

# **National Hispanic Leadership Agenda**

March 4, 2014

Honorable Tim Johnson  
Chair  
United States Senate Committee on Banking,  
Housing and Urban Affairs  
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Mike Crapo  
Ranking Member  
United States Senate Committee on Banking,  
Housing and Urban Affairs  
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

## **RE: The Nomination of Gustavo Velasquez Aguilar to serve at Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the Department of Housing and Urban Development**

Dear Chair Johnson and Ranking Member Crapo:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of the 37 preeminent national Latino organizations in the country, we write in support of the nomination of Mr. Gustavo Velasquez Aguilar to be Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHE) at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). We request that this letter of support be placed into the official record of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

Our membership, which represents millions of Hispanic Americans across our nation, supports Mr. Velasquez's nomination and we urge you to move expeditiously toward confirmation. As you will discover upon examination, he has significant accomplishments in the public sector. Our support of Mr. Velasquez is rooted in his management experience in the investigation of discrimination claims and his knowledge of the field of non-discrimination laws, regulations, and enforcement, including fair housing.

Gustavo has demonstrated expertise in working with federal civil rights laws, regulations and programs, including Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act), Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968; the American with Disabilities Act; the Age Discrimination Act; and relevant policies and regulations.

Having served from January, 2007 to October, 2013, as the Director of the District of Columbia Office of Human Rights (DC-OHR), he was responsible for the investigation and disposition of thousands of discrimination cases filed by individuals and organizations in the areas of employment, education, public accommodations, and housing. He was also responsible for helping establish or modify rules and guidelines to investigate and adjudicate employment and housing discrimination complaints under one of the most comprehensive non-discrimination statutes in the country – the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977.

The skills he acquired while at DC-OHR are relevant to the position he is nominated for because DC's non-discrimination law is substantially equivalent to the Fair Housing Act. The DC-OHR has for many years been cross-filing and investigating cases with HUD under federal law. This required Mr. Velasquez to understand and apply the rules and guidelines emanating from HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) for the proper investigation and disposition of Title VIII complaints.

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## **MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

American G.I. Forum  
ASPIRA Association  
Avance Inc.  
Casa de Esperanza  
Cuban American National Council  
Farmworker Justice  
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities  
Hispanic Federation  
Hispanic National Bar Association  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
Latino Justice PLDEF  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities  
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives  
National Association of Hispanic Publications  
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 Hispana Leadership Institute  
National Hispanic Council on Aging  
National Hispanic Environmental Council  
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Institute for Latino Policy  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Puerto Rican Coalition  
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

In addition to his many years as a non-for-profit executive manager, he has valuable management experience in government for two state-level agencies: The District of Columbia Office of Latino Affairs (OLA) and the D.C. Office of Human Rights. At OLA, Gustavo was responsible for reviewing and approving annually more than \$5 million in local appropriations and federal funding for a wide range of community programs. At the Office of Human Rights, he managed a team of 30 that worked on combating discrimination in the Nation's capital. His staff included investigators, mediators, compliance specialists, attorney advisors, and administrative law judges.

Moving forward on this nomination, it is our intent to score all votes associated with this nomination in our NHLA Congressional Scorecard on the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress. The NHLA Congressional Scorecard rates members of Congress on votes taken in the House and Senate that our membership deems important to the social, economic, and political advancement and quality of life of Hispanic Americans.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Hector Sanchez

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hector Sanchez", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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