

Minnie Santillan
Chief of Staff, Business Owner and Non-profit Executive

For more than two decades, Minnie Santillan has been a top advisor to many of California's most powerful lawmakers. In fact, Santillan's counsel has helped steer her clients into positions of power, helping to create some of California's most consequential laws.

She is currently chief of staff to Los Angeles Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio, the chair of the influential and informal moderate caucus the New Democrats, a group of center-left, pro-job Democrats. Concurrently, Santillan owns her own political and policy consulting firms, Santillan Devlin, LLC, and Santillan Strategies, where she specializes in electing candidates to office and helps reshape local policies.

Santillan has served more than a handful of members of the Senate and Assembly throughout the years, including a Speaker of the State Assembly, as well as the entire California Latino Legislative Caucus, prior to helping her then-boss, Assemblyman Henry T. Perea, take over the Capitol by building the New Democrats, into a legislative powerhouse. The feat was recognized in 2015 by Capitol Weekly's Top 100 List, a who's who of California government.

She has left her imprint on countless pieces of legislation, but some of her highlights include closing a loophole that was denying justice for victims of rape and sexual assault, a water bond that helped secure a sustainable future for water, a law protecting low-income families' access to electricity and a commonsense system promoting alternative energy.

Outside the Capitol, she has worked on California Assembly, Senate, and Congressional campaigns for more than 20 years, never losing a race. She helped transform the Fresno City Council by installing a Latino Democrat majority, continues to elect sensible lawmakers throughout the state and continues to pass and reshape local policies that improve the lives of hard-working California families. Santillan is an active member of the Association of American Political Consultants (AAPC), and the USA Southwest Hispanic Leader for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Minnie has been repeatedly recognized for her philanthropic work the last 25 years, which includes serving as president of the Fresno Downtown Association and the Hispanic Commission, a member of the Fresno Family Self Sufficiency, Fresno Women's Network and a docent at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum. In 2004, the Marjaree Mason Foundation and The Fresno Bee recognized her as one of Fresno County's Top Ten Professional Women of the Year for her commitment to service in her community. She was recognized as a "politico dynamo" in a December edition of Central Valley Life Magazine December edition, which profiled her life.

In Sacramento, she volunteers with Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (H.O.P.E.) and participated as a water leader, Class of 2010, through the Water Education Foundation. In 2014, she was recognized by H.O.P.E as a "H.O.P.E. Treasure" for her mentorship, advocacy, and leadership. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Saint John's Program for Real Change, a nonprofit that helps homeless mothers and children break the cycle of poverty and homelessness one family at a time, and is a board member for National CORE-Hope for Housing, a national non-profit devoted to addressing the housing needs of our most vulnerable populations in the USA, and is a member of the Fresno State Alumni Board.

Santillan was raised in California's Central Valley in a large, loving family as one of 12 children. For undergrad, she stayed local to earn a bachelor's degree in criminology from California State University, Fresno. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling the world, having visited more than 60 countries. In addition to traveling, she golfs, plays tennis, hikes, and mentors young staffers in the Capitol, all while she graduated Summa Cum Laude from Cornell Law School.