood, Walker's Point Historic District, and Lincoln Village, will be in the spotlight in the 2026 elections as voters demand consistent, responsive leadership from their representatives.

Luna launched his campaign at La Canoa, the restaurant where he worked as a teenager to help support his family. Surrounded by community members, friends, and family, he celebrated the launch as a step toward representing the 8th District and delivering real results for the families who call it home.

Read below for Ismael Luna's full prepared remarks announcing his

candidacy for the State Assembly in the 8th district:

Friends, family, neighbors -

Today, I am proud to say that I am running for State Assembly in District 8.

I am running to advocate for our community and for families like mine, the ones who get left behind when politicians stop paying attention.

I am not a career politician. I am not someone who grew up with a lot of money or connections. I went to Kagel Elementary. I graduated from Riverside. I was confirmed at Our Lady of Guadalupe. I have lived in this district for over 14 years.

Este es mi hogar.

At 14, I was unhoused. I started working then, right here in this restaurant, to help support my family. There were times when I did not know where I was going to sleep, or how I was going to eat, or what my future was going to look like.

That kind of experience stays with you. And it can motivate you.

Today, I work at a shelter helping people who are experiencing homelessness. I went from being unhoused to helping house people for a living. And I can tell you, it changes how you see everything.

You stop thinking in theories. You think of real people. Real families. Real struggles.

I was raised by a working-class immigrant family. My parents taught me to work hard, to stay grounded, and to never forget where I come from. They taught me that if you are able to make it, you turn around and help the next person.

That is what I try to do every day.

I am a first-generation college graduate. I earned a degree in political science, a minor in Spanish, and later a master's in public policy because I wanted to understand how decisions get made and why they so often leave people behind.

I have spent the last few years working in public policy and community organizations. I volunteered with the Red Cross. I worked with shelters and food programs. I served as Vice Chair of RISE Drug Free MKE, working on substance

misuse prevention and recovery.

Not because it looked good on a resume. But because this is my community.

Así es la comunidad. We help each other.

I am a first-time homeowner. I have a pre-existing health condition. I am gay. I am Christian. I know what it feels like to navigate systems that are confusing, expensive, and not built for people like us.

That is why I am running.

I am running to fully fund our public schools because MPS students deserve the same opportunities as anyone else, and teachers should not have to beg for resources every year.

I am running to make healthcare affordable because no one should skip the doctor or ration medication because they cannot afford it.

I am running to invest in mental health services and drug treatment because addiction is something I see every day, and punishment does not fix it. Support does.

I am running to build real public safety. That means housing, jobs, and prevention. You cannot police your way out of poverty, trauma, or homelessness.

I am running to build more affordable housing on the South Side. Right here in District 8, I know people who live with ten people in one house just to survive. I know seniors who are being priced out of their homes. And that is not okay.

I am running to protect immigrant families. My family is an immigrant family. And no one should live in fear just for trying to build a life.

Yes, that means I will fight to keep ICE out of Milwaukee, and I will work to expand access to in-state tuition and driver's licenses for undocumented residents, including DACA recipients.

And I am running to invest in local businesses across this district. On Mitchell Street, in Walker's Point, and across the South Side. Because small businesses are the heart of this community, and they deserve support, not neglect.

I have sat with people who lost family members. I have worked with people battling addiction.

Housing. Healthcare. Mental health. Opportunity.

That is what makes a community thrive. And too many families are still waiting for all of it.

For too long, the South Side has been told to wait.

Wait for better schools.

Wait for safer streets.

Wait for housing we can afford.

Wait for leaders who actually listen.

No más. I am done waiting.

This community raised me. It carried me through some of the hardest moments of my life. And now, I am ready to fight for it.

I am running for State Assembly because our community deserves better. Because young people deserve a future here. Because our elders deserve to age with dignity. Because our community deserves a voice that shows up and does the work.

Me llamo Ismael Luna. I am a community advocate, a nonprofit worker, and a neighbor who will work for you. For us. Porque nuestra comunidad deserves more than politics as usual.

¡Juntos, let's build a stronger South Side!

For more information about Ismael Luna's campaign, please visit www.IsmaelLuna.com