

The Mexican female entrepreneur who surprised Joe Biden



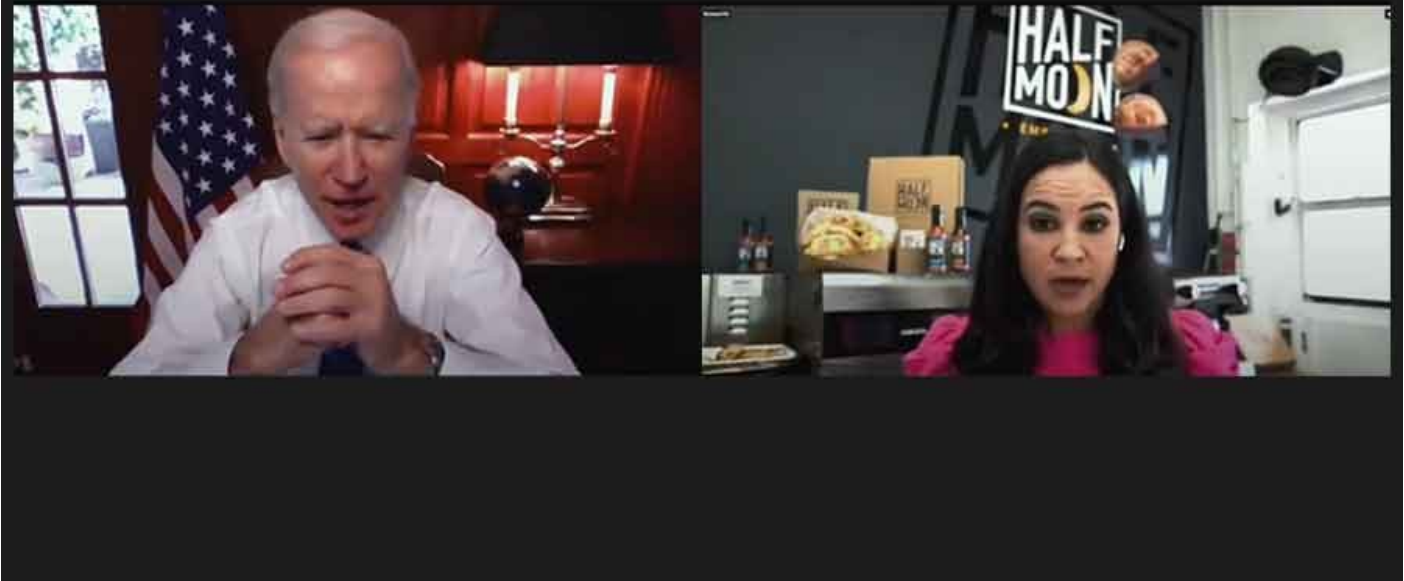
*“I’m sitting waiting for the **Zoom call**... suddenly, the little window that opens says: ‘**President-elect**,”* describes **Pilar Guzmán**, who recently spoke with **Joe Biden**, now **President of the United States**.

Pilar, who’s originally from **Veracruz**, and a **Tec graduate** from the **Monterrey campus**, lives in Miami with her family. Together with her husband, she owns [Half Moon Empanadas](#), a restaurant with **14 branches in Florida**.

Her **business activities** and **support for women** have earned her recognition as one of the **25 most influential businesswomen in South Florida**.

In 2020, she was contacted to serve on the **Small Business and Entrepreneurs Advisory Council** for the **Biden campaign**.

*“The reality is that I’d never done anything political, but I felt that it was a **moment in the history of this country in which it was important to make my voice heard**,”* Pilar shared in an interview with [CONNECTA](#).



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What did she talk about with President Joe Biden?

*“The **first thing** Biden says is, ‘**Tell me about yourself,**’ and so, I start to tell him about our experience as business owners, about how difficult it’s been, and how we reinvented ourselves because of COVID,”* said Pilar.

Her conversation with the president was part of the **campaign** that announced the **US economic rescue** plan, which includes support for small businesses.

As well as talking about her story as an entrepreneur, **Pilar took advantage of the interaction to suggest** that the **support reach even the smallest businesses**, since previous help was inaccessible for those businesses during the pandemic.

*“Most **Latino businesses** in this country, and **women’s businesses**, are very small. So, he agreed and thanked me for the advice,”* said Pilar.

<https://twitter.com/JoeBiden/status/1350077778310270978>

During the pandemic: adapt or die

Half Moon Empanadas started their first restaurant in **2008**, which is inspired by the **Argentinian empanada** culture and **Latin American flavors**.

