

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

On behalf of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Committee on Oversight and Reform, we write to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issue a report on the representation of Latinos in employment and management positions in the film, television, and publishing industries, and the enforcement of federal equal opportunity requirements on those industries by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Department of Labor (DOL).

Nearly one in five Americans is Latino, yet Latino Americans are dramatically underrepresented in employment and representation by the film and television industry. According to two major university studies, Latinos make up only 3-4% of leads or co-leads, 4% of directors, 3% of casting directors, and 3% of producers. Hollywood front offices are almost exclusively white and male: 91% of Chief Executive Officers in Hollywood are white, and 82% of them are male. Nearly half of the top 100 films from 2007-2018 did not even represent Latinos in any way, and when Latinos were portrayed onscreen, many were portrayed as criminals and poor.<sup>1</sup> The distorted representation of Latinos in front of the camera correlates with their lack of representation behind it.

Discrimination and denial of equal opportunity are intolerable and contrary to U.S. law in all occupations. But their persistence in the media industry has uniquely harmful effects on society. The media can influence the broader culture and shape the public perception of entire groups. Persistent and systemic underrepresentation of Latino Americans in the media distorts the media's depictions of Latino communities and perpetuates harmful stereotypes.

Federal law promotes equal employment opportunity by prohibiting private companies from discriminating in employment based on race and gender, among other things, and generally requires companies contracting with the federal government to comply with affirmative action and other equal employment opportunity provisions. The EEOC and the DOL's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs are the primary federal agencies that enforce these

---

<sup>1</sup> [Latinos In Film, University of Southern California Annenberg Inclusion Initiative \(Aug. 2019\) \(online at http://assets.uscannenber.org/docs/aii-study-latinos-in-film-2019.pdf\)](http://assets.uscannenber.org/docs/aii-study-latinos-in-film-2019.pdf); and [Hollywood Diversity Report, University of California at Los Angeles Institute for Research on Labor and Employment \(2020\) \(online at https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2020-Film-2-6-2020.pdf\)](https://socialsciences.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UCLA-Hollywood-Diversity-Report-2020-Film-2-6-2020.pdf).

requirements. EEOC enforces civil rights laws against workplace discrimination, including national origin discrimination, and the EEOC has the authority to investigate industries with systemic bias in order to develop and initiate charges against employers who engage in a pattern or practice of discrimination.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, EEOC has reportedly investigated discrimination in the media industry, specifically systemic discrimination against women directors in Hollywood.

As Members of Congress seeking to increase diversity in the media industry and enforce federal anti-discrimination and equal opportunity requirements, we respectfully request a GAO report to help policymakers better understand the current state of diversity in the media and federal enforcement efforts, as well as to identify the challenges and any potential solutions to diversify this influential industry. We also request that GAO publish data collected for the report in a manner disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender to provide a clear depiction of diversity and representation in the media industry. Specifically, we ask that GAO analyze the following topics:

- The number of Latinos working in the film, television, and publishing industries, broken down from executive-level roles to entry-level roles;
- The number of projects involving Latino writers, lead actors, showrunners, producers, directors, as well as Latino editors and authors in publishing;
- Latino representation in talent agencies, including identifying barriers to such representation faced by Latino talent;
- Latino representation in relevant union membership and the way policies on membership in these unions impacts the diversity of projects produced involving union crews, casts, directors, and writers;
- Existing gaps regarding Latino representation and employment in the film and TV industry; and
- The record of federal enforcement of equal employment opportunity for Latinos in the media industry.

We understand the challenges to the workplace presented by COVID-19, and we respectfully request that the GAO initiate this review as soon as practicable. We also request that you provide regular updates on the status of the work. Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and we look forward to your response. If you have questions, please contact [Stephanie.Palencia@mail.house.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Palencia@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

---

<sup>2</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-6.



Joaquin Castro  
Chairman  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Carolyn Maloney  
Chair  
Oversight and Reform Committee



Jimmy Gomez  
Vice Chair  
Oversight and Reform Committee



Tony Cárdenas  
Co-Chair, Diversity Taskforce  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Gilbert R. Cisneros  
Member of Congress  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus