

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

April 3, 2017

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHHLA), a coalition of 40 leading national Latino nonpartisan civic rights and advocacy organizations, we strongly urge you to support sufficient funding to the Census Bureau to adequately prepare for the 2020 Census and assure the continuation of the Economic Census. This will ensure the data collection process is both more effective and efficient, while reducing the incidence of undercounting Latinos, children, immigrants, non-English proficient, and other hard-to-reach populations. Furthermore, we urge you to reject any measures that seek to make the American Community Survey voluntary.

Accurate census data are necessary for the allocation of appropriate federal funding, civil rights enforcement, and documenting Latinos' socio-economic status.

More than one-in-six of the nation's residents are Latino and the Latino population will continue increasing in size and prominence in the coming years. By 2050, the Census Bureau projects that more than 105 million Latinos will live in the United States, accounting for about 26.5% of the total population. In order for the Census Bureau to compile accurate and useful data about the U.S. population, it must ensure a full and accurate count of the Latino community. While the Bureau has made progress in reducing the differential undercount of various population groups, the undercounting of Latinos persists. Failure to properly count our community results in serious consequences for our nation, ranging from creation of skewed and unequal voting districts to misallocation of federal dollars. More progress toward a complete and accurate count is urgently needed.

Any question format adopted must enable the Census Bureau to maintain or improve upon historic Latino response rates and the accuracy of the data collected.

At the minimum, the Bureau's decisions about the number and content of race and ethnicity questions should enable it to produce data about residents' racial and ethnic identities that are compatible with and comparable to data collected during the 2010 and previous decennial Censuses.

The Census Bureau needs to strengthen its linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach.

NHHLA is acutely concerned that the Bureau has canceled testing it had planned to conduct in Puerto Rico, and will not undertake any other significant, targeted testing of Spanish-language materials in advance of the 2020 Census. According to 2015 American Community Survey data, more than 40 million residents of our country speak Spanish; in order to ensure their full inclusion in national measures of the economy, our health, educational attainment, and other indicators, the Bureau must make a strong effort to engage partner organizations and leaders in the Latino community.

The Census Bureau must continue its efforts to secure accurate and complete data of the LGBTQ population.

The Bureau has indicated that it is not ready to use the ACS or decennial census to collect data on the LGBTQ population. It should continue robust research and testing efforts so that it can achieve this goal expeditiously.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alianza Americas
American G.I. Forum
ASPIRA Association
Avance Inc.
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
Farmworker Justice
Green Latinos
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Inter-University Program for Latino Research
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Latino Justice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
Mi Familia Vota
National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
National Association of Hispanic Publications
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association of Latino Independent Producers
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
National Council of La Raza
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Environmental Council
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Institute for Latina/o Psychological Association
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
Presente.org
SER Jobs for Progress National
Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
U.S.- Mexico Foundation
Voto Latino

Lastly, it is critical to alert stakeholders to the implications of a high undercount of young Latino children. Approximately 400,000 young Latino children ages 0 to 4 were left uncouncted by the 2010 Census. The undercount of Latino children reduces potential federal funding for state programs serving low-income families.

NHLA urges the Census Bureau to improve its targeted outreach to those areas with the largest numbers of undercounted children, as well as to develop more relationships with vested stakeholders, such as civic organizations and early childhood education organizations that will be able to reach households with young children.

Accurate census data are indispensable to civil rights enforcement, the fair allocation of federal funding, and documenting Latinos' socio-economic status. **NHLA strongly advocates members of Congress supporting the adequate funding of the Census Bureau. To meet the Bureau's most basic needs, the Office of Management and Budget must provide \$1.633 billion total for Fiscal Year 2017 when final appropriations for the fiscal year are enacted in April 2017.**

As the United States' demographic profile becomes increasingly diverse, the Census Bureau must collect reliable data about Latinos and the nation as a whole. Congress should, therefore, ensure that the Census Bureau has the funding that it requires to carry out an effective and efficient data collection process that takes into account Latino and other minority groups.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Sanchez", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Hector E. Sanchez

Chair, National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA)
Executive Director, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)