The first few years were difficult, as **the business was even on the verge of closing**, but **the restaurant picked up steam** as the years went by. It now has several locations, one of them at **Miami International Airport**.

In **March 2020, COVID-19** changed everything, explains the video that summarizes Pilar's call with **President Joe Biden**.

*"This put the brakes on for everyone. It made us question what we're doing wrong as **people** and as a **society**,"* she added in the interview with [CONECTA](#).

The response from this Mexican woman and her husband, as owners of **Half Moon Empanadas**, was not to sit back and do nothing.

*"I decided to call on my community and the groups that I've worked with. **I tried to sell to whoever would buy from me,**"* she said.



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While searching for new opportunities, she realized that the Miami government had begun to provide meals to the elderly so that they didn't have to go out. Pilar offered to help.

*"The requirement was to sell complete meals, so we had to **use the filling from the empanadas** to adapt the product to the request,"* said the businesswoman.

For the **Tec graduate**, this involved **reinventing her business**.

*“We started by seeing what was needed in terms of **nutrition**, what was needed for county and state **requirements**. We even rented refrigerated trucks to take deliver the meals to people’s homes,” she explained.*

Thanks to these actions, she managed to get her employees to return to work after businesses had been closed due to provisions for the pandemic.

Her career path: from Mexico to Florida

Pilar describes herself as a woman who fights for her dreams. Originally from the state of Veracruz, when she was younger, she decided to study a career in **Business Administration** at **Tec de Monterrey**, so she moved to the **city of Monterrey** to study there on campus.

*“In my second semester, I discovered the **student groups**. I took part in **administration symposiums**, I was a foreign exchange student coordinator, and **student president** for my course.*

*“At the age of **18**, that taught me **I could do important things**, and that intelligence comes in different forms,” she recalled.*

After graduating in 2001, Pilar applied to **Georgetown University** in Washington D.C. to study a **master’s degree** in economic development. She received a scholarship from the *Washington Center*.

*“I spent **2 years** of my life at Georgetown, and it was one of the most **competitive experiences** of my life. It was difficult, but I learned to think globally, systematically, and to analyze things deeply,” she said.*

It was in Washington where Pilar met her **husband**, who hails from Argentina, and together they moved to Miami, Florida.



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An entrepreneur with a community vision

In Miami, Pilar began to **get involved** with the **community**, and became a **mentor** to female business owners, restaurants, and an **advisor** to various organizations.

One of these foundations organized a trip to **Harvard** University for a course on **leadership development**.

It focused on how to help **American communities** to become more **inclusive** and more **socially and economically developed**.

*“At that time, the current **mayor of Miami** traveled with us. There were 10 groups from 10 cities learning about successful cities and how to help Miami,” she said.*

Later, due to the work she was seeking to do in Miami on behalf of women, she also visited **Israel** to learn about the **entrepreneurial ecosystem** in that country.

In the group she was traveling in was **somebody** who had worked for the **administration** of former President **Barack Obama**.

*“They invited me to the **council of entrepreneurs** for **Biden**. There were more than 20 people, some of them entrepreneurs and politicians.*

*“I had the opportunity to sit down to chat with **Kamala Harris** and later with **Biden’s** daughter at some public events,” Pilar mentioned.*

That was how the candidate’s team contacted her to invite her to **talk** with **Biden**.



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Growing and maintaining a balance in life

For Pilar, **social work** is part of her life, and she assures us that she will continue to **promote entrepreneurship** in her community.

*"It's something that comes from my heart. People ask me if I will enter politics. But I have my **focus** on my **business**, and I know that it's going to be a **national chain**," she said.*

Before the pandemic, Pilar had already signed some **contracts** to take her **branches** to **airports**, such as **Nashville** and **Denver**, so she continues to work on that expansion.

Pilar says that in her daily life, her **activities** vary between being **president** of her company, **mother**, **wife**, and **daughter**.

*"It's not easy, but I've known how to ask for help. My **husband** is part of the business. He manages the **kitchen**, the **quality**, and the **development** of new **opportunities**."*

*"He's Argentinian, he was born in Buenos Aires, and went to Washington aged 8. **We work together** in this company," she said.*

Pilar's children, aged 7 and 10, are her **priority**, and she seeks to balance the time she spends with them, her business, and her social work.

When asked what she's **looking for** in **life**, she says to **be happy**, and to be focused on **learning**, **evolving**, and **living**.

She also assures us that all **women** can achieve their **dreams** and shouldn't seek to define themselves by what society tells them to.

*"Find **your own definition** as **women**. There are lots of **opportunities**. Your skin color doesn't matter. You have to be able to **work** and to **dream**,"* she concluded.

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